HOLINESS AND WHOLENESS:
TOWARD A HOLISTIC CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY
IN THE KOREAN SYNCRETIC CONTEXT

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Theological Department of the Toronto School of Theology,
University of Toronto, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
Doctor of Theology

By

In Sung Chi

February 1998

Toronto
The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author’s permission.

L’auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L’auteur conserve la propriété du droit d’auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-32300-5
ABSTRACT

Holiness and Wholeness:
Toward a Holistic Christian Spirituality in the Korean Syncretic Context

This thesis is to explore how an authentic Korean Christian spirituality can be developed and deepened in the syncretic religious context. Its aim is to strengthen a distinctive Korean Christian identity through a holistic spirituality, which reflects upon a concern for wholeness and a desire for integration. It stresses "both-and" way of life that is integrative and inclusive, in contrast to a dualistic "either-or" way of life that sees things as irreconcilable opposites. The goal of this thesis is to move toward a spirituality centered in Jesus Christ, which is at the same time deeply inculturated into Korean life. It is the journey forward toward true holiness and wholeness. Therefore, this thesis proposes that Korean Christians must find ways to integrate the polarized Christian spiritualities that exist among them, and in doing so, must acknowledge and value Korea's own ancient syncretic heritage, which has sustained Korean people for many centuries.

In so doing, the first chapter explores foundational notions for the basic understanding of spirituality. The second chapter examines how an identifiable Korean syncretic spirituality has developed in the ancient religious traditions, noting their coexistence and mutual influence. The third chapter discusses theological questions of syncretism, in searching for inculturation as an ongoing process for the development of a deeper Korean Christian spirituality. The fourth chapter reflects upon theological paradigms of Christian spirituality found in selected contemporary Korean Protestant churches - 'conservative' Calvinist spirituality as the evangelical majority, Pentecostal spirituality as a substantial minority, and minjung spirituality as a smaller radical minority. The final chapter proposes an integration of the polarized spiritualities of Korean Protestant churches through a more balanced spirituality, called a spirituality of wholeness or a holistic Christian spirituality. Finally, this thesis suggests that a balanced approach has pastoral implications for Christian spirituality which embraces the personal, socio-political, religio-cultural aspects within the particular Korean syncretic context.
To

My Father and Mother

Young Suk Chi (1910 - 1998)

and

Oak Nyeo Kim (1919 - )

Models of Faith and Courage

My First Spiritual Directors
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am pleased to acknowledge a number of people whose good work and kindness have enabled me to complete this thesis.

First of all, I have to express my sincere appreciation to Prof. Harold G. Wells, Ph.D., my teacher and thesis director, who encouraged and supported me to write the thesis successfully. He helped me with patience, confidence, generosity, critical advice, and personal relationship, so that I cannot forget his love.

I would like to thank to two major readers of this thesis, Prof. Carl F. Starkloff, Ph.D., my teacher in the areas of Mission, Inculturation, and Syncretism, and Prof. Ovey N. Mohammed, Ph.D., in the areas of World Religions and Interreligious Dialogue, who together with Prof. Wells and Prof. Starkloff, read my comprehensive exam paper and thesis proposal and offered important suggestions and advices. I also want to express my deep gratitude to Dr. David Chung, mentor and former president of Hanshin University, Korea. He gave me kind advices and comments as my Korean language and theological consultant.

I am grateful to two examiners who read and commented this thesis: Dr. Jean-Marc Laporte, Director of Toronto School of Theology and Professor of Christian Anthropology, and Dr. Andrew Sung Park, Professor of Systematic Theology at United Theological Seminary, Ohio, who eagerly attempts to develop Korean's own spirituality from Korean-American theological perspectives. I am also thankful to a number of faculty members of Regis College, Professors Annice Callahan, Ph.D., Margaret R. Brennan, Ph.D., and Ronald Barnes, Ph.D., from whom I have learned so much in the field of Spirituality.
I am indebted to many members of the Korean United Church of Brampton with whom I have worked as a pastor. They provided me time enough to write the thesis. If there were not for their prayer, support, encouragement, and care, it would have been impossible to sustain this study.

Finally, my special deepest thank goes to my wife, You sun, and two sons, Tommy Dongmin and Aaron Dongyun. They fully understood and supported me with prayer, patience, and love during this long journey, although I often did not have enough time to spend with them. Without their longsuffering, therefore, this thesis would not have come to light. Once again I would like to express the debt of my gratitude to them.

I am dedicating this thesis to my father and mother who are awaiting my return to be beside them in Korea. They are models of faith and courage. Their enthusiastic prayer for me always inspires me to remember them. They are my first spiritual directors who taught me God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and also guided me in the way toward authentic Christian life.

In Sung Chi
Emmanuel College
Toronto
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements  ii  
Table of Contents  iv  

Introduction  1  

I. The Purpose and Scope  1  
II. Methodology  8  

Chapter One: Foundational Notions  13  

I. What is Spirituality?: The General Definition  13  

II. What is Christian Spirituality?  19  

1. Some Basic Biblical Terminology  20  
2. The Term "Spirituality" in Historic Christian Usage  22  
3. Toward a Definition  29  
4. Types of Christian Spirituality  36  
   (1) Apophatic and Cataphatic Ways  37  
   (2) Types of Christian Spirituality according to Theological Views  42  

III. What is a Christian Holistic Spirituality?  50  

1. The Meaning of Holiness  51  
2. Holiness as Wholeness  60  

Chapter Two: The Formation of Spirituality in the Syncretic Korean Context  69  

I. A Brief Sketch of Korean History  69  

II. The Cultural and Religious Foundations of Korean Spirituality  72  

1. Pungryudo as a Pathos of Korean Spirituality  72  
2. The Great Religious Traditions in Korea  82  
   (1) Shamanism  82  
   (2) Buddhism  89  
   (3) Confucianism  94
### III. The Insertion of Christianity into the Syncretic Korean Context 101

1. The Arrival of Roman Catholicism 102
2. The Growth of Protestantism 105
3. Types of Spiritual Movement in Early Protestantism 109
   (1) The Great Revival Movement 110
   (2) The Independence Movement for Liberation 113

### Chapter Three: Theological Reflections on Syncretism and Inculturation for Korean Christian Spirituality 116

I. Theological Understanding of Syncretism 117

1. The Question of the Definition of Syncretism 118
2. The Theological Debate 124
   (1) The Negative View of Syncretism 127
   (2) The Positive View of Syncretism 131
      i) Radical Syncretism 131
      ii) Christ-Centred Syncretism 135

II. Theological Understanding of Inculturation 147

1. Other Words Related to Inculturation 149
2. Inculturation: Definition and Theological Reflections 157
3. Towards Inculturation in the Syncretic Korean Context 165
   (1) The Translation Model 166
   (2) The Praxis Model 170
   (3) The Synthetic Model 175

### Chapter Four: Paradigms of Christian Spirituality in Korean Protestantism 183

I. "Conservative" Calvinist Spirituality: The Evangelical Majority 184

1. The Starting Point of Calvin's Spirituality: "Piety" 186
2. The Theological \textit{a priori} of Calvin's Spirituality: Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification 191
3. The Bond of Calvin's Spirituality: Union with Christ/ \textit{Unio Mystica} 197

II. Pentecostal Spirituality: A Substantial Minority 205
Chapter Five: Holistic Christian Spirituality for the Korean Syncretic Context 245

I. A Synthesis of Polarities for a Holistic Spirituality 246

1. Between Divine Transcendence and Divine Immanence 246
2. Between Contemplation and Action 254
3. Between the Personal and the Social 262

II. An Integration of Spiritualities for a Holistic Spirituality 268

1. Hahn, Jung and Mut as the Ground of Koreans' Spiritual Life 269
2. A Spirituality of "Healing" in Shamanism 273
3. A Spirituality of "Meditation" in Buddhism 279
4. A Spirituality of "Hyo" (Filial Piety) in Confucianism 284

III. Pastoral Implications for a Holistic Spirituality 292

2. Spiritual Direction: A Paradigm of Spiritual Ministry for Wholeness 300

Conclusion 309

Bibliography 313

1. English Books and Articles 313
2. Korean Books 346
INTRODUCTION

I. The Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how an authentic Korean Christian spirituality can be developed and deepened in the syncretic religious context of Korea. Its aim is to strengthen a distinctive Korean Christian identity through a holistic Christian spirituality. This study arises from an increased concern about contemporary Christian spirituality in Korea in recent decades - a time of greatly increased material wealth, and at the same time of rapid church growth. The unique socio-political and religio-cultural experiences of contemporary Korean Christians point to their own kinds of Christian spirituality, built upon a rich and ancient religious heritage, tested by intense suffering, and confronted by new challenges. Particularly, Korean Christians face the challenge of relating positively to other great religions which are very much alive in their milieu.

Therefore, Korean Christians, I shall argue, must find a way to integrate the polarized Christian spiritualities which today both enrich and divide the church. To do so they must, while remaining centred in Jesus Christ, acknowledge and value the ancient syncretic heritage which has shaped and sustained the people for many centuries. Only so will they be able to develop and deepen a truly holistic Christian spirituality in and for the Korean context.

In the title I have deliberately used the modest word "Toward," indicating that the visioning of a holistic spirituality for Korea is by no means, and can never be, a completed task. Also, though I use the term "Korean Christians" or "Korean Christianity" in this thesis, a significant limitation is its concentration on Korean Protestant Christianity. This limitation is
intentional, reflecting the fact that I am a Protestant, and am intensely concerned with the development of the spirituality of Korean Protestants. This is not to deny that Roman Catholicism is an important minority presence in Korean Christianity and possesses its own distinctive spiritual characteristics. Korean Catholicism also exists within the Korean syncretic context, also inherits the great religious traditions of East Asia, also builds upon an experience of deep suffering, and also faces the necessity for a positive relationship with other living religions. In short, Catholic and Protestant Christians in Korea share a great deal of common ground where their spiritualities are concerned, especially their basic faith in Jesus Christ and commitment to him. Furthermore, time and space, as well as limitations of experience and competence, require that this thesis be limited to a focus on spirituality among Protestants. However, I shall in fact be drawing substantially on both historical and contemporary western Roman Catholic theologies of spirituality, from which, I believe, Korean Protestants can learn much.

A main concept of this thesis is a holistic Christian spirituality. Because "spirituality" is a term with a broad spectrum of meanings and refers to a lived experience, in fact it is not a simple matter to define it generally or specifically. Ironically, the term "spirituality" has not been widely used in traditional Protestant thought and is viewed with some suspicion by many Protestants. They have preferred terms such as Godliness, piety, holiness of life or the devout life, which seemed in some way less tainted than "spirituality."\(^1\) Thus they have spoken of "the Christian life," and have used biblical language about the life "in Christ" and "in the Spirit." A disciplined life of prayer and Bible study, and of worship centred in hearing the word of God, has been basic

to historic Protestant Christianity. However, many Protestants today are making greater use of this traditional "Catholic" terminology, especially in the Asian context. Perhaps it is our syncretic context which pushes us in this direction, for we cannot avoid recognizing the reality of "spiritual life" beyond Christianity, even deep and beautiful spiritual life.

In academic circles, nevertheless, there has been widespread debate among writers about workable definitions. Here we may summarize their definitions of spirituality in general as a "life-style or way" in which one lives, both inwardly and outwardly, vertically and horizontally, personally and socially, in accordance with faith and its basic values. More specifically, Christian spirituality refers to a way of being Christian, in response to the call of God, issued through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is, it is rooted in the life of the triune God, focused on Jesus Christ, situated in the Church, and ever responsive to the Holy Spirit. For Christians, therefore, spirituality means one's total life as understood, felt, imagined, and decided upon in relationship to God, in Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit. In this sense, Christian spirituality is trinitarian, christological, and ecclesial.

The term "holistic" reflects a concern for wholeness, a desire for integration, and an attempt to understand the connections between the various aspects that constitute a given reality. Thus, a holistic spirituality respects the body-spirit unity of the person, integrates the head, heart, and body of a person, and then sees the struggle for wholeness as an integral part of the journey to holiness. This direction was taken, for example, in Pedro Casaldaliga & Jose-Maria Vigil's Political Holiness: A Spirituality of Liberation.

* It is not divided vertically: into natural and supernatural, material and spiritual, secular history and sacred history;
* It is not divided horizontally: into this world and the next, time and eternity, history and eschatology:
* It is not divided anthropologically: into individual and society, person and community, inner and outer, private and public, religious and political, personal conversion versus structural change.
* It is not transcendental, but is transcendent; it is not immanentist, but does accept and live commitment in immanence. The dimension of transcendence makes it a "transparency" in immanence.
* Nor is it spiritualist, believing in a God without a Reign, nor materialist, believing in a Reign without God. It lives the integrated synthesis that Jesus lived and revealed to us: for the God of the Reign and the Reign of God.²

A holistic spirituality stresses a complementary, "both-and" way of life that is integrative and inclusive, in contrast to a dualistic "either-or" way of life that sees things as irreconcilable opposites. That is to say, a holistic spirituality sees a way beyond the polarization of life.

Accordingly, a holistic Christian spirituality characterizes the core of spirituality as the attempt to maintain a delicate balance between the tensions or opposite dimensions of holiness in Christian life: transcendence and immanence, contemplation and action, and the personal and social.

However, without the reference to one's own particular context this understanding of a holistic Christian spirituality in itself is unhelpful and too vague. The particular context of Korean Christians definitely has been and continues to be a syncretic one, bringing together Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, which are the rich cultural and religious heritages of Korea.

Here I must note a further limitation of this study. I do not claim a high degree of specialized expertise in any of these great religious traditions. In fact, I have studied them extensively and substantially at each stage of my education. I believe that I have enough academic as well as first hand knowledge of these living religions to reflect upon the manner in

which their insights may be integrated into a Korean Christian spirituality. However, I shall not claim here to offer extensive accounts of the histories, beliefs and practices of these traditions. My purpose is the development of a holistic Christian spirituality for the Korean syncretic context. For example, Shamanism has been a comprehensive form for the totality of various Korean folk practices of worship, invocation, and reconciliation related to a multitude of gods, spirits, ghosts, and demons. This means that before the advent of Christianity in Korea there were already significant spiritual resources which constituted a "pre-understanding" for the gospel.

In this respect, Korean Christianity today, which has a new challenge with the discovery of culture as a pluralistic phenomenon, has the task of reconsidering or shifting major Christian attitudes toward other religions. Common approaches are often called the "exclusivist," "inclusivist," and "pluralist" paradigms. Of course, the exclusivist attitude toward other religions of Korean "conservative/evangelical" Christians was much influenced by foreign missionaries at the end of the nineteenth century. According to them, inclusivist or pluralist approaches toward other religions threaten the integrity of Christian faith, because they involve the problem of religious syncretism. But some "progressive/ radical Christians," who perceive a "syncretic dynamic" as a form of liberating action, have positively expressed their Korean

---


Christian identity in the declaration of "Three Religions are One Principle." This positive understanding of syncretism has helped them to link their spirituality to other religious traditions. Some forms of syncretism, however, do indeed dilute or threaten the integrity and distinctness of Christian faith. In this thesis I shall attempt to take a more positive view of syncretism. That is, I propose a positive "Christ-centred syncretism." Thus, this thesis refers to *inculturation* as an ongoing process for the development of Korean Christianity. By requiring an ongoing dialogue or positive relationship with other religions in the syncretic context, therefore, the thesis intends to link the concepts of inculturation and syncretism to the understanding of Christian spirituality. I dare to call this understanding of spirituality a "Korean Christian syncretic spirituality."

The different points of view regarding syncretism in Korean Christianity have resulted in a deep theological conflict, confusion, and polarity of faith positions. These phenomena have especially caused Korean Protestant theology to split sharply into two main groups: a majority conservative/evangelical group and a minority progressive/radical group. The former group is made up of a large majority who can be described as "conservative Calvinists" and a substantial minority who can be called "Pentecostals"; the latter is made up of a much smaller number of people, who combine liberationist and pluralist attitudes in various ways.

On the one hand, the progressive/radical group reinterprets the notion of *minjung* (politically oppressed, economically exploited, socially alienated, culturally despised, or

---

4 About the meaning of this terminology, see David Chung, *Religious Syncretism in Korean Society* (Michigan and London: University Microfilm Inc., 1960), chapter 3. According to Chung, this term means that Korean Christianity integrates the distinctive characteristics of three religions - the religious belief of Shamanism, the philosophical ideas of Buddhism, and the morality and ethics of Confucianism. Thus, he gives as a metaphor one body of three elements - a heart of Shamanism, a head of Buddhism, and a body of Confucianism. He calls it the "Oriental tapestry."
religiously condemned people or crowd) as part of a struggle for democracy and human rights, and stresses political participation and the social responsibility of Christians. This group thus focuses on the social salvation of the people, adopts a pluralist attitude about salvation, articulates the historical experience of oppression, and promotes a positive relationship with other religions. They exhibit little concern for specific Christian truth claims or the unique Lordship of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the conservative/evangelical group stresses an other-worldly faith, either through a conservative "Reformed" spirituality centred in Scripture and preaching, or through the charismatic or Pentecostal movement emphasizing gifts of the Holy Spirit. Both of these are concerned primarily with personal morality, eternal salvation and quantitative growth of the church. They also emphasize the material prosperity of believers and value pious or spiritual activities such as prayer, witness, service, evangelization and celebration. They exhibit little prophetic responsibility for society.

From the perspective of a holistic spirituality, in fact, both of the above positions are a reduction of the gospel. However, both positions have their spiritual strengths derived not only from Christian sources, but also from the Korean people's spiritual richness and power within their traditional culture and history. In other words, both groups, whether they are aware of it or not, are drawing upon the ancient spiritual traditions of Korea. For example, the conservative/evangelical group adopts a Shamanistic prayer form (which is similar to a Pentecostal type such as loud or tongue prayer), while the latter a more ritual form of Shamanism (such as the mask dance and singing). In this sense, an intentional integration of the spiritualities in the Korean religious traditions remains an important task for a holistic Christian spirituality.
I believe that the strengths and insights of both conservative/evangelical and progressive/radical groups can be integrated in a more balanced holistic spirituality. To work toward this goal is the task of this thesis. Therefore, I will attempt, by developing a more holistic Christian vision, to provide a possibility of integrating these opposing spiritualities "beyond" the present polarity. In conclusion, I shall discuss some pastoral implications for this holistic Christian spirituality in the Korean church.

II. Methodology

As the subtitle, "Toward a Holistic Christian Spirituality in the Korean Syncretic Context" shows, a theological work for a Korean spirituality is never finished. It is an ongoing process of answering and responding to the questions and problems that have been raised in this particular context. In this respect, Korean theology of spirituality must obviously be contextual. This means that it concentrates directly on the religious-cultural and historical context in which Korean Christianity took its root, and also on the present socio-political and cultural context.

In Models of Contextual Theology Stephen Bevans suggests five models of contextual theology: the translation, anthropological, praxis, synthetic, and transcendental models. Among them, the synthetic model is most closely related to the methodology of this proposed thesis. For Bevans, the concept is characterized as threefold. In the first place, the synthetic model tries to

---


6 Ibid., 82-83.
preserve the importance of the gospel message and the heritage of traditional doctrinal formulations. It does not easily dismiss central elements of the Christian theological tradition. In addition, it involves the importance of reflective and intelligent action for the development of a theology that does not ignore the complexities of social and cultural change. Further, the synthetic model reaches out to the resources of other cultures and other theological expressions for both the method and content of its own articulation of faith. In this way a synthesis develops between one's own cultural point of view and the points of view of others. Also, this model has the Hegelian sense of attempting not just to put things together in a kind of compromise, but of developing, in a creative dialectic, something that is acceptable to all standpoints. Therefore, this method is dialectical, dialogical, and conversational.

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter will explore foundational notions for the basic understanding of spirituality. The first section begins with the definitions of spirituality in general; the second of Christian spirituality; the third of a holistic Christian spirituality. In particular, the second section will briefly examine the basic biblical terminology, the historic Christian usage of the term "spirituality," the definition, and the types according to theological views of spirituality, such as apophatic and cataphatic ways, and differences between Catholic and Protestant spirituality. The third section involves a biblical concept of "holiness" and the meaning of holiness as wholeness, and briefly examines their relationships in various Christian traditions.

The second chapter will examine a Korean syncretic spirituality of the great religions, including Christianity, in Korean history and in the present Korean context. The main goal of this chapter is not to study the Korean religions as such. Rather, I wish to describe how Korean
syncretic spirituality was formed through the centuries, and has connected the Korean religious traditions to each other. Therefore, first of all, I shall consider the Korean term "Pungryudo" (a way of elegance or a perfect state of harmony in nature, art, and life), which may be seen as the spiritual foundation of the Korean people. I also will focus on the syncretic characteristics of three faiths that have manifested the religious life of the Korean people: Shamanism, a form of religion which emphasizes healing; Buddhism, with its highly intellectual and disciplined meditative life; and Confucianism, the strict practice of morality and social harmony. I call these characteristics of Korean religions "heart, head, and body modes" as metaphors of the human organism. Finally, this chapter refers to the insertion of Korean Christianity, in the form of Roman Catholicism in the eighteenth century and of Protestantism in the nineteenth century. These sections will briefly sketch the arrival, beginning, and persecution of Catholicism, the work of foreign missionaries and the growth of Protestantism, and two different kinds of spiritual movements (the Great Revival movement and Independence movement) which are precursors of the major streams of contemporary Christianity. Here I will contend that in the process of this suffering, persecution, and growth, Korean Christianity has in fact already developed and deepened its own spirituality in a syncretic way together with the other great religions.

The third chapter will discuss theological questions of syncretism and inculturation for Christian spirituality. Particularly, because the issue about syncretism touches the very heart of Christian faith and life, it has been passionately debated in academic circles. My interest here is to maintain that syncretism is not only inevitable but that the results are often positive and desirable for the development of local theologies, even though the negative connotations of "syncretism" still remain for some evangelical theologians, who insist that syncretism of any kind
is dangerous and unfaithful. However, I suggest a *Christ-centred syncretism* (already used by M. M. Thomas) as a positive way toward a new healthy syncretism, in order to open the possibility for a process of interpenetration, while holding fast to the "essentials" of Christian faith.

The fourth chapter will reflect upon the polarity of Korean Christian spirituality in the contemporary context. My analysis will show that Korean Protestant spirituality is basically twofold. The one includes both "conservative" Calvinist and Pentecostal spiritualities, categorized as the conservative/evangelical approach; the other is liberationist (*minjung*) and pluralist spiritualities as the progressive/radical approach. But in this chapter I do not discuss pluralist spirituality because it is partially dealt with in Chapter three. The discussion of Calvin's spiritual ideas will be primarily dependent upon the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559) with reference to secondary sources. In this chapter I shall discuss how *minjung* spirituality is related to other liberation spiritualities, which have emerged from other contexts. *Minjung* spirituality has risen out of a deep feeling of *Han* (resentment or affliction) of the oppressed in the not only socio-political, but also religio-cultural context. It is important to note here that most Korean Protestant theologians who emphasize *minjung* spirituality are from the Calvinist tradition. Thus we must distinguish "conservative" Calvinists from "progressive" Calvinists in Korea.

The fifth chapter attempts to integrate characteristics of the polarized groups through a more balanced spirituality. This attempt will be the major contribution and goal of the thesis. I call this integrated vision "a spirituality of wholeness" or "a holistic spirituality" of Korean Christianity. That is to say, it is an attempt to move "beyond" the polarity of Korean Christian spiritualities in the syncretic context. More specifically, it shows that in a holistic Christian
spirituality the opposite dimensions of holiness that both groups emphasize can be synthesized; namely, the vertical and horizontal, the personal and corporate, the inward and outward, and contemplation and action. This synthesis presents the task of a Korean Christian spirituality as a spirituality of wholeness. As already examined in Chapter Three, Korean Christian spirituality is already syncretic. This means that to find a holistic spirituality, Korean Christians have to develop a dialogical or conversational approach to other Korean religions. In other words, it has to learn by listening to and respecting the strengths of other religions. Here I shall suggest that Korean Christians must integrate and learn from the healing emphasis of Shamanism, the contemplative and meditative dimensions of Buddhism, and Hyo (filial piety) dimension of Confucianism.

However, if these elements are to be integrated in a holistic Christian spirituality, certain pastoral implications follow for the Korean church, namely, implications for our understanding of conversion and "spiritual direction" for holiness and wholeness. I shall discuss some of these implications briefly. Finally, a brief conclusion will return to the thesis statement and draw together what has been learned from these explorations for a "holistic Christian spirituality for the Korean syncretic context."
CHAPTER ONE
FOUNDATIONAL NOTIONS

It seems appropriate to begin our inquiry with a discussion of the general definition of "spirituality." Many recent articles and books attempt to clarify what is meant by this term as it pertains to humanity in general. Having considered this, we shall turn to the more specific task of defining Christian spirituality, and explore some of its foundational notions. Because of the long history of western Christianity, this initial discussion will have to attend mainly to spiritual concepts in the West, even though our goal in this thesis is to clarify Korean Christian spirituality.

I. What is Spirituality?: The General Definition

It is not a simple matter to define spirituality. This is an ambiguous term, often used with no clear meaning or with a wide and vague significance. One captures the ambiguity of the term in a very broad definition such as that of Rachel Hosmer: "it refers to whatever in human experience is alive and intentional, conscious of itself and responsive to others. It is capable of creative growth and liable to decay." However, Sandra Schneiders suggests that it is possible to discern among authors discussing this issue two basic approaches: a dogmatic position supplying

---

a "definition from above" and an anthropological position providing a "definition from below."² According to Schneiders, for a Christian dogmatic approach, spirituality is the life derived from grace and therefore any experience which is not explicitly Christian can be called spirituality only by way of extension or comparison. For the anthropological approach, the structure and dynamics of the human person are the locus of the emergence of the spiritual life. Spirituality is an activity of human life as such. This activity is open to engagement with the Absolute (in which case spirituality would be religious) in the person of Jesus Christ through the gift of the Holy Spirit (in which case the spirituality would be Christian) but is not limited to such engagement. In principle, it is equally available to every human being who is seeking to live an authentically human life. An acknowledgment of "anthropological spirituality" is important for our thesis, since we seek to value and learn from spiritualities of non-Christian religions.

The Oxford English Dictionary distinguishes six meanings for the word "spirituality." Three among these are of interest: "the quality or condition of being spiritual; attachment to or regard for things of the spirit as opposed to material or worldly interests; an ecclesiastical state which is the body of ecclesiastical persons and ecclesiastical property or revenue held or received in return for spiritual service." In a recent article, however, Jon Alexander writes that in modern English usage the word spirituality has meant primarily a quality or condition rather than an ecclesiastical state or an incorporeal mode of being. He surveys the definitions of spirituality given by a number of contemporary scholars in this field, and concludes that the term is being used by

most in an experiential and generic sense.³

Joann Wolski Conn wisely notes that "although the definition of spirituality may be
generic, there are no generic spiritualities. All spirituality is concrete, embedded in the
particularities of experience."⁴ In other words, spirituality as experience includes all the
complexity and richness of one's own religious, historical and cultural background, and at the
same time it involves the particularities of gender, race, class, and psychological development
within human personality. From this view of point, Conn suggests the usage of spirituality in
three ways:

First, it refers to a general human capacity for self-transcendence, for movement beyond
mere self-maintenance or self-interest. Second, the term spirituality can refer to a
religious dimension of life, to a capacity for self-transcendence that is actualized by the
holy, however that may be understood. Third, it may refer to a specific type of religious
experience such as Jewish, Christian, Muslim, or Buddhist.⁵

For her, therefore, self-transcendence is at the core of any definition of spirituality; Spirituality
may be non-religious as well as religious.⁶

³ Jon Alexander. "What Do Recent Writers Mean by Spirituality?," Spirituality Today 32

⁴ Joann Wolski Conn, "Toward Spiritual Maturity," in Catherine Mowry LaCugna, ed. Freeing
Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective (San Francisco: HarperCollins,
1993), 237.

⁵ Ibid., 236-237.

⁶ Conn distinguishes the self-transcendence of spirituality in its philosophical and religious
senses. According to her, "The philosophical meaning of spirituality is based on a distinction
between the material and spiritual, the spiritual being understood as that capacity for self-
transcendence through knowledge and love which characterizes the human being as a person.
Thus, in the philosophical sense of the term, all humans are essentially "spiritual" and actualize
that dimension of self-hood through the establishment of human relationships. The religious
meaning of spirituality is based on the conception of what constitutes the proper and highest
(continued...)
Again, Daniel A. Helminiak recently summarized usages of the term "spirituality" in a number of different senses. He also notes six usages. The first four of these are closely related. Firstly, the term refers to human spirit itself, the basis or source of talk about the spiritual (spirituality as the human spiritual nature). Secondly, it refers to an awareness of the spiritual (spirituality as concern for transcendence). Thirdly, it refers to a lived reality, a way of living, expressing that awareness and its source (spirituality as a lived reality). Fourthly, it refers to a subject matter, an academic study, that treats the lived reality and its source (spirituality as an academic discipline). Fifthly, it refers to a communication with human spirits, usually people who have died, or other non-human spiritual entities (spirituality as spiritualism). Sixthly, it refers to an involvement with extraordinary human powers that result in "psychic" or "psi" phenomena (spirituality as parapsychology).7

These usages disclose the broad issues concerning the nature of spirituality in contemporary debate. But Donald Evans distinguishes the senses of spirituality in three different dimensions. The first concerns motive, but in a deeper dimension than the psychology of motivation. It can be a metaphor for motive as a reference to a spiritual energy or even a spiritual entity. The second element in spirituality is a transformative process. This process is accessible to people of many different religious and secular perspectives. The third is a mystical core of

(...continued)
actualization of the human capacity for self-transcendence in personal relationships, namely, relationship with God. Spirituality, then, in its religious sense, refers to the relationship between the individual and God pursued in the life of faith, hope, and love." [See, Spirituality and Personal Maturity (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 29-30.]

spirituality. This is not an awareness of a new content of consciousness but a new way of being conscious of any content, whether new or old. This distinction, in fact, is identified with a working description of the term which Ewert Cousins, one of the founding editors of *World Spirituality* series, introduced in order to be acceptable to all traditions and not merely to the Christian.

The series focuses on that inner dimension of the person called by certain traditions "the spirit." This spiritual core is the deepest center of the person. It is here that the person is open to the transcendent dimension; it is here that the person experiences ultimate reality. The series explores the discovery of this core, the dynamics of its development, and its journey to the ultimate goal. It deals with prayer, spiritual direction, the various maps of the spiritual journey, and the methods of advancement in the spiritual ascent.

While the term "spirituality" was used exclusively by Roman Catholics prior to Vatican II, it has been gradually adopted by Protestants, Jews, members of other non-Christian religions, and even by secular feminists and Marxists. Furthermore, the term no longer refers exclusively or even primarily to prayer and spiritual exercises, much less to an elite state or superior practice of Christianity. Rather, from its original reference to the interior life of the person, it broadens to connote the whole life of faith and even the life of the person as a whole, including its bodily, psychological, social, and political dimensions.

Finally, spirituality, referring to lived experience, denotes some particular experiential realities which characterize not only Christianity but also other religions. That is to say, spirituality refers to the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms not of

---


isolation and self-absorption, but of self-transcendence within and toward the "ultimate concern." Thus, in relation to differing understandings of the ultimate concern, differing spiritualities emerge. For example, if the ultimate concern is God revealed in Jesus Christ, and experienced through the gift of the Holy Spirit within the life of the Church, it is clearly Christian spirituality. If the ultimate concern is Enlightenment or Nirvana, attained through disciplined meditation and the teaching of Gautama, it is clearly a Buddhist spirituality. Consequently, spirituality involves intrinsically some relatively coherent and articulate understanding - both of human being and the ultimate value. In this sense, "spirituality is," as Raymundo Panikkar says, "one typical way of handling the human condition." A similar definition is provided by Gordon Wakefield: "Spirituality is the word .... to describe those attitudes, beliefs, practices which animate people's lives and help them to reach out towards super-sensible realities." More recently, as Lawrence Cunningham and Keith Egan suggest, "spirituality refers to that dimension or dimensions of human experience which provide the spiritual aspect of our lives by enriching and giving 'thickness' to our ordinary existence."

Here it is important to indicate that a definition of spirituality should be sought at three

---


different levels, which the Canadian scholar Walter Principe has proposed. The first is the real or existential level. It is the way a person understands and lives, within his or her historical context, a chosen religious ideal in sensitivity to the realm of the spirit or the transcendent. The second level of spirituality is the formulation of a teaching about the lived reality, often under the influence of some outstanding spiritual person. The way of life of such a person provides to others a good example and guidance. Many traditions and schools of spirituality arise and are formulated in rich detail. The third is the disciplined academic study by which scholars of the first and especially of the second levels of spirituality reflect upon these realities, using the methods and resources from theological, psychological, cultural, historical, or comparative perspectives. This study of spirituality is interdisciplinary.¹⁴

Drawing upon the insights of all of these authors, I would define spirituality, in its general sense, as a way of life in which we experience "life as a meaningful whole" both inwardly and outwardly, in accordance with faith and its basic values. But this general definition of spirituality must not often be used without the reference of the particularities of one's own spiritual journey and those of one's own faith community. I shall therefore begin to consider what constitutes a specifically "Christian" spirituality.

II. What is Christian Spirituality?

In accordance with my own Protestant (Calvinist) tradition, - and in continuity with

Christian tradition generally, it is important to begin with our basic biblical sources. The scriptures, especially (but not exclusively) of the New Testament, put us in touch with the deepest roots of our Christian spiritual life. Basic concepts like Holy Spirit, Kingdom of God, New Creation, New Birth, and Eternal Life, are fundamental to the Christian life, and therefore to any “Christian Spirituality.” There are other key biblical terms to be explored later (e.g. holiness or sanctification, reconciliation and love). What I shall offer here is not an extended exegesis of these terms, but an elementary exploration of their biblical usage. Inevitably, my selectivity and particular interpretations and emphases will reflect my (relatively) liberal Protestantism, as well as my Calvinist heritage, and Korean cultural context.

1. Some Basic Biblical Terminology

The term "spirituality" is not itself a biblical term. It is rooted in the Latin spiritualitas, an abstract word related to spiritus and spiritualis, which translated the Greek noun pneuma and its adjective pneumatikos. In Pauline letters (our earliest sources of Christian teaching), "spirit" (pneuma) is opposed to "flesh" (Greek sarx, Latin caro), and "spiritual" (pneumatikos) is also contrasted with "fleshly" (Greek sarkikos, Latin carnalis - Gal. 3:3; 5:13, 16:25; 1 Cor. 3:1-3; Rom. 7:14-8:14). But "spirit" (pneuma) is contrasted neither with "body" (Greek soma, Latin corpus) nor with "matter" (Greek hyle, Latin materia). For Paul, the "pneumatic" or "spiritual" person is one whose whole being and life are led or influenced by the "Spirit of God" (Greek Pneuma Theou, Latin Spiritus Dei - 1 Cor. 2:12, 14), whereas, the "sarkik" or "fleshly" person is
one who dwells in opposition to the Spirit of God. Accordingly, when considered biblically, this contrast emerges between two ways of life or two attitudes to life. In this regard, as Sandra Schneiders points out, "the word 'spirituality' has its origin in Christian usage and its root reference is to the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit." In other words, it refers to a life according to the Holy Spirit.

Here we should note first some of the key concepts in the New Testament about Christian life "in Christ" and "in the Spirit." According to the synoptic gospels, Jesus explicitly proclaimed that God was drawing near to us in a dramatically new way, namely, the Kingdom or Reign (Basileia) of God: "the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk. 1:15). The power and Reign of God breaks through in Jesus' words (Mk 4:14, Lk. 12:32) and in his healing works (Lk. 11:20, Mt. 12:28). Its foundations had already been laid in the covenant relationship between God and Israel attested in the Old Testament; that is, Yahweh liberated His people from slavery and called them to be a holy people of justice and freedom. That "Kingdom" (Basileia) is not only a personal or individual but a communal and social term. It has to do with human social relationships. The Kingdom of God is the Reign of justice, peace and love, which Jesus preaches and which is embodied in his life, death and resurrection. Jesus teaches that the Kingdom is precious above all things: "The Kingdom is like treasure hidden in a field" (Mt. 13:44). It is to be sought above all things: "the Kingdom is like a merchant looking for fine pearls" (Mt. 13:45). Jesus' disciples are to be stewards of the Kingdom, helping it to grow: "it is like a mustard seed...like yeast" (Lk.

---


13:18-21). The Kingdom also belongs to a little child with humility and simplicity: "anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it" (Lk. 18:17).

Similar and related concepts are "new birth in the Spirit" (Jn. 3:1-8) and "new creation in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:17). For St. John, it means that God lives in us because God lives in Christ (Jn. 17:23). The love of God for Christ lives in us, because Christ lives in us (Jn. 17:26). Indeed, the Spirit cannot be given until the resurrection and glorification of Jesus (Jn. 7:39, 16:7), and the first thing the Lord does when he appears to the disciples afterwards is to breathe the Holy Spirit upon them (Jn. 20:19-23). St. Paul also says that it is through the death and resurrection of Jesus that we are liberated from sin and for new life (Rom. 6:3-11). Jesus was raised from the dead so that we might bear fruit for God (Rom. 7:4). Therefore, Christian life or spirituality has to do essentially with our union with God in Christ through the Holy Spirit, which is already life in the Kingdom of God and already a share in "eternal life." In this sense, Christian spiritual life is a profound transformation. a metanoia (turn around).

2. The Term "Spirituality" in Historic Christian Usage

Here we shall briefly glimpse the long and complex history of the use of the term "spirituality." The term "spirituality" in Christian history, as first evidenced by St. Jerome in the

---

fifth century - "so act as to advance in spirituality" (*ut in spiritualitate proficias*), referred to the Pauline sense of life according to the Spirit of God, and this use was continued in subsequent centuries. From approximately the fifth century, a "mystical theology" aimed to provide a context for the direct apprehension of God who is revealed in Christ and within us as the Spirit. It refers mainly to the personal life of Christians who believe in God as revealed in Christ. The mystery of Christ is expressed in the liturgy of the Church as well as in personal Christian life.

In the twelfth century the term *spiritualitas* shifted even further from its biblical roots in that it began to be used in contrast to *corporalitas* or *materialitas*, because of the emergence of scholasticism that led to a sharp distinction between spirit and matter. This shift was already visible earlier, namely in Augustine (influenced by neo-Platonism, 4th - 5th centuries). Later, it was the influence of new philosophical, especially Aristotelian developments in theology which designated humans as intellectual creatures in contrast to non-rational creation. Thus the term lost its biblical sense of earlier centuries and took on a meaning more radically opposed to corporeality. This new philosophical meaning, as Walter Principe says, "prepared for a later widespread view that confused spirituality with disdain for the body and matter,"\(^{18}\) although it did not replace the biblical view completely. Until the twelfth century, a "mystical theology" continued to appear in collections of homilies or scriptural and patristic commentaries, but there were some exceptional writings that were associated with "religious" life, particularly with the new monastic life.

In the thirteenth century the philosophical meaning stood side by side with older religious meanings. For example, Thomas Aquinas used both the Pauline and the anti-material senses.

---

In his great work, *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas put most of what he had to say about the Christian life in Part II, and thus set spiritual theology or spirituality as a subdivision of moral theology.\(^9\) This situation has remained until very recent times. Sheldrake summarizes this period, from the twelfth century onwards, as a process of development in the approach to the spiritual life which may be characterized as one of separation and division.\(^{10}\) Consequently, by the end of the Middle Ages, the 'spiritual life' had increasingly moved to a marginal position in relation to culture as a whole. However, in this time a third juridical meaning appeared and, in fact, from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, this was the most frequent usage, while the philosophical and theological meanings were seldom used in this period. However, as Principe says, "persons exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction were called the *spiritualitas*, or 'lords spiritual,' as opposed to those exercising civil jurisdiction, the *temporalitas*, or 'lords temporal'; next, ecclesiastical property came to be called *spiritualitas*, and the property of the civil ruler *temporalitas.*"\(^{21}\) This historic separation and division is precisely (as argued in this thesis) what needs to be corrected by a "historic" spirituality.

---

\(^9\) Principe quotes Roberto Busa's computerized concordance of Thomas Aquinas' writings: "the word *spiritualitas* occurs about seventy times (by comparison with the word *spiritualis*, which is found some five thousand times). In the majority of Thomas' texts *spiritualitas* is related to the Pauline notion of life according to the Holy Spirit or life according to what is highest in the human person; in a good number of texts, however, it is set in opposition to corporeity or to matter." (Walter Principe, "Toward Defining Spirituality," 131.)

\(^{10}\) Philip Sheldrake, 44. ['"There was, first of all, a division of spirituality from theology, of affectivity from knowledge. Secondly, there was a gradual limitation of interest to interiority or subjective spiritual experience. In other words, spirituality became separated from social praxis and ethics. And finally, although it has been touched upon only indirectly, there was a separation of spirituality from liturgy, the personal from the communal, expressed most graphically by a new attention to the structures of personal prayer and meditation."']

However, the Protestants of the sixteenth century did not use the term. In the seventeenth century the term "spirituality" had a distinct religious meaning again in France among Catholics. In a positive sense, it referred to the interior life, devout life, or spiritual life, especially a personal and affective relationship with God. In a negative sense, however, it was sometimes used in contrast to the term "devotion" which placed a proper emphasis on human effort in the spiritual life. Nevertheless, generally, the term "spirituality" was used to denote everything that pertained to the interior life, especially to the quest for "perfection" above and beyond the requirements of ordinary Christian life. But the distinction between the ordinary Christian life and the life of perfection raised a lively debate in the eighteenth century. In Schneiders' terms, it was "the debate on the continuity or discontinuity between the life of ordinary virtue and the mystical life." In fact, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many words about spirituality were used to express life in the Spirit: for example, "devotion," "perfection," and "piety." In a word, this period was the "golden age" of the term "spirituality."

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries mainly confined the term to free religious groupings outside the mainline Churches and produced the academic discipline of spirituality in the formal sense, because the intense interest in the life of perfection developed the spiritual life in the preceding century. It was called "spiritual theology," or "the science of the life of perfection." This was classically divided into "ascetical theology," which studied the life of perfection up to the beginning of passive mystical experience, and "mystical theology," which examined that life from the beginning of infused contemplation to its climax in the union with God possible outside of the beatific vision. In fact, as Sheldrake indicates, "the approach of the

---

22 Sandra Schneiders, "Theology and Spirituality," 259.
manuals of ascetical and mystical theology was to seek to reduce the study of the Christian life to manageable categories, precise distinctions and reliable definitions. In general, this study accorded with the static approach to theology which had applied during the period up to the Second Vatican Council. In other words, in this time, spiritual theology was in practice subordinate to "dogmatic theology" and was frequently regarded as a subdivision of "moral theology."

In the early decades of the twentieth century the term "spirituality" once again was used among Roman Catholics in France and then it was translated into English. The use of the term was closely associated with the debate about the nature of the spiritual life in itself. In general, people who believed in a continuity between ordinary and extraordinary or mystical dimensions of Christian life preferred the term "spirituality," because it is comprehensive. The use of the term grew surprisingly among both Catholics and Protestants in the twentieth century, with attempts to study the spiritual life, as well as a new emphasis on religious consciousness and the importance of Christian experiences in various socio-economic and religio-cultural contexts. This convergence was partly the result of the post-Vatican II ecumenical movement.

More recently, the term "spirituality" has been studied as "an academic discipline." One of the most serious analyses for spirituality as a distinct discipline was argued by Sandra Schneiders, who has elaborated the methods and criteria of judgement for such a discipline. For her, "spirituality is the field of study which attempts to investigate in an interdisciplinary way the

---

23 Philip Sheldrake. 45.
spiritual experience as such, i.e., as spiritual and as experience." Further, she describes four characteristics that distinguish the discipline of spirituality from related fields of study. First, it is essentially an "interdisciplinary discipline." Christian spirituality includes at least biblical studies, history, theology, psychology, and comparative religion. Second, it is "a descriptive-critical rather than prescriptive-normative discipline," that is, it is not the practical application of theoretical principles, theological or other, to concrete life experience. It is the critical study of such experience. Third, it is "ecumenical, interreligious, and cross-cultural." The context for the study of spiritual experience is anthropologically inclusive, since Christianity is not presumed to exhaust or include the whole of religious reality. Fourth, it is "a holistic discipline" in that its inquiry into human spiritual experience is not limited to explorations of the explicitly religious, i.e. the so-called "interior life."

To summarize these analyses more succinctly, Joann Wolski Conn notes five distinctive trends in recent studies of spirituality: "sustained attention to feminist issues, concern for the link between prayer and social justice, reliance on classical sources for answers to current questions, recognition of the value of developmental psychology and its understanding of the 'self,' and

---


25 Walter Principe has a different view of the pluralistic approach to spirituality. Rather than conceive of the discipline of spirituality as itself interdisciplinary, he takes spirituality as unitary subject matter, which is then studied historically (history of spirituality), theologically (spiritual theology), in terms of its cultural setting (sociology of spirituality), etc. [See, "Toward Defining Spirituality," 139-140.]

26 Sandra Schneiders, 693.
agreement that experience is the most appropriate starting point.\textsuperscript{27}

This trend in the recent study of spirituality eventually became a major shift toward more serious reflection on human experience in its cultural context, and gained considerable ecumenical acceptance. As Sheldrake points out, this trend provoked "a movement away from a static approach to the Christian life, embodied in an analytical and abstract spiritual theology, and towards a more dynamic and inclusive concept, namely spirituality."\textsuperscript{28} More succinctly, Sheldrake examines the differences between spirituality that has emerged in the recent decades within western Christianity and the spiritual theology of previous times.

Firstly it is not exclusive - certainly not associated exclusively with any one Christian tradition, nor even necessarily with Christianity as a whole. Secondly, while if anything more, rather than less, associated with solid theology than in the recent past, it is not simply the prescriptive application of absolute or dogmatic principles to life. Thirdly, it does not so much concern itself with defining perfection as with surveying the complex mystery of human growth in the context of a living relationship with the Absolute. Finally, it is not limited to a concern with the interior life but seeks an integration of all aspects of human life and experience.\textsuperscript{29}

Especially, for our purpose, it is very important to note that the final characteristic, which underlines the importance of issues of life-style, because Christian spirituality is not about some other kind of life, but about the whole of human life at depth. This is intimately related to the concept of a holistic Christian spirituality which I shall discuss later. A holistic spirituality is generally a religious outlook and regimen that emphasizes the connections among a person's various interests, problems, and responsibilities.

\textsuperscript{27} Joann Wolski Conn, \textit{Spirituality and Personal Maturity}, 31.

\textsuperscript{28} Philip Sheldrake, 49.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 50.
3. Toward a Definition

In this section I shall examine some definitions and descriptions of Christian spirituality proposed by contemporary scholars. Drawing upon their insights, I shall propose what I believe to be a more adequate holistic definition, which will inform the rest of the thesis.

A very general, philosophical concept is offered by Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar: "Spirituality is the basic practical or existential attitude of man which is the consequence and expression of the way in which [an individual] acts and reacts habitually throughout his life according to his objective and ultimate insights and decisions." The strength of this definition lies in its completeness, but at the same time its weakness is that it is too general and not specifically Christian. Edward Kinerk chooses to view any spirituality primarily from the standpoint of expressions of the authentic and the inauthentic. Thus, he also explains spirituality by using these philosophical and psychological notions: "A spirituality, then, is the expression of a dialectical personal growth from the inauthentic to the authentic." Here it is important that he summarized the definition as three ingredients: "expression, dialectical personal growth, and authentic - inauthentic."

From the French Catholic tradition, however, Louis Bouyer sees spirituality as "the


psychological or experiential counterpart of dogma." Bouyer differed substantially from the older manuals in recognizing developments in liturgical theology and biblical study and in his impatience with a multitude of classifications and distinctions. He was also more open to the spirituality of traditions other than the Roman Catholic one. Here Eugene Megyer points out that Bouyer's approach formed an important bridge between the constraints of a narrow neo-scholastic theological approach to spirituality and a more scriptural, liturgical and ecumenical approach after Vatican II.  

There are many definitions from theological perspectives. Above all, Jordan Aumann gives a more theological and very specifically Christian definition:

Christian spirituality therefore is a participation in the mystery of Christ through the interior life of grace, actuated by faith, charity, and the other Christian virtues. The life that the individual receives through participation in Christ is the same life that animated the God-man. the life that the Incarnate Word shares with the Father and the Holy Spirit: it is, therefore, the life of God in the augst mystery of the Trinity. Through Christ, the spiritual life of the Christian is eminently Trinitarian.  

A similar theological understanding is described by Sandra Schneiders: "Christian spirituality, then, is personal participation in the mystery of Christ begun in faith, sealed by baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, nourished by sharing in the Lord's Supper. which the community celebrated regularly in memory of him who was truly present wherever his followers

---


34 Jordan Aumann, Spiritual Theology (London: Sheed and Ward, 1980), 18
Christian spirituality is the cultivation of a style of life consistent with the presence of the Spirit of the Risen Christ within us and with our status as members of the Body of Christ. Christian spirituality has to do with our way of being Christian, in response to the call of God, issued through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Christian spirituality, therefore, is trinitarian, Christological, ecclesiological, and pneumatological. It is rooted in the life of the triune God, focused on Jesus Christ, situated in the Church, and ever responsive to the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{36}

According to him, spirituality has to do with our experience of God and with the transformation of our consciousness and our lives as outcomes of that experience. Since God is in principle available to everyone, spirituality is not exclusively Christian. For him, however, Christian spirituality is life in the Holy Spirit, who incorporates the Christian into the Body of Jesus Christ, through whom the Christian has access to God the Creator in a life of faith, hope, love and service. It is "visionary, sacramental, relational, and transformational."\textsuperscript{37}

At this point, the prominent Protestant theologian Jurgen Moltmann agrees with McBrien. Moltmann declares that "Literally, spirituality means life in God's Spirit and a living relationship with God's Spirit. Talk about Eastern or African spirituality unfortunately blurs this precise sense of the word and reduces it again to 'religiousness'. In a strict Christian sense, the word has to


\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 1058.
mean what Paul called the new life "en pneumati."  

The editors of *The Study of Spirituality* also identify Christian spirituality as "a search for meaning and significance by contemplation and reflection on the totality of human experiences in relation to the whole world which is experienced and also to the life which is lived and may mature as that search proceeds." While this is not specifically a Christian definition, it represents a turning point in the notion of spirituality in that it relates the term to the whole of life. Bernard McGinn, one of the editors of *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*, clarifies the point:

Christian spirituality is the lived experience of Christian belief in both its general and more specialized forms... It is not the actual lived experience itself, but reflection upon the historical manifestations of this experience. Spirituality both as lived experience and as reflections on that experience is a more inclusive term than either the traditional Roman Catholic asceticism or mysticism.  

As well, Don E. Saliers emphasizes that a distinctive Christian spirituality focuses on God's self-giving in Christ, animated by the Holy Spirit, and puts it: "Spirituality refers to a lived experience and a disciplined life of prayer and action, but it cannot be conceived apart from the specific theological beliefs that are ingredients in the forms of life that manifest authentic Christian faith."  


40 Bernard McGinn, John Meyendorff, and Jean Leclercq, xv-xvi.

41 Don E. Saliers, "Spirituality," in Donald Musser and Joseph Price, eds. *A New* (continued...)
An important distinctive approach to the definition of Christian spirituality is proposed by liberation theologians. This approach is also of particular relevance to a Christian spirituality for Korea, because of its history of poverty and oppression. From the perspective of lived experience, the El Salvadoran theologian Jon Sobrino presupposes that spirituality is simply the spirit of a subject in its relationship with the whole of reality. This presupposition implies spirituality as an approach to and an encounter with God in history; namely, spirituality as the totality of the Christian and historical life; more specifically, spirituality as encounter with the Lord in the poor; spirituality as experience of God through liberation. The spirituality that Sobrino here describes has two characteristics that, in dialectical unity, shape the human being's approach to God: acquiring a kinship with God and journeying toward God through solidarity with the poor.

The best known liberation theologian, Gustavo Gutierrez presents spirituality as a synthesis of the Christian life, and as standing in essential relationship with liberation. Gutierrez clearly demonstrates the impossibility of genuine Christian spirituality without struggling for political, socio-economic liberation. For him, a Christian is defined as a follower of Jesus, and the following of Jesus is the totality of the Christian life. Following Jesus implies the option for the poor. At the same time, it is the process of achieving the realization of the Christian life, which includes political struggle. With these two aspects, totality and process, Gutierrez defines

---

41(...continued)

spirituality as "a journey according to the Spirit of Christ." Also, another liberation theologian, Segundo Galilea speaks of liberation spirituality.

It is an attempt to answer the crucial question of how to evangelize, how to transmit the Christian experience in a society dehumanized by injustice. It is an attempt to preach the gospel in a way that frees people, and to preach the coming of the kingdom and the human growth of the poor and oppressed. And in the process it generates those Christian attitudes, motivations and values which permit Christians to cope with this synthesis and these challenges. These values, attitudes and motivations are what we call spirituality.44

On the other hand, Asian theologians of liberation believe that Asia provides rich resources for a liberation spirituality, namely, Asia's myths and legends, poetry and drama, its symbols, philosophical writings and religious texts. According to them, spirituality is a dynamic quality of life that involves the world and creation, but ultimately comes from a divine source. Thus, they propose that "a spirituality of liberation is a dynamic energy that frees persons, as individuals and as community, to attain a quality of life that endures, and to experience and enjoy the unity and expansiveness of the universe."45 This signifies that the Asian spiritualities of liberation tend to be both immanent and transcendent, inward and outward, personal and social.

More specifically, the Sri Lankan Jesuit, Aloysius Pieris laid the basis for an Asian spirituality of liberation by showing that such a spirituality must be integrated with solidarity with the poor, as the agents of God's liberation from forced poverty. He sees that only by locating itself in the lived connection between personal and social liberation can Christianity

43 See Gustavo Gutierrez, We Drink from Our Own Wells (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984), 59, 73, 85.


become a life-giving witness in and for Asian people, who are the majority of the world's poor. According to him, "a Christian is a person who has made an irrevocable option to follow Jesus; this option necessarily coincides with the option to be poor; but the 'option to be poor' becomes a true 'following of Jesus' only to the extent that it is also an option for the poor. Christian spirituality, therefore, is a coincidence of all these options. For both Jesus and his followers, spirituality is not merely a struggle to be poor but equally a struggle for the poor." From a similar perspective, Korean minjung theologian, David Kwang-sun Suh speaks of Christian spirituality of liberation in the minjung tradition of Korea. He says, "Minjung spirituality is the crying and moaning of the han-ridden spirits of the people, the poor, and the oppressed to God. It is thus a liberating spirituality; it is a crying out for liberation and a struggle for liberation from the han creating political oppression and economic exploitation." Finally, all forms of liberation spirituality reproduce and renew the essential values of any genuine Christian spirituality. Those are the paramount values of love, prayer, contemplation, asceticism and self-denial, a predilection for the poor and needy ones, fraternal charity, spiritual nourishment by the Word and Sacraments. In this regard, the American Protestant liberationist, Robert M. Brown recently established the relationship between spirituality and liberation as a synthesis, a new vision of Christian wholeness. "Spirituality is basic to the religious life, but it


47 David Kwang-sun Suh, "Liberating Spirituality in the Korean Minjung Tradition," in _Asian Christian Spirituality_, 33-34. [The Korean term, "minjung" is the politically oppressed, economically exploited, socially alienated, culturally despised, or religiously condemned; "han" is also a Korean term, which means a psychosomatic pain, sorrow, bitterness, resentment, affliction, or anger. I will examine these terms more theologically in the subsequent chapter.]
can be enriched by the contribution of liberation. Liberation is also basic to the religious life, but it can be enriched by the contribution of spirituality." So, liberation spirituality deals with the Christian life in its totality, life in the trinitarian reality of God in a historical manner. That is to say, this spirituality does not involve a choice between action and contemplation, but an integration of both.

Drawing upon the insights of these theologians, we can say that Christian spirituality, at its best, is not about some special, esoteric kind of life, but about the whole of Christian life at depth. Christian spirituality, being rooted in the Scripture, is a conscious relationship with God, in Jesus Christ, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and in the context of the community of believers. It is a lived experience and a reflection of that experience in history through practical liberative activity. It is explicitly trinitarian, Christological, ecclesial, visionary/prophetic, liberative, and transformational. It is both personal and social. In short, it is holistic.

4. Types of Christian Spirituality

In this section I shall briefly discuss definable types of Christian spirituality. There are many ways of categorizing and classifying types of spirituality. One can speak of apophatic and cataphatic ways, Protestant and Catholic divisions, distinctions according to theological views, and "schools" which are commonly divided by institutional expressions (e.g. Benedictine or Franciscan) as well as periods (e.g. the seventeenth century French school). I cannot possibly

---

discuss all of these types and distinctions here. However I shall focus upon those distinctions which can help to clarify the meaning of spirituality for the purpose of this thesis. Most of our discussion here will attend to the long history of western Christian spirituality, which (together with Asian religions) has been inherited by Korean Christians.

(1) Apophatic and Cataphatic Ways

In describing spiritual ways, the terms *apophatic* and *cataphatic* are often used. This distinction particularly refers to our thinking (later in the thesis) about Asian, especially Korean, spiritualities. The former mainly emphasizes silence, darkness, passivity, and the absence of imagery, namely *via negativa*, a negative way toward God. By contrast, the latter stresses the way of images and the positive evaluation of divine creation or of human relationships with God, *via positiva*, a positive way toward God.

In using both terms, western writers, whether medieval or modern, have usually connected with the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius in the late fifth or early sixth century, the writings which installed western medieval mystical theology. In his writings Pseudo-Dionysius spoke of both cataphatic and apophatic ways of spirituality, although he primarily emphasized the apophatic

way. According to him, the *cataphatic* way is affirmative about what we know of God, while the *apophatic* way reflects the fact that in the presence of God we are reduced to silence; it is a "process of negation" whereby what we affirm must ultimately be denied. So, it is important to realize that Pseudo-Dionysius' theology is "not connected with subjective religious experience but with how we praise God, our response to the love of God made manifest."

The *cataphatic* way provides the essential *affirmation*, while through denial (the *apophatic* way) we find the path to a deeper knowledge of God. In other words, the *cataphatic* way concerns God's movement towards us or self-manifestation in the world as well as in Scripture and liturgy, whereas, the *apophatic* way refers to a return of all things into the One, namely, our movement inwards to God which manifests itself in a process of denial.

In the spiritual tradition of the West, Pseudo-Dionysius' influence was remarkable even in the twelfth century which saw the beginning of a blossoming of spiritual thought and practice. The notable figures were Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141), Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173), and Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153). Subsequently, in the thirteenth century *apophatic* and mystical Dionysian influences are to be seen in the great Francis of Assisi (1181/2-1226) and St. Bonaventure (1217-1274), the Dominican theologian Albert the Great (1200-1280) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274); in the fourteenth and fifteenth century the Northern mystics Meister Eckhart (1260?-1328?), John Tauler (1300?-1361), Jan van Ruysbroeck (1293-1381) and Julian of Norwich (1353-1416?), and also Thomas a Kempis (1380-1471) and the unknown author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*; and in the sixteenth century the Catholic spiritual writers Ignatius of Loyola (1491?-1556), Mother Teresa of Jesus (1515-1582) and John of the Cross (1542-1591).

---

50 Philip Sheldrake, 192.
Some of these manifest a notable balance of *apophatic* and *cataphatic* ways.

Here we need to keep in mind that, after the twelfth century, a unified vision of human knowledge began to distinguish "heart" (the affective) from "head" (the intellectual). An example of "heart" spirituality is Bernard of Clairvaux, who loved the images from Song of Songs relating to marriage to Christ the Bridegroom, and who leaned in a somewhat more *cataphatic* direction. Until the twelfth century, western Christian spirituality emphasized the risen Lord or eternal Logos rather than the humanity of Jesus. In other words, it tended to "support a spirituality which sought ultimately to move upwards from the level of creatures rather than to be engaged in the historical and material." However, in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries Francis of Assisi and Bonaventure were concerned about the humanity of Christ and a Christ-centred visionary mysticism, which may be called "a mysticism of the historical event." It contrasted with a-historical and world-transcending emphases, by concentrating on the historical, the concrete and the human. Julian of Norwich in the fourteenth century also placed more emphasis on the concrete and human in our relationship with God. This kind of spirituality mainly emphasizes "imitation of Christ," later associated especially with Thomas a Kempis. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus in the sixteenth century, especially developed this ideal of imitation further by focusing on Jesus' ministry and mission. As a result, this spirituality focused more on the generosity of God, or the immanence of God in creation and in all human experiences and may be characterized as relatively *cataphatic*. Sheldrake points out, "the current spirituality to which this gave birth tended to be rooted in an attention to the Jesus of history as well as an appreciation of God's self-revelation and gift of divine life in and through the created

---

51 Ibid., 196.
The most outstanding examples of the more apophatic way are the Dominican theologian Meister Eckhart and John Tauler, who eventually leaned toward a rejection of "knowledge" of God. They emphasized via negativa, the negative way, and described union with God in terms of detachment wherein a person is no longer occupied with material things, namely, the entrance into a kind of divine darkness. Their negation of images of God focused on a more world-transcending dimension. The highlight of this dimension was The Cloud of Unknowing. It offered a mystical theology of darkness and unknowing in which a contemplative or higher way of life comes to be reached by withdrawal, or the negation of images. The Cloud of Unknowing linked this movement from images to darkness to a distinction between the actual life, which is lower, and the contemplative life, which is higher. Higher contemplation is entirely in darkness and the cloud of unknowing. Sheldrake quotes from the Cloud of Unknowing: "the higher consists of good spiritual meditations and earnest consideration of a man's own wretched state with sorrow and compassion, and of the wonderful gifts, kindness, and works of God in all his creatures, corporeal and spiritual with thanksgiving and praise."  

---

52 Ibid., 196.

53 Near the end of Eckhart's life some of his Franciscan enemies brought charges against him, and a number of his statements were condemned as heretical. He was accused of heresies related to Neo-Platonism: "pantheism" (the view that God is the world and the world is God), making no distinction between God and the soul in mystical union, and the denial of God's freedom in creation. The validity of these condemnations is still hotly debated by the adherents of "creation spirituality." [See Bradley P. Holt, Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Spirituality, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1993), 62]

54 Ibid., 195. [At the same time, the great Flemish mystic, Jan van Ruysbroeck uses and modifies the traditional three stages, moving from the lower to the higher, in his The Spiritual (continued...)
But, in fact, we are always involved in both cataphatic and apophatic ways. These ways can never be separated from each other. This is essentially a paradox: all the creation reveals God but at the same time no one has ever seen God. More properly, these are two sides of the same coin whereby the cycle of God's outpouring into creation and the return of all into the One demand both an affirmation of the meaningfulness of symbols and at the same time a destruction of all symbols for the naked knowledge of unknowing. God is both unknowable and inexhaustible. We believe that this unknowable and inexhaustible God has been revealed to us in Jesus Christ. That is to say, these two spiritual ways belong together in Christ.

According to Alan Jones, "it cannot be overemphasized that they are complementary: negation and affirmation are like the negative and positive poles of a fully charged battery. While one side says 'yes' to images, ideas, metaphors, the other side says 'no' or is silent. This dialectic is vital for the transmission of life and energy. Without one or other of the poles there is death." Also, Morton Kelsey describes.

\[\ldots\ldots\text{two different ways of leading people on the spiritual pilgrimage, which have often been seen as opposed to each other. The first is the sacramental method, in which we try to mediate the divine through images, pictures, symbols and rituals. Often this results in confusing the image with the reality and can lead to idolatry....The second way is based on the idea that we can best find the divine through emptying ourselves of all images and contents. This point of view stresses the fact that all descriptions and pictures of the holy are inadequate... This point of view gives few methods of handling direct confrontation with the evil within us and in the world around us...these two approaches cannot be}\]

\[\text{54}(\ldots\text{continued})\]

Espousals. The first 'actual life' is for beginners and consists of 'union with God by intermediary'; the second 'interior life' is higher and more inward and union with God is 'without intermediary'; the third 'contemplative life' is the highest point and union is 'without distinction.' For him, each stage is indispensable.]

separated from one another.  

As we shall see, this history of cataphatic and apophatic ways in western Christian spirituality is relevant to our later deliberations upon Asian (Korean) Christian spirituality.

(2) Types of Christian Spirituality according to Theological Views

Traditionally, there have been clear distinctions between Protestant and Catholic notions of spirituality in the Christian traditions, and some writers have consequently adopted this distinction as an explicit typology. The most significant distinction between Protestant and Catholic spiritualities is especially in relation to the doctrines of grace and works, different emphases on word and sacrament, and sharp divergences concerning ecclesiology. Thus, in fact, some Protestants reject the use of the term "spirituality," and prefer terms such as Godliness, piety, holiness of life or the devout life, because, as Jill Raitt points out, "these seemed less tainted than 'spirituality' with the erroneous doctrine of works-righteousness." Consequently, to some Protestants, the term spirituality carries theological and anthropological implications that are antithetical to classical Protestant premises. According to Tiina Allik, the classical Protestant premises are basically as follows:

(1) justification by faith: Salvation is not by works but by faith. Because the Christian life is not something that earns God's favor, there can be no first- and second- class Christians or degrees of spirituality. (2) The sanctity of secular callings: All believers are priests

---


before God. Spirituality or the Christian life is the birthright of all believers. Each individual has direct access to God and is not dependent on the Church, priests, or the sacraments for salvation. Clerics and religious are not more spiritual than lay people and do not have a head start toward salvation. (3) The goodness of all of created reality: The goodness of creation implies that all aspects of human life are basically good and potentially redeemable. Nonmaterial aspects of human existence are not to be understood as essentially religious or as bringing one closer to God. Thus the Christian life is not merely a matter of developing the spirit, if spirit is understood as the nonmaterial aspects of human existence, as it usually is.  

However, this situation has substantially changed. With Lutheran theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg, who suggested that every major historical type of spirituality must imply a complete interpretation of the world. Protestants recently began to be concerned with spirituality, because "it sought to articulate the human-divine relationship and to work out concrete ways in which it might be expressed." But Protestants have continued to reject what they see as "dualism" in much Catholic spirituality, by which the highest kind of spirituality is to be found in religious communities, while a lesser adaptation of this way of life is found in the rest of the Church. The highest spirituality was usually thought to require a total concentration on God, which necessitated detachment from worldly concerns.


60 Philip Sheldrake contends that there is some justification for the criticism of a dualism or a double standard in Catholic spirituality. According to him, "first of all, such a double standard was rejected by Vatican II's teaching on the single call to holiness and secondly, developments in the theory and practice of Catholic religious life indicate that neither a works-righteousness nor a double standard of spirituality is necessarily implied by the presence of religious life in the Christian community." [Philip Sheldrake, 199-200. About such a distinction, also see, Henry Rack, 20th Century Spirituality (London: Lutterworth Press, 1969), chapter 3.]
The most significant distinction between Protestant and Catholic spiritualities lies in Word and sacrament, namely, the individual and congregation as hearer of the Word as opposed to focus on the sacramental life. This distinction was especially suggested by the Swiss biblical scholar, Franz Leenhardt. In *Two Biblical Faiths: Protestant and Catholic*, he tries to distinguish a Protestant spirituality from a Catholic one. He identifies Protestant and Catholic spiritualities with two strands of the biblical tradition which he labels "Abrahamic" and "Mosaic."61

The Abrahamic/Protestant strand of tradition is traced from Abraham through the prophets of Israel to Paul and the reformers. The Mosaic/Catholic strand is traced from Moses through the priesthood of Israel to Peter and the papacy. For Leenhardt, "the word" is a symbol of Protestant spirituality and the "burning bush" represents Catholic spirituality. The Abrahamic spirituality is one in which persons hear the call of the word of God, break with their past through repentance, and move on in hope toward the eschatological kingdom. By contrast, Mosaic spirituality is one in which the gospel is mediated through concrete, sacramental instruments, and is expressed in brotherly love in community. But in fact the sacraments fulfill and apply what the word of the gospel proclaims. In other words, ethical purity flows from the same source as ritual purity. Undoubtedly, then, many Protestants will see something of their own spirituality in the Mosaic strand, and many Catholics shall identify themselves with Abraham, Paul and the prophets. As Frank C. Senn points out, therefore, Leenhardt's view "may be criticized not only for forcing certain historical personalities into preconceived molds, but also from the standpoint

---

of biblical scholarship." However, his contribution is that he has firmly dealt with both Protestant and Catholic spiritualities within the biblical tradition, and admitted that God's presence is ultimately elusive.

Surely, the typological distinction between Protestant and Catholic spiritualities has its limitations. Yet its highlight is in the importance of theological assumptions. Recently there have been two attempts to classify both spiritualities that adopted theological criteria. They focus on attitudes to "the world" and "history." Here I shall discuss two representative scholars: the American Roman Catholic (Jesuit), Edward Kinerk and the Methodist theologian, Geoffrey Wainwright.

Kinerk, first of all, identifies four types of spirituality according to the way in which the world and history are interpreted as "potential loci for expressions of the authentic: the world - including human society and institution - and history - especially change and conversion." Here he asks the following question: does a spirituality view the world and/or history as a positive locus for expressions of the authentic? For him, through the answer to this question, the type of spirituality can be determined: "if a spirituality is not positive toward either we call it apophatic; if it is positive toward both we call it apostolic; if it is positive toward the world but not toward history we will call it city-of-God; and if it is positive toward history but not toward the world we will call it prophetic."³⁴

---

³³ Edward Kinerk, 14.
³⁴ Ibid., 14. [Kinerk borrowed these ideas from John Macquarie's Christian Hope (New York: Seabury, 1978), 86-88. Macquarie here works out four types of Christian hope: individual vs. (continued...)
Kinerk's first type, "apophatic," says "no" to the world and history, though this does not understand the world as evil or history as meaningless. Classical expressions of this type are "mystical spiritualities" such as *The Cloud of Unknowing*, John of the Cross, and Thomas Merton. In this type the journey to the authentic is through negation of specific images or through darkness. The second type, "apostolic," says "yes" to the world and history. This type views both the world and history as the locus of self-transformation. Kinerk's classical example is Ignatius of Loyola. Spiritualities of this type are concerned about not only the conversion of individuals but also the transformation of history and world. The third type, "city of God," says "yes" to the world but "no" to history. This is characterized by the location of expressions of the authentic in one special place in the world to the exclusion of others. This place then becomes a reflection of the Kingdom of God in a privileged way. The classical expressions of this type, for Kinerk, are monasticism, which seeks to construct the Kingdom community (outer) and *The Imitation of Christ*, which finds the Kingdom in the human heart (inner). This type has probably been the norm for most Christians throughout history, and it is also a characteristic of every other type. Kinerk's final type, "prophetic," says "no" to the world but "yes" to history. In other words, this type finds expressions of the authentic in history but not in the world. This is not a spirituality of gloom, but of challenge, because prophecy interprets history and judges the world. The classical expressions of this type are martyrdom, the radical poverty of Francis of Assisi and contemporary peace spirituality or social disobedience. Especially, the radical poverty of Francis of Assisi was a judgement on the abuse of material wealth and it was a sign of hope in God who

64(...continued)

social, this worldly vs. other worldly expectations, evolutionary vs. revolutionary, and realized vs. future.]
would fulfill all promise.

On the other hand, from a Protestant perspective, Geoffrey Wainwright analyzed five types of spirituality from H. Richard Niebuhr's typology of "Christ and Culture" that was particularly concerned with social ethics. Regarding the attitudes to the world and history, Wainwright's types of spirituality are framed by eschato logical vision and the teaching of the Scriptures, that is, the balance of "now" and "not yet" in the understanding of the Kingdom of God.

Wainwright's first type is "Christ against Culture." Here the world is wicked and is in conflict with the Kingdom of God. In this type the basic attitude toward the world is renunciation and escape. This approach takes one of two directions: one emphasizes that the Kingdom is "not yet" because the world of human history is beyond redemption; the other stresses paradoxically that the Kingdom is already realized in the present. Examples of "Christ against Culture" spirituality are forced in martyrdom, primitive monasticism, and Pentecostalism. The difficulty with this world-renouncing spirituality is that it tends to simplify or underestimate the world as the object of God's love (Jon 3:16).

The second type is "Christ of Culture." This type is in contrast to the first type and has a positive view of the world. This position either completely identifies the Kingdom with the world, or in its liberal form, avoids the language of eschatology because it has no "fall." In other words, since it has no fall, there is no redemption. In general, this position is embodied with either politically conservative or liberal views. The specific examples of this type would be the

---


Imperial Christianity of the Roman Empire, the Reich Church of Nazi Germany, and Harvey Cox's "the secular city." Wainwright also adds "Puritan theocracies," which characterize society as opposed to secularizing religion, to this category. With the first type, this is seriously deficient form the eschatological viewpoint.67

The third type is "Christ above Culture." This type more accurately designates a 'synthetic' view in its attitudes to the world and history. This emphasizes positive elements in human nature and culture but recognizes the need of purification. This spirituality often bears a strongly intellectual or aesthetic character, or both. In eschatological terms, this type highly values creation as such, but adds that Christ raises the whole of creation in his redemptive work. According to Wainwright, the representatives of this attitude are generally Clement of Alexandria, Thomas Aquinas, Karl Barth and Charles Wesley as well as the aesthetic spirituality of icons and much Orthodox theology.68

The fourth type is "Christ and Culture in Paradox." This is a "dualist" type, according to Wainwright. It stands more on the world-negating side of the center, but is not so extreme as Christ against culture. This type recognizes that God reveals himself in hiddenness and hides himself in revelation: at the same time it presupposes "two Kingdoms," that is, the rule of God's left hand (God judges or at best preserves humanity against the ravages of sin) and the rule of God's right hand (God redeems and saves humanity). Spiritualities of this type are "paradoxical" and characterized by struggle and conflict. So in the eschatological sense this puts both "now" and "not yet" at the same time, and often has an apocalyptic tone. The representative examples

67 Ibid., 596-598.
68 Ibid., 598-599.
of this spirituality are Luther and, more recently in this tradition, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, with his refusal of "cheap grace."  

The final type is "Christ the Transformer of Culture" as the middle type. This type especially emphasizes transformation. That is to say, the world should be understood positively in the doctrine of creation and incarnation, and the radical corruption of humanity is not instinctive evil but the perversion of the good. Accordingly, transformation, conversion and rebirth are needed. It is more radical than 'purification' but is not a matter of 'replacement.' Spiritualities of this type insist that the death and resurrection of the incarnated Christ is the starting point for the transformation of human life and culture, and certainly suggest that the beginning of the Kingdom lies in history, through the process of dying to sin and living to God in dependence on Christ. However, this type notes that such a process is not completion and thus there is always an impulse toward a final goal with urgency. This type of spirituality includes St. Augustine, John Wesley (in general Wesleyanism), and the mendicants and the militants, the Dominicans and the Franciscans as well as the Jesuits and the Salvation Army. In addition, Wainwright places liberation theologians in Latin America such as Gustavo Gutierrez in this category.

In summary, the first two among Wainwright's five types, "Christ against Culture" and the "Christ of Culture" are essentially unbalanced and thus deficient. All of the other three types are somewhere in the middle, although the "Christ above Culture" type moves more toward the "yes" side of center and the "Christ and Culture in paradox" type is on the "no" side of center. For

---

69 Ibid., 599-602.
70 Ibid., 603-605.
Wainwright, thus, the final type, "Christ the transformer of Culture" seems to be the most balanced and favored type. But, in a sense, Wainwright seems to seek a balance between "yes" and "no" to the world and history in his favored type.

Despite beginning from a similar theological assumption, however, we can recognize here that the typologies of Kinerk and Wainwright take different approaches. For example, Kinerk's first type is not the same as Wainwright's first type. For Kinerk, the "no" to the world and history is not merely a rejection of either the world or history as evil, but rather is the mystical type par excellence. Therefore, it is rather closer to Wainwright's second type, the "paradoxical." As well, Kinerk's second type, the "yes" to the world and history, operates out of quite different assumptions than Wainwright's second type, "Christ of Culture." For Kinerk, this type is "apostolic." and its main idea is placed on "transformation." Thus it is rather related more closely to Wainwright's final type, "Christ transformer of culture." In this sense, in fact, it is difficult to fit the typologies of Kinerk and Wainwright together. However, comparison of those typologies helps us, as Sheldrake points out, "to preserve the particularity of specific spiritual traditions and to appreciate the rich plurality at the heart of Christian spirituality."\textsuperscript{71}

In conclusion, no single typology is complete or perfect, for all are based on relative values and limited perspectives.

III. What is a Christian Holistic Spirituality?

In this section I shall elucidate what is meant by a Christian holistic spirituality. Here the

\textsuperscript{71} Philip Sheldrake, 209.
term "holistic" connotes a concern for wholeness, a desire for integration, and an attempt to understand the connections between the various aspects that constitute a given reality. So a holistic spirituality stresses not a dualistic "either-or" way of life that sees things as irreconcilable opposites, but a complementary "both-and" attitude that is integrative and inclusive; it sees the struggle for wholeness as an integral part of the spiritual journey to holiness. Accordingly, a holistic Christian spirituality seeks wholeness in Jesus Christ through the Spirit of God.

1. The Meaning of Holiness

"Holiness" in the biblical literature denotes a state of being set apart for religious purposes, or being consecrated for God. The Hebrew word is qds and the Greek hagios, with both the Hebrew and the Greek having the added sense of "separation" or "consecration." Etymologically, the English word "holiness" is derived from the Old English halignes, which means "without blemish or injury." Beyond biblical faith, holiness also lies at the heart of most religions. It connotes an element of mystery and of the unknown. In Rudolf Otto's terms, it is the "Totally [Wholly] Other" and "mysterium," engendering both awe and fascination. The idea of the holy that Otto speaks of, as Eric James also describes, is "an attention to the fear, the wonder, the shock, and the amazement and astonishment which the holy may evoke." The notion of

---


holiness in its most fundamental meaning pertains to the transcendent order as opposed to the finite or the limited. If the concept of the holy pertains to what is ultimate (God/the Sacred), holiness can also be applied to relationships with the ultimate. Biblically speaking, holiness is a dependent notion deriving its meaning only in relation to God, because, as J. Sidlow Baxter expresses it, it is "moral likeness to God,"75 in the sense that God is Spirit (Jn. 4:24), light (1 Jn 1:5), and love (1 Jn 4:8). Hence, just as God is essentially spiritual, so "the first mark of holiness in any of ourselves is a corresponding spirituality in outlook, attitude, desire, and sense of values."76 This spirituality is the first prerequisite of holiness.

Needless to say, in the Bible holiness is predicated, in the first and fundamental instance, of God. In the Old Testament, for example, the ground surrounding the burning bush became "holy" because of the presence of God (Exod. 3:5). In the New Testament Jesus called the Father "holy" (Jn. 17:11). Instructed the disciples in prayer to "hallow [i.e. make holy] God's name" (Mt. 6:10, Lk. 11:2). Jesus himself is said to be holy, or "sanctified" (hagiazo) and communicates this sanctification or holiness to his disciples (Jn. 17:19). When the Bible speaks of "the Holy One." therefore, it is using, of course, a synonym for God. While holiness is a predicate peculiar to God, it becomes an extended quality by reason of proximity to God. As Lawrence Cunningham expresses, "holiness derives from God not only as a designation but as a divine quality that is shared."77


76 Ibid., 109.

77 Lawrence S. Cunningham, 480.
Christians, especially in the Pauline literature, are also called "holy." Paul addresses the faithful at Rome as those who are "called ... to be holy" (Rome. 1:7) or called to be "saints" or "sanctified." He also greets congregations as "holy ones" at the head of letters to the Corinthians (II Cor. 1:1), the Ephesians (1:1), the Philippians (1:1), and the Colossians (1:2). As a general term, the "holy ones" are those who are set apart by faith in Christ, as contrasted to those who are not believers. Therefore, as Cunningham also points out, "the word 'saint' or 'the holy one' denotes inclusion rather than exclusion: it is an extension of the Jewish concept of a people beloved and chosen by God.... Holiness is the state of those who live within the Trinitarian dynamic by which they are connected to the Father through the Son in the Spirit of God, poured out precisely to make us children of God." 78

Here we need to reflect upon the idea of holiness more theologically, because it has always played such a central role in the lives of Christians. Holiness for Christians reaches its climax in Jesus, because he revealed himself as self-giving love in his life and teachings, death and resurrection. However, the starting point for a Christian concept of holiness should always be from God, whom Jesus called "Abba." This name evidently arose out of an intimacy with God in his life. The prayer Jesus taught begins with that name (Mt. 6:9f, Lk. 11:2f), and it is on the lips of Jesus as his agony begins in Gethsemane (Mk. 14:36). The Christian calling upon God as "Abba" depends on the gifts of the Spirit (Gal. 4:4), and implies that our lives, in union with God through Christ and the Spirit, reflect the love of God for all of creation. The great Lukan parables of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37) and the Prodigal Son (15:11-32) reflect well upon

78 Ibid., 481.
that love of God. Jesus’ doctrine of love is unitary in that love of God and love of neighbour, already hollowed in the Hebrew tradition, are inseparable.

In the synoptic gospels we see that Jesus’ life is theocentric, in the sense that everything Jesus did is under the loving eye of his “Abba.” To keep that in mind is to understand Jesus’ insistence that one cannot serve God and mammon (Mt. 6:24), that God’s providence extends to the smallest detail of the world (Lk. 12:6-7), and that God provides materially for those whose trust is complete (Mt. 6:25-34). Also, in John’s gospel the theocentricity of Jesus becomes so intimate that it may involve more than mere faith: “Whatever the Father does, the Son will do also” (Jn. 5:19). In the same discourse the Son raises the dead as the Father has done (5:21), just as he judges as the Father judges (5:22). The conclusion is clear: “Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him” (5:23b). This relationship between Son and Father is so intimate that John’s gospel is characterized by a whole series of “I am...” sayings (6:35, 8:12, 10:7, 11:14, etc.). Jesus, as the Word of God made flesh (Jn. 1:14), is one with God and is himself divine.

In this biblical understanding Jesus is certainly the catalyst for a new form of living that puts us in contact with him and with Abba. In other words, Jesus is the agent of our holiness. All Christians profess that Jesus “died for our sins and was raised up for our justification.” Indeed, Paul declares that Jesus Christ is “our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption” (I Cor. 1:30). The life, death, and resurrection of Christ is not merely a memory but a living reality for all Christians down through history and in our own time. Christ’s death and resurrection is real for us today, as we recall it in baptism and remember and recreate it in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the wine. In this sense, the early Christian community
was holy precisely because it was identified with the mysteries of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ kept alive and celebrated in the community. Accordingly, Christians find in Jesus Christ the gift of holiness offered by God, and the continuing means by which we can grow in holiness, of which Christ is the model.

As I shall show in a later chapter, Calvin emphasizes that since Christ is our sanctification or holiness, we are holy “in Christ” only, and that we are holy because we are forgiven and justified by faith. That is, it is through “union with Christ” that sanctification is accomplished in us. As Calvin says, “First we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value to us.”79 For Calvin, then, the foundation of sanctification or holiness is rooted, not in humanity, but in what God has done in Christ, and for us in union with him. Certainly, we cannot acquire the righteousness that would justify us before God. Nevertheless, if we are justified, that is because we have been grafted into Christ and, in that sense, have received his righteousness. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, but this imputation is made possible only by our union with him.

However, in fact, a discussion of holiness without a consideration of the Spirit of God would not be complete, because the Spirit is in itself called "Holy" and is the source of holiness. One thing that is very clear is that the Spirit of God is the source of life itself in the Scriptures. The Spirit is akin to breath, so that when God breathed life into the human being (Gen. 2:7); that is, when God created human beings, it was the imparting of the Spirit of God - God’s own life.

John the Baptist promises a new baptism in the Holy Spirit, which will replace his baptism of water (Mk. 1:8). The Spirit is said to be the agent of "Jesus." The Spirit anoints him in his baptism, strengthens him in temptation, and empowers his ministry of healing. According to Luke, Jesus applied to himself the passage from Isaiah (61:1-2) in which "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" (Lk. 4:18). For Jesus, resistance to the Holy Spirit is more than blasphemy. It is the unforgivable sin (Lk. 12:10).

According to Acts, Jesus promises early Christians power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, a power that will permit them to witness to Jesus even to the ends of the earth (1:8). That promise is fulfilled in the Pentecost experience, when the Holy Spirit, like "a strong driving wind" and like "tongues of fire," descends on the disciples, empowering them to "speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim" (2:1-4). Paul especially regards the Spirit as "life-giver." The Spirit of God or "the Holy Spirit" or "the Spirit of Christ" is, for Paul, the dynamic power and presence of God. Thus, it is the Spirit that assures us of the right to be called children of God and to cry out "Abba" (Rom. 8:15, Gal. 4:4-6). The law of the Spirit sets us free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:1-2). The Spirit also aids us in our weakness at prayer and intercedes with "inexpressible groaning" (Rom. 8:26). For Paul, the contrast between Spirit and no-spirit, as well as holiness and unholiness, is that between Spirit and flesh. The former brings forth the gifts of the Spirit, namely, "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control," while the latter brings forth all kinds of sin (Gal. 5:22-23).

For Paul, it is the Spirit that gives coherence and meaning to the Christian community. It is only in the Spirit that one can confess "Jesus is the Lord" (1 Cor. 12:3). It is the same Spirit
that unifies the diverse gifts available to the Church (1 Cor. 12:4), while ordering them to serve the common good (1 Cor. 12:7). Finally, the assembly, though diverse in its membership, is one in Christ, for "in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). In Ephesians Paul calls this unity a "unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

To clarify the relationship of the Christ and the Spirit, the Scriptures present a triadic sense of God's presence in the individual and in the community. It already expresses such a formula as Jesus is depicted sending the disciples to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28:19). Also, according to John, Jesus promised that the Father will send the Holy Spirit so that the Church may be able both to teach and to remember "all that I told you" (Jn. 14:26). As Cunningham concludes, then, "holiness becomes a way of being with God in Christ..... It is rather a response to the demand of Jesus that we be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect."80 It is clear from a careful reading of the scriptural witness that the Spirit is holy because it is of God, and the Spirit as a gift communicates the life and holiness of God to believers, as individuals and communities.

As observed above, we understand holiness not only as a given condition but also as a call. For example, the New Testament not only calls the followers of Jesus a holy people, but it demands that they become holy. In that sense, holiness may be understood as a conversion process, that is, "a move away from that which is not God (aversion) toward that which makes us closer to God after the manner of Jesus (conversion)."81 In the traditional sense, the term

---

80 Ibid., 488.

81 Ibid., 482.
denotes the urging grace of God, while our conversion to God is a response to that prompting of grace. Holiness, then, involves both a given condition in Christ and a choice in response to an offer, and at the same time demands both individual and communal decisions within the context of faith. This idea of holiness has become much more familiar to Roman Catholics since "the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" (Lumen Gentium) of the Second Vatican Council. The fifth chapter of Lumen Gentium states that holiness is not ornamental but essential, and that holiness is not the domain of an elect or cultic group within the Church but the universal call of all Christians: "..... all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity." 82 Also, for Luther, "all Christians are priests," and all are "religious." Thus, he denied the distinction between the "religious" and the "secular" Christian. That is to say, everyone is called to the same holiness that is rooted in charity, the love of God above all things and the love of others for the sake of God. This is a "universal call to holiness," based on baptismal identification with Jesus Christ.

However, in fact, our psychological insights applied to faith have made us more aware that faith includes "stages of a development." 83 It is not a static thing given once for all at baptism or adult conversion, and fundamentally the same for every Christian. From a religious as well as a psychological standpoint, then, Philip Sheldrake simply underlines that the most dangerous

---

82 Lumen Gentium, 40.

83 See Erik Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: Norton, 1963); James W. Fowler, Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981). [In this book Fowler especially draws six stages in the development of a person's faith, which is the way of grasping basic meaning: "intuitive-projective faith; mythic-literal faith; synthetic-conventional faith; individuative-reflective faith; conjunctive faith; universalizing faith.]
spirituality is that of being in a 'state of perfection' or even conceiving of perfection as a state at all. He suggests that "holiness has a great deal to do with a realisation and acceptance of imperfection and even failure and of the need for continual conversion." In short, it is a process, a continual movement toward God. Furthermore, "In the end the core of the process is a realisation of all as gift which means that holiness cannot be identified simply with the performance of externals - holy actions or spiritual exercises to be fulfilled."

Like individuals, however, the Church also must constantly turn away from that which is not God and return to God, since it is "at the same time holy and always in need of being purified, and incessantly pursues the path of penance and renewal." In other words, the Church is not a sacred object but the assembly that holds within itself the means of holiness as it remembers, recalls, and recreates the saving mysteries of Jesus Christ in time and history. That is, the Church is not a perfectionist sect but a pilgrim people of saints and sinners, who find their model in Jesus Christ.

In summary, the call to holiness involves a call of personal conversion. It also involves secular commitment to the social dimension. In other words, the contemporary call to holiness should involve some degree of social awareness and engagement in the face of a dehumanized world. However, at the same time it is important to stress that engagement, awareness, or action without contemplation or the self-commitment of faith, is always a danger.

---


85 Ibid., 22-23.

86 *Lumen Gentium*, 8.
2. Holiness as Wholeness

In recent years, a holistic approach has diversely come forward in the fields of medicine, education, psychology and spirituality. In each field the general meaning of “holistic” denotes a concern about wholeness or integration in the various contexts. For example, holistic medicine represents the desire to keep the total person at the centre of medical attention, and linking physical and mental health. Thus holistic medicine stresses the organic unity of body and mind as well as the responsibility and control that people take for their own health, and emphasizes the importance of preventing illness through the cultivation of a well-balanced and harmonious life. Psychology also speaks of a holistic approach to human development. It stresses the importance of acknowledging and developing the various aspects that constitute the human personality. It also includes one’s bodily needs, emotions, and spiritual and religious needs. Thus, a holistic approach to human development requires that one constantly enlarges the images by which one understands himself or herself and the world. As well, a holistic approach to education attempts to foster emotional and social as well as intellectual growth. Holistic educators underscore the vital need for reintegrating thinking, feeling, and sensing in education, and emphasize an all-embracing education that integrates knowledge and personality.

What, then, does a holistic approach to spirituality mean? In a word, it includes all the connotations and nuances of the term described above. That is, like holistic medicine, a holistic spirituality respects the psychosomatic or body-spirit unity of the person; like holistic human development, a holistic spirituality includes the ongoing struggle for integration and wholeness; like holistic education, a holistic spirituality goes beyond merely intellectual disciplines to
engage the whole person in a process of personal transformation. It develops an integrated
spiritual growth, and makes a person's faith become a dynamic element affecting every
dimension of one's daily life. It includes the individual or personal and the social or political. In
the words of psychologist and theologian, Wilkie Au, "a holistic spirituality attempts to embrace
the totality of a person's existence, including one's relationship with others, with one's work, and
with the material world." In John Carmody's words, "a holistic spirituality is a religious
outlook and regimen that emphasizes the connections among a person's various interests,
problems, and responsibilities." Also, Anne Wilson defines it as "one which perceives how the
need for unity applies on every level of our lives and interactions," and then goes on: "It is an
attempt to look beyond notions of duality and see the underlying wholeness and interrelatedness
of all things. In short, it is the continuation of that prayer which Jesus himself prayed: 'May they
all be one. Father: may they be one in us as you are in me and I am in you' (Jn. 17:21)."

In a biblical understanding, the Spirit of God dwells and acts not only in such explicitly
religious activities as prayer and worship, but also in all aspects of people's lives. Hence, to view
the spiritual life holistically is to assert the truth of one's faith in the Spirit of God. Au considers
it as two central beliefs: "(1) the pursuit of holiness is in no way inimical to healthy human
growth; and (2) those who strive to be religious are not exempt from the human condition. They
must, like everyone else, work out their growth into wholeness in the context of human

87 Wilkie Au, By Way of the Heart: Toward a Holistic Christian Spirituality (New York:
struggle." From this point of view, those aspiring to be religious persons, whether as professionals or as lay people, must continue to invest for their ongoing human growth in what holistic spirituality sees as essential religious maturity.

Regarding developmental maturity, Christians who take seriously the truth of their faith in Christ should not denigrate human growth as something merely secular, something unrelated to maturity in Christian spiritual life. This is why a holistic Christian spirituality must see the struggle for Christian wholeness as an integral part of the journey to holiness. In Holiness and Wholeness, Josef Goldbrunner explicitly explains it,

[Christian ]Faith is the ability to think with Christ. It is an entering into mental communion with Him; it is a participation in the truth of God. The Christian enters into the unfolding purpose of Christ's life; it is a participation in the divine will, a self-adjustment to the divine plan... This is the slow process of Christian metamorphosis - the way of sanctification.91

Alto, he asks how to unite the whole of human nature with Christianity, how to attempt to form the holy and Christ-like life, and how to be wholly worldly and at the same time wholly devoted to God. Finally, his answer and conclusion is that it can be found only in the way of the cross of Christ. His important statement. "holiness is [spiritual] health," is resolved on the cross. That is, "through the cross of Christ, holiness and [spiritual] health become one."92

Rooted in this incarnational belief in the presence and grace of the forgiving God, holistic spirituality counters the dualism that has plagued spirituality in the Western Christian tradition

90 Wilkie Au, 18-19.


92 Ibid., 34.
over the centuries. Specifically, the dualism in traditional spirituality is a division between the sacred and the secular, this world and the other world, the individual and the social, and the spiritual and the material. But, for Christians, any spirituality that values a privatized, vertical love relationship with God at the expense of the communal, horizontal love of neighbour would be inimical to holistic spirituality. That is to say, in these loves that Jesus commanded (Mt. 22:34-40; Mk. 12:28-34; Lk. 10:25-28), holistic spirituality is concerned with helping people connect and unify the various aspects of their lives in a responsible and coherent manner. Based on this gospel of love, holistic spirituality provides a framework that can help all Christians better assess how their love-life is going. Accordingly, a holistic spirituality has the task of finding an outlook that will integrate people's lives sufficiently to give them a sense of increasing wholeness and guide them in fashioning a concrete way of living out their spirituality. By enabling Christians to forge a more vital link between their faith and their practical lives, a holistic approach to spiritual life helps them to overcome the dichotomy between the human and the holy, the secular and the sacred.

To be truly holistic, therefore, Christians, who are called to love God with their whole heart and with their whole being, and their neighbour as themselves, must strive to unify the characteristics of those biblical loves. According to Au, such characteristics are as follows: (1) it should be developmental; (2) it should be experiential; (3) it should be integrative; (4) it should

93 From the twofold commandment of love, Donald Goergen derives five distinct loves in scripture: love of God, neighborly love (diakonia), communal love (koinonia), particular love (philia), and self-love. According to him, these five loves are distinct, but in reality interact and affect each other. [see Donald Goergen, The Power of Love: Christian Spirituality and Theology (Chicago: The Thomas More Press, 1979), 21.]
be transformational. Finally, a holistic Christian spirituality calls for Christians to be faithful to the struggle of loving, to be open to change, and to trust that the guidance of the ever-present spirit of love is more important than fixed rules and techniques for their lives. True spirituality consists in walking by the light of that Spirit.

As a model for Christian wholeness in the spirit of love, Au pictures an image of a holistic Christian spirituality as Figure A. Such a spirituality is expressed as prayer, solitude, self-denial, ministry, and friendship, in balance with elements of self-love and enjoyment: humour, community, self-esteem, leisure, and generativity.

Nevertheless, a proper understanding of a holistic Christian spirituality confronts us with several paradoxes. For "the goal of wholeness as seen from the perspective of a holistic Christian

---

94 Wilkie Au, 55-56.

95 Ibid., 24.
spirituality," as Wilkie Au and Noreen Cannon indicate, "differs drastically from the popular conception," which presents a steady state of total harmony as "getting it all together."

First, wholeness brings contentment and harmony into our lives; but dealing creatively with conflict, the shadow side of wholeness, will always be part of its reality. Because this paradoxical understanding of wholeness threatens the pleasurable anticipation of harmony, it has not caught the fancy of mass culture.... Second, instead of thinking complacently that they [paradoxes] have it made, people who are whole are ever-faithful to the struggles of ongoing growth. Third, they [paradoxes] consistently put serious effort into becoming whole, while acknowledging at the same time that, left to themselves, they cannot bring it about. Wholeness comes as a gift from a Power greater than themselves. Fourth, people striving to become whole are continually open to self-transcendence. They experience themselves as always on the verge of "something more" and believe that present struggles and difficulties are the threshold to new life and growth. This belief, of course, is rooted in the central paradox of Christian faith: the paschal mystery that life comes through death. that one gains oneself by losing oneself (Mk. 8:35-36).97

A holistic Christian spirituality, then, is rooted in a belief in the all-embracing love of God. It acknowledges that God loves and accepts us by grace. The spirituality then is a holistic one in the sense that it recognizes the dynamic interrelation between our quest for holiness and our desire for wholeness. Wholeness, like holiness, is not our idea, but God's. Therefore, "the call to holiness is also a call to wholeness."98

In the New Testament Jesus proposed a way as a prominent metaphor describing the nature of the call to holiness or wholeness. Acts reported that one of the first names given to Christians was "followers of the way" (Acts 9:2). The way especially referred to those who follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ (9:2; 18:26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24: 14, 22). "To be a follower of Jesus," as

---


97 Ibid., 8-9.

98 Ibid., 2.
Au and Cannon note, "requires that we submit our lives to the paschal pattern of his life, that is, that we allow life to come from death and personal wholeness to emerge from self-transcendence." Thus, the Christian way consists in loving. The Bible reminds us that Jesus' love mirrored God's all-embracing love, because Jesus died for us all. In the process of striving to love as Jesus did, God makes us whole. Therefore, "wholeness, for Christians, is not to be sought so much in itself but will result as a kind of by-product of our earnest struggles to love."

The spiritual journey for Christians is to move away from unconscious to conscious loving.

The recent example of this holistic spiritual journey is "political holiness" as wholeness or "spirituality of liberation," produced by liberation theologians in Latin America. In Political Holiness: A Spirituality of Liberation, the authors say that the spirituality of liberation as a real spirituality consists first and foremost in "living with spirit," and cannot be reduced to outward routines or theoretical interpretations. According to them, spirituality operates at the deepest level of our humanity, where we make fundamental choices and draw our primary motivation. Thus, they define it as "an ethos, and an attitude, an energy, something we absorb into our lungs, inspiration, 'spirit.'"  

Still, they say that because its essence is following Jesus, the spirituality of liberation makes the Kingdom of God its focus, its mission, and its hope. It also seeks to be a spirituality based on Jesus' own spirit, and tries to make its primary focus following Jesus and continuing the

---

99 Ibid., 11.

100 Ibid., 12.

struggle he waged; it concentrates on what is most universal, urgent and decisive in the human
universe, namely, the situation of the poor and their plea for life, for justice, for peace, for
freedom, from domination and oppression. From this point of view, they describe wholeness
as one of the constants in the spirituality of liberation.

The spirituality of liberation treats reality as dialectical and therefore one and whole. This
means: it is not divided vertically: into natural and supernatural, material and spiritual,
secular history and sacred history; it is not divided horizontally: into this world and the
next, time and eternity, history and eschatology; it is not divided anthropologically: into
individual and society, person and community, inner and outer, private and public,
religious and political, personal conversion versus structural change; it is not
transcendentalist, but is transcendent; it is not immanentist, but does accept and live
commitment in immanence. The dimension of transcendence makes it "transparency" in
immanence: nor is it spiritualist, believing in a God without a Reign, nor materialist,
believing in a Reign without God. It lives the integrated synthesis that Jesus lived and
revealed to us: for the God of the Reign and the Reign of God.

Wholeness without dichotomies or reductions in the spirituality of liberation refers to
political holiness. In general, the development of Christian holiness always presupposes that it is
in answer to God's will, and the response to this primary will of God is a specific type of love for
persons, especially the poor. Jon Sobrino calls this love, which is both a response to God's will
and to the present suffering of humanity, the poor, "political love." He explains the specific
characteristics that differentiate it from other forms of love: "first, it requires a metanoia to see
the truth of the world; second, it requires pity for the unhealed but not unhealable suffering of the
oppressed majority, Jesus' pity for the multitude; third, it requires an awareness of responsibility
for recovering their dignity by sharing the suffering of humanity." He finally says that "this

102 Ibid., 204.
103 Ibid., 207.
104 Jon Sobrino, Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness, 81.
political love is the fundamental material of political holiness.\textsuperscript{105}

In conclusion, holiness is necessary for the poor to receive the good news, and for history to move toward the coming of the kingdom of God. Holiness as wholeness, then, is truly holistic, having to do with integrated human well-being in every dimension of personal and social existence.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 82.
CHAPTER TWO

THE FORMATION OF SPIRITUALITY IN THE SYNCRETIC KOREAN CONTEXT

The Korean religio-cultural context is richly syncretic. By “syncretic” I mean a co-habitation, convergence, and mutual influence of differing socio-cultural and religious traditions, which, nevertheless, maintain their own distinct and visible identities.

In this chapter I shall examine the syncretic spirituality of the traditional great religions and Christianity in Korean history. The goal is not to study the Korean religions themselves, but rather to describe how an identifiable “Korean spirituality” has developed syncretistically out of the ancient Korean religious traditions. For this purpose, this chapter will sketch briefly Korean history, noting the co-existence and mutual influence of the religions, and discuss the insertion of Christian spirituality into this syncretic context.

I. A Brief Sketch of Korean History

Korea has a rich history of almost 5,000 years.³ It goes back to Tangun, allegedly 2,333 B.C., the first legendary king of Korea, who set up his kingdom, known as Chosun, which meant

---

³ The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1989) defines the term “syncretic” as “attempting, especially inconsistently, to unify or reconcile differing schools of thought.”

² According to Korean historian Woo-Keun Han, "on the evidence of paleolithic artifacts, Korean archaeologists conclude that human beings had come to Korea at least by the later paleolithic age - about 30,000 years ago. By the tenth century B.C., a neolithic people of Ural-Altaic stock was established in Korea." [Woo-Keun Han, The History of Korea, trans. Kyung-Shik Lee (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1970), 4.] We have historical information going back about 5,000 years.
"morning calm." However, this period is little known since it is pre-historic or legendary. In this period the religious and spiritual life of the ancient Koreans was influenced by *Pungryudo* (the way of elegance) and Shamanism. These fundamental elements of historic Korean spirituality may be described as profoundly emotional, as we shall see later.

As most Korean historians acknowledge, there were three kingdoms in early Korean history: the *Kokuryo* Dynasty (37 A.D. - 668 A.D.) in the northern half of the Korean peninsula, the *Shilla* Dynasty (57 A.D. - 935 A.D.) in the southeastern part, and the *Paikche* Dynasty (18 B.C. - 935 A.D.) in the southwestern part. These kingdoms used a hierarchical structure, and competed in the strengthening of state power by territorial expansion. Finally, the *Shilla* Dynasty won the victory in 668, unifying the peninsula for the first time. During the united *Shilla* period, Koreans experienced the golden age of Buddhism. Buddhism in this period became not only a religious force but also a political power in the Dynasty.

When the *Koryo* (later Korea) Dynasty (935 A.D. - 1392 A.D.) succeeded the *Shilla* Dynasty, all educational and religious systems were based on the Chinese classics. The country experienced great suffering and trouble for a number of years because of many invasions and interventions from China. It was perhaps this experience of suffering that caused the people to turn to the more religious life, especially an other-worldly life. Most Buddhist temples in Korea were built in the mountains reflecting their escape from the world. The highly intellectual content of Buddhist thought also appealed to the intellect of many Koreans.

The succeeding *Yi* Dynasty (1,392 A.D. - 1910 A.D.) was established by Sung-Gye Yi, while *Koryo* was still in the power of China. Yi moved the capital to *Hanyang* (now Seoul) and called the country *Chosun*, using the original name that had come down from the days of *Tangun*. 
Politically, the country closed the door to foreigners to protect itself, since it had often experienced external invasions from the surrounding larger and more powerful countries, China, Japan, and Russia. This is part of the historical background of the persecution of Western Christianity, especially Catholicism in Korea.

The early years of the Yi Dynasty saw the decline of Buddhism and the growth of Confucianism among the intellectual classes, and the country eventually took Confucianism as a national religion or ideology. Confucianism emphasized ethical conduct in individuals and government, and maintained a high standard of education. Hierarchy and authority are emphasized in the five cardinal relationships, called O-ryun (五倫): the king, the father, the husband, the elder, and the teacher constitute "superior" poles, while the people, the son, the wife, the young, and the student are "inferior" poles. This relationship between superior and inferior poles became a fundamental element of Korean moral awareness.

Eventually, these spiritual modes of Confucianism, Buddhism and Shamanism were, to a degree, syncretized not only with each other but also with those of Korean Christianity.¹ Let us look briefly at each of these in turn.

II. The Cultural and Religious Foundations of Korean Spirituality

1. Pungryudo (풍류도) as a Pathos of Korean Spirituality

_Pungryudo_ may be seen as the basic spiritual pathos of the Korean people. It consists of three Chinese characters: Pung (the wind), Ryu (the stream) and Do (the way). Literally, it means "the stream of the wind" or "a way of the wind." But Korean dictionaries in general define this term as "elegant pursuits," "the matter of elegance," and "ancient expression of music." Its usual meaning is a lyric and natural beauty or harmony. In short, therefore, it means "the way of elegance" and expresses a perfect state of harmony in nature, art, and life. It is the principle of the unification or wholeness of life. As much, it is particularly relevant to our theme of "holiness and wholeness."

Chronologically, in the period between the tenth century B.C. and the first century A.D., _Pungryudo_ was a cultural and spiritual tradition, an attitude that underlay Korean religious life, and also transformed alien religious beliefs to make them indigenous. Tong-Shik Ryu, a Korean theologian, interprets the word _Pungryudo_, first of all, as Mot or Mut (مون), which corresponds roughly to the English word "stylish." It captures a certain sense of beauty and verve combined with freedom, harmony, and resourcefulness. Another concept is expressed as _Hahn_ (한, not to be confused with "Han," 恨 as sorrow and bitterness), which is used in connection with oneness, wholeness, absoluteness, and greatness. The final concept is _Sarm_ (삼), the word for life.

---

5 In English expression, this term _Hahn_ has usually been used as _Han_, which means sorrow, bitterness, anger, and resentment, because it has the same Korean pronunciation. In order (continued...)
which expresses both biological and social aspects of life. This is the root form for the word *Salam* which means a person or a human being. *Pungryudo* combines all of these ideas, and speaks of an elegant, graceful, and harmonious way of life. Each of these elements has a peculiar charm of its own, forming a unity. The conception of *Hahn* is included in *Mot* and *Sarm*; *Mot* is accomplished in the meeting of *Hahn* and *Sarm*; *Sarm* should possess a great elegance. So in the development of a cultural history, as Ryu observes, "that part of Korea's cultural history devoted to the pursuit of *Hahn* is its religious history; that devoted to the pursuit of *Mot* is its art history; and the Korean cultural history is its developing history of *Sarm."\(^7\)

For him, these ideas were originally derived from three thoughts of ancient Koreans: *Sinin-Yunhap* (神人联合), the union between the divine and the human, *Poham-Samkyo* (包含三教), the inclusiveness of the three religions. Shamanism, Confucianism, and Taoism, and *Chuphwa-Kunsaeng* (族群群生), the edification of the people through living among people. These thoughts eventually correspond to the dream of Korean spirituality - *Hahn, Mot* (Mot), and *Sarm*. *Hahn* is the mind of *Poham-Samkyo*; *Mot* is the mind of *Sinin-Yunhap*; and *Sarm* is the mind of

\(^5\)(...continued)

not to be confused with each other, afterward I shall distinguish the term *Hahn* from *Han*. This distinction is also used by Korean-American theologist Andrew Sung Park, who, most recently, tried to enhance the Christic community through the culture of each racial and ethnic group, especially the Korean spiritual and cultural ethos, called "Koreaness." Here Park distinguishes *Han* from *Hahn* as two types of Korean ethos: the existential ethos, *Han*, and the essential ethos, *Hahn*. [See Andrew Sung Park, *Racial Conflict and Healing: An Asian American Theological Perspective* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 107-117; About *Han*, also see *The Wounded Heart of God: Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).]


\(^7\) Ibid., 312.
From this perspective, Ryu uses a Korean idiomatic expression, "Hahn Motchin Sarm," which means "a (or one) splendid life" or "a (or one) delightful life." He thus believes that it is the ultimate goal of Koreans' lives. He sees that the Korean Hahn ("a" or "one" in English) has diverse meanings. First, it connotes Oneness, which is equivalent to absoluteness or transcendence. Second, it connotes supreme, which is equivalent to greatness and royalty. Third, it signifies the sky or the heaven. By personifying the sky, thus, Koreans name God (the Ultimate Reality) "Hahnanim" or "Hahnynim." For Ryu, therefore, Hahn is the basic core of authentic Korean mind or spirituality. He states that there are four major principles of the spirituality of Hahn. First, it is the spirituality of "tolerance," which accepts the differences of others and appreciates diversity. Second, it is the spirituality of "synthesis," which creates a new thing out of the integration of varieties. Third, it is the spirituality of "praxis," which participates in the reality of the world with responsibility. That is, it is not speculative but concrete, and is ready to be engaged in social transformation. Fourth, it is an "idyllic and romantic" spirituality. The elegance of Korean life-style flows from the depth of Hahn. But Ryu does not attempt to define Hahn metaphysically. He rather says that we live Hahn and express ourselves through Hahn.

8 Tong-Shik Ryu, "Pungryu Shinhak" (Pungryu Theology), Shinhak Sasang (Theological Thought) 41 (Summer 1983), 438.

9 From the linguistic perspective, the Korean Hahn-a-nim connotes the only and one Being; Hahn-u-nim signifies the supreme Being in the sky or heaven. Here nim is the personal honorific term. It makes the word Hahn personal.

On the one hand, Korean-American theologian, Andrew Sung Park affirms "Hahn philosophy" as the major essence of the Korean mind in its historical and philosophical aspects. According to him, first, Hahn denotes divine supremacy, referring to heaven or sky. It also characterizes the attribute of the divine, pointing to greatness, sublimity, immensity, brightness, honor, ultimacy, infinity, majesty, and magnificence. For Koreans, Hahn is the ultimate, utmost, highest, and the most sublime word. Secondly, Hahn signifies Oneness, which indicates a circle that has no beginning and no end. A circle symbolizes wholeness or totality. Hahn mind sees both sides of a coin, both forest and trees, and both ocean and its water at the same time. Thus, it is non-dualistic. Third, Hahn symbolizes paradoxical inclusiveness, pointing to an intermediate boundary. It embraces one and many, and whole and part at the same time. It means that Hahn mind embraces yin and yang, "either...or" and "both... and" without self-contradiction. Therefore, the radical openness of Hahn emphasizes tolerance, acceptance, and creativity in spite of difference and lack of accord.12

Another Korean theologian, Kyoung Jae Kim, theologically interprets characteristics of Hahn, which Ryu examined in Pungryudo, as follows:

First, Ha(h)n is the mind that accommodates the diversity. The idea of Ha(h)n is the experience with the reality representing the paradoxical oneness of diversity and unity, of one and many. If the number one is divided, it produces many. If the many is combined, it

---


becomes one. Second, Haphn is the mind which combines opposite sides into one creative whole. It combines the transcendental and the immanent being, the sacred with the secular, the formative principles with the dynamic actuality. Third, Haphn is the mind that manifests the truth participating in our present life. It is always concerned with the here and now community. It does not return to the past, nor transcend toward the future. The present here is always the centre of actual reality; without participating in the present life, there is no authentic renewal. Fourth, Haphn is the mind that combines paradoxically the sacred with the secular in joy and bliss. It is the theonomous way of life combining the simple life of autonomy with the authoritative heteronomy.¹³

In this sense, the Hahn experience Ryu described is the essence of Korean religious culture. According to Ryu, the ancient Koreans from the third century customarily offered sacrifices to their heavenly God ("god" in a henotheistic sense) in the spring and the autumn, and their ceremonies brought the participants to a state of ecstasy in which they experienced union with their God. By uniting with their God, they could realize their desire for a prosperous and happy life. For the ancient Koreans, this was the way of deliverance from the hardships and sufferings of life. This belief was incorporated with Chinese culture and was called Pungryudo. In fact, its central idea is that of union with God, and it is referred to as the way of the heavenly God. According to Ryu, this Korean belief was based, first, on worshipping Hahnynim (belief in the god of heaven). second, on religious rituals for the blessings of a god before or after harvest (belief in the god of the earth). third, on ecstasy through drinking, singing, and dancing at festivals (belief in the union between the divine and the human).¹⁴


¹⁴ Tong-Shik Ryu, Hankuk Mukyo ui Yoeksa wa Kujo (The History and Structure of Korean Shamanism). (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1975), 16.
Ryu has recently described the reality of Pungryudo in many different ways. He is convinced that Pungryudo is the spiritual foundation of Korean culture, and the essence of Pungryudo is the union of God and human beings. It should be noted that, first, Pungryudo is not a name for a particular religion, but is rather the cultural ground that receives other religions. It is also Korean spirituality or spiritual life in the broadest sense. Second, Pungryudo in the Korean language has the same etymology as Puru in Altaic language, which signifies fire, light, clearness, illumination, and flowing wind. Also, Pungryudo originates in Hahnanim belief, and its focal point lies in the union of Hahn-a-nim and humankind in ecstasy. Third, Pungryudo signifies concretely Korean spirituality which is manifested in the ritual of sky-worship of the ancient Koreans. Fourth, Pungryudo is not only the spirituality of the ancient Koreans, but also the fundamental spiritual structure of contemporary Korean life. It may be described as the basis of all Korean cultural activities.

Regarding Pungryu or Pungryudo, Kyoung-Jae Kim, like Tong-Shik Ryu, contends that it is "not a formulated religion with a symbolic system of belief or doctrines, but the basic dynamic structure of Korean spirituality." He characterizes Pungryudo as "the archetype of the Korean..."
religious mind" and "the expression of Ha[hn]nam worship." He argues that for Korean people, hermeneutically speaking, world religions were received and developed within the structure of Korean spirituality, Pungryudo, and the world religions such as Buddhism and Christianity have been indigenized with and through the structure of Korean Pungryudo. Even earlier, according to Kim, "Pungryudo has been interpenetrating with Shamanism in terms of a hermeneutical fusion of horizons." In other words, Pungryudo has been syncretized or amalgamated also with Korean Shamanism.

According to Kim, the amalgamation of Pungryudo and Shamanism is completed in the Hahn-a-nim belief or the worship of the Korean "Tangun myth," even though they did not come

---

18 Ibid., 62-63. [The term archetype he used is not a concept but a power that brings out enormous energy.]

19 Ibid., 66.

20 Ibid., 66.

21 The Tangun myth is as follows: "There was Hwan-Woong, the son of Hwan-Inn. He was desirous of the human world. His father, having comprehended the will of his son, looked down on three high mountains on earth. Among them Tai-Paik Mt. looked like it might help the people for good. His father gave him three seals and ordered him to go down and rule the world. Hwan-Woong came down under the sacred tree on Tai-Paik Mt. with 3,000 people, and there he established a village. He controlled three hundred sixty affairs of people like that of grain, fate, sickness, punishment, good and evil with his wind, rain, and cloud helpers. At that time a bear and a tiger were living in a cave, and they asked Hwan-Woong to change them into human beings. A mountain spirit told them that they would turn into human beings if they ate a bunch of wormwood and twenty garlics and did not see the light for a hundred days. After three weeks, the bear turned into a lady, while the tiger could not keep the promise. Since there was no partner for the bear-lady, she beggared under the tree for a child. Hwan-Woong turned into a man for a while and married her and she bore a child. He was called Tangun-Wang-Kum. Tangun established his city in Pyungyang and called it Chosun in the year of Kyung-In in the lunar calendar, the 50th year of the Yoo kingdom of China. Afterward he moved his capital city to A-Sa-Dal on Paik-Ak Mt. He reigned 1500 years. The tiger king of the Choo kingdom of China sent Kee-Cha to rule Chosun in the year of Ki-Myo. Tangun moved to Chang-Taang-(continued...
from the same root -- "Pungryudo is basically monotheistic and Shamanism is polytheistic." In Pungryudo, on the one hand, the heavenly One can be manifested in various deities in the modes of theophany, kratophany, or hierophany. That is, the Many is the specialized form of the One; the One is the converged form of the Many. Thus, for the ancient Koreans, the heavenly Hahnam-nim and the deity of the high mountain are believed to be the same God. On the other hand, in Shamanism, there is a hierarchical order within the family of deities. Hahnam-nim is the super God; then there are others in succession. However, there is no overruling power or principle controlling the universe in Shamanism. But in Hahnam-nim worship of the Tangun myth, Pungryudo and Shamanism were completely mixed and amalgamated. There are two conflicting opinions: one is "the archetype of the religious mind of the Koreans is polytheistic Shamanism"; the other is "the archetype is in the henotheistic or monotheistic Hahnam-nim worship."  

In summary, as Ryu observes, we can detect three essential characteristics of Pungryudo as follows: first of all, Pungryudo accompanies delight with liveliness and rhythmic movement, and it is the way of life with transcendental freedom and harmony. The Mot of Pungryudo is the aesthetic awareness coming from transcendental freedom and harmonious liveliness. Second, the ideal of Pungryudo is the spirituality with inclusiveness which holds the essential elements of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shamanism in it. Third, the ultimate purpose of Pungryudo is to make an abundant life and creative cultural activity by transforming many people. The final goal

21(...continued)

Kyung, then he returned to A-Sa-Dal. Then he became a mountain spirit. He was 1908 years old." (Kim, 70.)

22 Ibid., 69.

23 Ibid., 71.
Pungryudo is encapsulated in the phrase of "a delightful life." In terms of pneumatic dynamism we may say Pungryu, which means, literally, the flowing of the wind, represents "the creating and renewing power of the Holy Spirit." Hermeneutically speaking, as Kyoung-Jae Kim indicates, "for Korean people the world religions could be received and developed in the structure of Korean spirituality. Pungryudo. The world religions like Buddhism and Christianity have been indigenized with and through the structure of Korean Pungryudo."25

How, then, did Pungryudo, a pathos of Korean spirituality, meet Christian spirituality and converge with it? As mentioned above, Ryu argued that the ancient Koreans pursued the vision of "Hahn Motchin Sarm" (a splendid life). While summarizing Korean spirituality in Hahn, Mot. and Sarm, Ryu recapitulates Christian spirituality in terms of the Trinity. Hence, he explains that Pungryudo and Christianity may meet at three points: Hahn and Hahn-a-nim (the Father), Sarm and Jesus Christ, and Mot and the Holy Spirit.26 Ryu contends that the three traditions of Hahn, Mot. and Sarm are one in the Pungryu vision of the "Hahn Motchin Sarm" just as God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are one in the Trinity. The triune God endeavours to make people authentic. Likewise, the Pungryu vision of the "Hahn Motchin Sarm" proposes to facilitate abundant life for people. For this reason, Ryu boldly claims that before the insertion of Christianity into Korea the Pungryu vision already worked for the promotion of Korean spirituality as Christian spirituality would do. Therefore, he concludes that the goals of


25 Kyoung-Jae Kim, 66.

26 Tong-Shik Ryu, "Pungryu Shinhak" (Pungryu Theology), 440.
Pungryudo and Christianity do not diverge but converge in the vision of Korean spirituality.\(^{27}\)

As mentioned above, the body of Pungryudo is in a Mot based on the union of God and human beings from which Hahn and Sarm are developed. Hahn embraces Mot and Sarm; Mot produces Hahn and Sarm. So Sarm must be a Mot of elegance. This is called the "three-one philosophy" of Pungryudo; theologically speaking, the "Trinity" of Pungryudo. That is, Hahn is the main body (trunk) and the three elements are its branches. On this ground, Korean people easily accepted the logic of Buddhism later, and likewise developed their own version of Confucianism. Still later, this way of thinking also prepared the Koreans to accept the trinitarian God of Christianity.

Consequently, some Korean Christians attempt to interpret Pungryudo as the gospel of Korea's own traditional spirituality. At the same time, the comprehension of the divine immanence of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is viewed as the relationship between the trunk and the branch in the mutually inherent nature and activity of God's personality. It is also viewed as the worship of the trinitarian God through the eyes of Pungryudo. Thus, Ryu says, "Christian thought in Korea has already developed, through employing the Pungryudo ideas of Hahn, the Holy Father and conservatism [of Korean Christianity]; Sarm, the Holy Son and progressivism [of Korean Christianity]; and Mot, the Holy Ghost and liberalism [of Korean Christianity]."\(^{28}\) Here are some reasons for emphasizing anew the Pungryudo theology in Korean theology. It is our hope that our Pungryudo will further develop in order to appreciate the gospel in a more Biblical fashion, and at the same time in a more Korean fashion, that the Korean churches may be in

---

27 Ibid., 440.

harmony in a united effort toward a common goal, through the pathos of our common Korean spirituality. Our goal, then, of a holistic, integrated spirituality for Korean Christians, is well served by this fundamental root of Korean religious culture.

2. The Great Religious Traditions in Korea

Korean spirituality has blossomed through the contact and interaction of religious traditions in Korea. Thus the religious life of the Korean people, before Christianity was introduced, manifested itself in several different faiths: Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism in chronological order. The purpose in this section is not to study what these religions are specifically, but to discuss how they have been mingled, amalgamated or syncretized with each other, and Christian spirituality later. Unlike Pungryudo, Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism are specific, identifiable, and visible religions.

(1) Shamanism

In Korean religious history Shamanism is one of the great traditional religions of developing Korean spirituality. Before Buddhism and Confucianism were introduced into Korea from China, Shamanism, absorbed into Pungryudo, had been the main religion in Korea. In fact, Shamanism, broadly conceived, is a primal religion, similar to those found widely not only in Siberia, Mongolia, Manchuria, China, Korea, and Japan, but also in Europe, Africa, and North America. In Korea, however, as mentioned before, it was combined or syncretized with
*Pungryudo* from the palaeolithic era over so many centuries that it is hard to distinguish between them. Thus Tong-Shik Ryu characterizes *Pungryudo* as a Korean Shamanism.\(^2^9\) According to him, "Korean Shamanism is not an extinct ancient religion, nor a simple primitive religion. It is not only a remnant of old Korean religion, but also a living religious phenomenon renewing itself in the form of folk beliefs and practices even in modern Korean society."\(^3^0\)

One of the major characteristics of Shamanism, as Mircea Eliade defines it, is "an archaic technique of ecstasy."\(^3^1\) However, Eliade says, "any ecstatic cannot be considered a shaman; the shaman specializes in a trance during which his soul is believed to leave his body and ascend to the sky or descend to the underworld."\(^3^2\) In addition, by using a state of consciousness called "ecstasy," he distinguishes the shaman from the other kinds of magicians or witch doctors. In any case, Michael Harner clearly defines the shaman as "a man or woman who enters an altered state of consciousness - at will - to contact and utilize an ordinarily hidden reality in order to acquire knowledge, power, and to help other persons." Thus he points out that "the shaman has at least one, and usually more. 'spirits' in his or her personal service."\(^3^3\)

In this sense, Shamanism may be seen as a psycho-pathological phenomenon, but has


\(^{3^0}\) Ibid., 16.


\(^{3^2}\) Ibid., 5.

appeared as a religious phenomenon among the common people, who participated in the shamanistic rituals (Korean word, Kut). I. M. Lewis has pointed out in his book, *Ecstatic Religion*, that "all ecstatic cults have always attracted followers among the weak and the oppressed, especially women in male-dominated society." Lewis then says, "Shamanism and its ecstasy is closely connected with suffering, affliction or oppression." At this point, a Korean feminist theologian, Hyun-Kyung Chung agrees with Lewis, pointing out that "Korean Shamanism is the women-centred popular religiosity that is widely practised among poor people in Korea."

Korean Shamanism, as an ecstatic religion, serves gods with dancing and singing in order that people may get help from the spirits. The repetitions of the rhythm in dancing and singing lead people to the ecstatic state. Drinking may heighten it. People can transcend themselves by dancing and singing, and they may have communion with the spirits, who provide them with new life in the midst of their sufferings. This bears a strong similarity to the traditional ghost dance of the native people of North America, who commune with their spirits by drumming, singing, and dancing. In this respect, Tong-Shik Ryu points out that "the structure of Korean Shamanism is intended to create a new world and life through denial." By denying themselves and their present circumstances, people go to the pre-historical world and freely have communion with the

---


35 Ibid., 89.


37 Tong-Shik Ryu, 346.
spirits there. But this denial is undertaken for new life and resurrection, rather than for death in this world.  

Another characteristic of Korean Shamanism is its goal in harmony and reconciliation. Traditionally, the shamanistic ritual provides the place for the feast and festival where the oppressed could play and enjoy themselves. The "mask dance" (Korean word, *Talchum*, 탈춤) is an example of this. With faces hidden by masks, the dancers resolve their accumulated feelings of oppression by acting them out. Thus, by participating in the *Kut* (ritual drama), they experience a harmony between playing and ecstasy, a harmony between the shaman priests and themselves, and not only a communion with the spirits but also a harmony and a reconciliation with the spirits. So, a Korean anthropologist, Hung-Yoon Cho defines the essence of Korean Shamanism as "*harmony itself.*" This shows that one spiritual basis of Korean Shamanism is the longing for harmony or reconciliation.

However, there is also a negative element in Korean Shamanism from our point of view. It is the lack of a strong sense of history or of ethics in the shamanistic gods or spirits. The shamanistic spirits do not ask for justice and righteousness, but for sacrifice and rituals. Similarly, there is little concern about human relationships. The predominant value is not social responsibility nor the ethics of humanity, but blessings, long life and happiness. For example, in

---


Shamanism, death by accident, illness, killing, and so forth leads to an unfinished and unsatisfied form of life. The soul of one who has died in that way wanders in this world until his/her original life is fulfilled. So, Shamanism uses exorcism in order to send the dead person's soul to the other world safely. But its basic concern is not for the soul itself, but for the descendants of the dead person, because the resentful soul can become an evil spirit and bring about woe to its descendants. This view later constitutes a syncretic element with the ancestor worship of Korean Confucianism.

Consequently, on the one hand, the present world, especially wealth, long life and material blessings, are very important to Shamanism. This kind of materialism, without concern for human relationships, eventually becomes the ground of injustice and corruption. On the other hand, in Shamanism, there is also a strong dependency and fatalism. Everything is totally dependent upon the power and will of the spirits. This kind of dependency can ultimately lead to religious authoritarian fundamentalism, wherein people have no concern for social justice or for their own freedom and responsibility to society. This is the weakness of Shamanistic fundamentalism, but it becomes a precursor of a certain type of Korean Christianity later.

In Korean religious history the important syncretic element of spirituality between Shamanism and Christianity is the Han (as distinguished from the other concept of Hahn mentioned earlier) of the common people who participate in the Shaman Kut (or Christian worship.) Han is a Korean word which means an aggregate of the experience of unjust suffering and the subsequent repression of this unjust suffering. When Han denotes the feeling of suffering, it embraces not only individual experiences, in which feelings have been repressed, or in which people have been oppressed by others, but also collective ones in the social
consciousness of the oppressed people. That is, it is a feeling of unresolved resentment against unjustifiable suffering: it is a deep awareness of unjust treatment by the powerful. So, Han has both an individual and a communal dimension. An individual experiences Han as a result of personal suffering and oppression, but the entire people experiences Han collectively as well.\(^{40}\)

Recently, Minjung theology,\(^{41}\) coined by Korean progressive theologians in the 1970s, has utilized the Han of Shamanism in Christian theology. Minjung theology, from the perspective of oppression and liberation, has been developing as one type of "Liberation theology" (similar to the liberation theologies of Latin America. "Black theology" and "Feminist theology" in North America, and "multicultural theology"\(^{42}\) in North America). But Minjung theology has the strength that comes from considering the "socio-political biography" of the oppressed in relation

\(^{40}\) The Korean notion of Han is very similar to that of "affliction" in Simone Weil (1909-1943). For her, "affliction" includes physical pain, psychological isolation, and a social stigma. [About the notion of "affliction," see Simone Weil, Waiting for God (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1951); Oppression and Liberty (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968); Gravity and Grace (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987); Annice Callahan, Spiritual Guides for Today (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 80-96.]


\(^{42}\) Jung-Young Lee recently considered the key notion, "marginality" in multicultural theology as an Asian-American perspective on doing theology in the new mosaic. [See Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).]
to their religious and cultural experiences. Nam-Dong Suh, the pioneer of Korean Minjung theology, finds a source for theology in Han-experiences of the minjung, and interprets it in folk religion like Shamanism: "Han is an accumulation of suppressed and condensed experience of oppression. The accumulated Han is inherited and transmitted, boiling in the blood of the people. And it is also defined as the emotional core of anti-regime action. This is the genesis of Han."43

Cyris H.S. Moon, a Korean-American theologian, also emphasizes that through experience the spiritual eyes of the minjung are opened, and that they see the deep truths about life: "in Han we [minjung] encounter God who comes down to the han-ridden people and justifies their plights; with Han we [minjung] begin to dream of a new, alternative future and to dedicate ourselves to the cause of making that future a reality."44 From this perspective, David K.S. Suh characterizes Han as a liberating spirituality of the minjung.

Minjung spirituality is to overcome the Han of an individual as well as the collective Han of the people. Minjung spirituality is the crying and moaning of the Han-ridden spirits of the people, the poor and the oppressed to God. It is thus a liberating spirituality.... Minjung spirituality deeply imbedded in Korean Shamanism is a combat spirituality.45

Finally, Han in Christian theology appears in emotional prayer, like Pentecostal tongue prayer or loud prayer in worship, or the special revival meeting, as a syncretic element of Korean spirituality. I shall deal with Pentecostal spirituality and the minjung spirituality of Korean Christianity in Chapter Four. These spiritualities represent the spirituality of "conservative/

43 Nam-Dong Suh, "Towards a Theology of Han," in Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History, 60.


evangelical" and "progressive/radical" theologies, respectively, in Korean Christianity.

(2) Buddhism

Buddhism, which came originally from India but was introduced from China, established its Korean form during the time of the three kingdoms [Kokuryu, 372 A.D., Paikche, 384 A.D., Shilla, 420 A.D.], and later passed on to Japan in 552 A.D. It gradually extended its sway, until in the latter years of the Koryo dynasty it became the greatest political and intellectual force in the nation, and eventually provided a spiritual source for Korean people, along with Pungryudo and Shamanism, by a process of religious syncretism. In this respect, as James Huntley Grayson, a former Methodist missionary to Korea, says, "religious syncretism, the mixture of folk religion with one of the religions from the so-called 'great traditions,' is an important element in the development of Buddhism in Korea."46

Buddhism, originally derived from the title Buddha (the Enlightened One)47, basically teaches that human beings break out of the grim cycle of death and rebirth and attain Nirvana (salvation) by following the "middle way," avoiding both total, hedonistic absorption in the


47 The founder of Buddhism is the "Buddha," which means the "Enlightened One." It is not a personal name but a title like "Christ" or "Messiah." The Buddha was born from an ancient noble Indian family of the Sakyas. From this comes his poetic names Sakamuni or Sakayera, which are widely used in Korea. His personal name was Siddartha (Korean Sidal Taisa), but that name was never used by his followers. There is another name belonging to the family from the earliest times by which he has been sometimes known, Gautama (Korean Godam). See Charles Allen Clark, Religions of Old Korea (Seoul: CLSK, 1961), 14.
world and excessive self-torment. *Nirvana* here implies "liberation from all human desires" and thus provides salvation according to a person's deeds. In a word, the way of Buddhism leads from *dukkha*, the irremediable suffering that is the most fundamental condition of life, to Nirvana, an ineffable bliss.

Heinrich Zimmer, one of the great scholars of Indian philosophy, observes that this basic idea of Buddhism is found in the "Four Noble Truths," which constitute the heart and kernel of Buddha's doctrine: "all life is sorrowful"; "the cause of suffering is ignorance"; "the suppression of suffering can be achieved"; and "the way is the noble eightfold path." In particular, the last of the "Four Noble Truths" indicates the way out of suffering: the path to freedom is a middle way between extremes, a path of neither extreme sensuality nor extreme asceticism. The eightfold path is based upon a proper view of all things and proper conduct toward all; it consists of "right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration, right understanding, and right thought."

As Leo D. Lefebure points out, this eightfold path is traditionally divided into three moments, sometimes called the "Three Learnings": firstly, ethical conduct, which includes right speech, right action, and right livelihood; secondly, mental discipline, which includes right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration; and thirdly, salvific insight, which includes right understanding and right thought. In this regard, a way [a spirituality] of suffering in Buddhism goes toward an ultimately positive goal. That is, "the first truth of suffering is always to be read...

---


in light of the third truth that there is a release from suffering. The second truth points out the cause of suffering; the third truth confidently expresses the possibility of peace and joy; and the fourth truth points out the path to freedom."  

In Buddhism there are two schools that may be broadly characterized as conservative and liberal (or Southern and Northern). The former is Hinayana Buddhism (the Small Vehicle), close to the original form, which denies the reality of the individual soul. The latter is Mahayana Buddhism (the Great Vehicle), which emphasizes the way of compassion for others and the ideal and spirit of Bodhisattva. It means a "being fixed on enlightenment," or simply "being of enlightenment." This path was more attractive to the majority.

Korean Buddhism, as well as Japanese [Zen] Buddhism, was eventually influenced by Mahayana, which emphasizes a "middle way" between being and nonbeing, between realism and nihilism. It asserts the "emptiness" (sunyata) of all existent things in this changing world, and the absence of any permanent substance, qualities, and essential characteristics. Later, in exploring the relationship between Korean Buddhism and early Korean Christianity, a Korean church historian, Lak-Geoon George Paik, argued that Mahayana was an early form of Christianity which had incorporated within itself many non-Christian elements in the course of its spread in Asian countries. He argues, then, that the Buddhism which Sundo brought into Korea was a diluted form of Christianity. This very idea (though not supported by other scholars) indicates at least that there are substantial elements of similarity between Korean

---

50 Ibid., 21.

Buddhism and Christianity.

Korean Buddhism, which was indigenized by the great Buddhist monks, Wonhyo (617-688, A.D.) and Ui-sang (625-702, A.D.), is characterized as both Hua-yen (Hwaom in Korean) Buddhism and Ch'an (Zen in Japanese) Buddhism. They are both explained, however, as forms of Mahayana Buddhism. Their main pattern of thought, as Kyoung-Jae Kim observes, is characterized as "a syncretistic interpretative harmonization" and as "a Buddhism of total interpretation." In other words, both are regarded as "a creative synthesis of all the systems of Buddhist thought from the perspective of the mutual interaction of the universal and the particular, or the non-obstacle co-origination of the particular with the particular." Its focal point is the "Ultimate Reality."

The essential thought of Buddhism was successfully synthesized with the religiosity of the Korean people, made a special impact on the Korean religious mind, and developed into an indigenous form of Korean Buddhism in Hahn-a-nim belief. As Kim says, "Ha[h]nanim belief has been worshipped as the Ultimate Reality who is the ontological ground of righteousness, light, and prosperity for all humankind." Thus, Kim concludes that the fusion of Buddhism with the existing religions of Korea appears in two different forms: "One is evolving from fusion with Pungryudo, and the other is the establishment deriving from the fusion of Shamanism." This signifies that Buddhism in Korea was mixed with other religions from the perspective of

---

52 Kyoung Jae Kim, 79.
53 Ibid., 79.
54 Ibid., 83.
55 Ibid., 84.
spirituality, even though they had different roots and forms. This fusion can be seen in Kim's summary of the three main characteristics of Korean Buddhism: "the first is that it strives for unity in 'A Whole-Buddhist View'; the second is that it is a down to earth popular religion practicing the spirit of the Bodhisattva; and the third is that it never hesitated to fuse with the traditional religions of the land or other philosophies."\(^{56}\)

In Korean Christian spirituality, some syncretic elements are clearly influenced by Buddhism. An important example is the form of prayer of the Korean people.\(^{57}\) Most Buddhists begin prayer at four or five o'clock in the morning, and the content of their prayer is almost entirely Chook-won (祝願), which means "petition for blessing," that is almost exclusively material, asking for good health and prosperity. For Koreans, this form of prayer is called "Kibok-Sinang" (祈福信念), belief in prayer for blessing. Many Korean Christians also expect that God will always provide the same material blessings abundantly through their prayer. They believe that true faith, especially as expressed in prayer, will cure illness, solve financial and personal problems, and otherwise lead the faithful to a happy life here on earth. They also understand these blessings as the "grace" of God, and thus frequently attend Saebuck-Kido ( 새벽祈禱), prayer meeting in the early morning and Chulya-Kido (徹夜祈禱), the mid-night prayer meeting) in the church. Some Christians especially seek the Kido-won (祈禱院), a prayer retreat centre) in the mountains to pray for their special purposes and concerns.

This form of prayer is not very different from the traditional type that Buddhists make at

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 73-75.

the Sansin-gak (山神閣), the mountain god shrine. In the temple they bring devotion to the Mountain God, one of the major deities of Korean folk religion, they ask for the good things of life, and they see material riches as a sign of spiritual blessing.58 These similarities of the form of prayer suggest, as Horace G. Underwood indicates, that "some thoughtful [Korean] theologians feel that there sometimes seems to be a touch of a Shamanistic mechanism in some aspects of Korean prayer life."59 That is, Buddhist and Shamanistic elements together manifest themselves in Christian piety. In other words, although, in the Christian perspective, we may wonder just what is the nature of such prayer, these examples clearly show that there are syncretic elements in Korean spirituality.

(3) Confucianism

Classical Confucianism as a system of beliefs predated Confucius himself, who lived in the sixth century B.C. His ideas became very influential later but classical Confucianism first came to Korea in 1122 B.C. (?) from China. It has been influencing the life and value system of the

58 James H. Grayson shows that petitions offered up to the great spirit have been made in three locations: (1) in a Sansin-gak; (2) before a large and strangely shaped rock deep in the mountains; or (3) before a pile of stones placed at the high point of a mountain pass. Also, petitioners usually offer one of three types of supplications to the Mountain God: (1) requests for the birth of a male child; (2) petitions for family prosperity in the coming year; (3) petitions for success in such important life events.


Korean people with *Pungryudo*, Shamanism, and Buddhism for a very long time. This classical Confucianism was a philosophy stressing moral principles, and was basically a way of self-discipline, emphasizing loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and sincerity. As Stuart C. Hackett understands, "its most fundamental insight was the notion that the inclusive totality of the natural order of things (the Great Whole constituted by the dynamic, interacting unity of Heaven, Earth, and Man) is the embodiment and progressive actualization of an objective moral realm in which everything has its appropriate place and function."\(^{60}\)

However, Neo-Confucianism, influenced and challenged by the thoughts of Taoism and of *Hua-yen* Buddhism since the sixth century A.D., is a philosophical religious way searching the essence of the human mind and the primordial principles of the universe. In China, originally, Neo-Confucianism began with Chang-Tsai (1,020-1,076 A.D.), reached a peak of fulfilment with Chu Hsi (1,130-1,200 A.D.) and became influential in Korea after this time. According to Hackett, they provided a tradition of systematic, sophisticated philosophical thought that Western thinkers like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas provided for Christian thought.\(^{61}\) Neo-Confucian reconstruction both began the achievement of its fullest expression and divided into two distinguishable perspectives: the School of *Li* (理, form or ideal pattern) and the School of Universal Mind. The former is called "rationalistic Neo-Confucianism"; the latter "idealistic Neo-Confucianism."\(^{62}\) Kyoung-Jae Kim explains the basic difference between the two Schools:

---


\(^{61}\) Ibid., 34.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 36-37.
"the rationalistic Neo-Confucianism is nearer to the whole rationale of Confucian thought, and
the idealistic Neo-Confucianism is more akin to the thought of Cha'n Buddhism [Zen
Buddhism]. These two schools differ widely in ideology and methodology."

In fact, the main issue of the two Schools was really one of the fundamental philosophical
problems, namely, in terms of Western philosophy, both ontological and epistemological
problems. By synthesizing these ideas into a comprehensive system of thought, metaphysical as
well as ethical, Chu Hsi made a clear distinction between "what is above shapes" (the
metaphysical) and "what is below shapes" (the physical), as well as between the Li and the Ch'i, 氣
which means "the basic and dynamic physical and substantial force of the natural universe." In
a word, the Ch'i is pertaining to "what is below shapes" and the Li is pertaining to "what is above
shapes"; there is not one without the other. In Kim's words, the Li-Ch'i theory of Neo-
Confucianism is like form and matter in Aristotelian metaphysics, or like the eternal objects and
the actual entities in Whiteheadian metaphysics, and it corresponds with the Logos Christology in
Christianity. The Li and the Ch'i are two formative elements in a never mixed, never replaced,
ever separable relationship. So, the inseparableness of the Li and the Ch'i is like that of the
Logos and Pneuma relationship in Christian theology.

63 Kyoung Jae Kim, 88.

64 According to Hackett, "Ch'i is both the matter or stuff of things and at the same time
the efficient cause of their participation in the transcendent patterns. The concept of Ch'i in its
material aspect is of course relative; pure matter could not conceivably exist as such, since it is a
particular nature or character, and hence exemplifying a form; but formed matter of a certain type
may itself be the matter of some further form. The wood in a tree has a nature of its own, but it is
by having that nature particularized that it can become the matter for the form lumber; and
lumber itself may in turn serve as the matter of a house." (Stuart C. Hackett, 38.)

65 Kyoung Jae Kim, 90.
In the religious history of Korea, Neo-Confucianism was predominant for about three hundred years from the fifteenth century to the seventeenth century. In this period (the Chosun dynasty), the most prominent Korean scholars of Neo-Confucianism were Lee Hwang (1,501-1,570 A.D.) and Lee Yi (1,536-1,584 A.D.), who were the sincere followers of the Chu Hsian line. Lee Hwang emphasized the Li more than the Ch'i in Chu Hsi's metaphysical system, and gave the priority to the Li, while Lee Yi stressed the active movement of the Ch'i more. Consequently, Lee Hwang's position is more conservative, normative, conceptual, and traditional, while Lee Yi's position is more progressive, revolutionary, and experimental. Later, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, in Korean Neo-Confucianism, there appeared the new movement called the Shil-Hak School (射學派), pragmatic Neo-Confucianistic School. The ethos of this School was like pragmatism in Western thought, and this School was strongly influenced by Lee Yi's line, namely, Ch'i priority.

Here a question arises: "Is Korean Confucianism a religion, or a religious philosophy?" Korean Confucianism may be considered as not a religion, but rather a philosophy, because there are no religious structures, doctrines, human salvation, and so on. However, in T'ien (天, Chun in Korean, Heaven) thought and ancestor worship, Korean Confucianism does have religious characteristics. In regard to T'ien thought there is a distinction between Classical Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism. In Classical Confucianism T'ien is not just the principle of the universe but the Ultimate Reality itself as the object of worship. This thought is deeply related to the Hahn-a-nim belief of Pungruyudo, Shamanism, and Buddhism. But in Neo-Confucianism T'ien is totally changed to be the principle of the universe; it is the object of the human epistemological pursuit of truth, but not the object of worship with a feeling of awe. In Neo-Confucianism all the
supernatural spiritual beings are nothing but special forms of Ch'i. In this regard, Korean people do not find their religious spirituality in Neo-Confucianism. Rather, they accept Confucianism only as a moral norm, and find their religious fulfilment in Shamanism or Buddhism.

Nevertheless, ancestor worship in Korean Confucianism provides an important syncretic element with other religions in Korea. The religious syncretism of Confucianism and other religions especially took place in the farm village rite; the rite was a syncretic product of the Hahn-a-nim worship of Pungryudo; ancestor worship was part of Shamanism. Later, the Confucian rite had to do with Ch'udo-Yebae (追悼禮拜), the burial and memorial worship services, of Korean Christianity; namely, services for putting the body in the coffin, for departure of the body from home, for the traditional memorial visits to the grave, and so on.

The conceptions of the ancestors in Korean Confucianism have been identified with two types of spirits, namely the good or benevolent ancestor and the evil spirit or ghost of Korean Shamanism. The distinction between these two spirits is generally held to be the manner in which they met their deaths. Bad spirits are the products of abnormal deaths, such as suicides or accidents, and they are held to have died outside the home. They wander around the world and harm people. However, good spirits have lived long lives and died normal deaths in their homes;

---

66 Ch'udo-Yebae is usually held in the home of the person requesting the performance of the ritual and is conducted by the minister of the church. The ceremony is normally held in memory of a relative in the first two generations above the person who made the request. In other words, it is not performed for distant relatives or the founders of the clan to which the person making the request belongs. This feature makes it different from many Confucian ancestral rites. In the room a low table is laid out with various festive foods, fruits, and meats. The family gathers around this table with the minister in the centre and the chief mourner opposite. A ceremony of thanksgiving for the life of the deceased is offered consisting of hymns, reading from Scripture, and a short sermon or talk by the minister. Afterward, the family, the minister, and the attendants eat a communal meal together.
they become ancestor spirits which protect their descendants and family. So, if indeed the nature of the spirit of a dead person were fixed by the manner, time, and place of his or her death, then there would be no particular need for the development of ritual services for the ancestors.  

However, in fact, this understanding of two spirits is based upon the belief of the ancient Koreans that there are three spirits and seven souls in each human being. As a Korean scholar, Kwang-Kyu Lee observes, "one of these spirits goes away to the other-world with the messengers after death, one stays in the deceased body, and one wanders around the world. The spirit box is for the protection of this last spirit. The seven souls are of the two eyes, two nostrils, two ears and one mouth; they are attached to the body and thus stay with it after death."  

During the funerary rite in Confucianism, the dead spirit is preserved in the spirit box after death has been certified by the rite of calling back the departing spirit. This funerary rite definitely shows a syncretic element with the Shamanistic ritual, which is performed with the corpse and spirit box, and which is a ceremony for the messengers, although there is a difference from the experience of religious ecstasy in mediating between the deity and human beings. In Kyoung Jae Kim's words, "the religious rite for ancestor worship is not a memorial to the ancestor's grace or simply a memorial act. The rite of ancestor memorial is impossible without the Shamanistic belief that the departed continues some kind of life in the other world. Therefore, the Confucian religious rite for ancestor worship fuses with the horizon between the

---


Shamanistic immortality of spirits and the Confucian return of gratitude to the ancestors."  

With ancestor worship in Korean Confucianism (*Ch'udo-Ye-bae* in Korean Christianity), the most influential element to Korean Christian life is the Confucian standard of morality or ethics of personal and social behaviour. The standard, as already mentioned earlier, is based upon the *O-ryun*, the five key hierarchical forms of human life or relationships. On this basis, most Korean Protestant churches, whether Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, or Pentecostal, have a presbyterian type of structure with an elected eldership which is normally supposed to have control and direction of the affairs of the church. The minister and elders together exercise decisive authority.

From the Westerners' view, of course, "this leadership system in Korea functions very differently from the way in which presbyterian types of church structure function in Western nations."  

But this perception in the Korean church consequently represents an assimilation of the Confucian concept, and continues to model the inter-personal relationships on the Confucian pattern: the ruler and subject, the parent and child, the male and female, the elder and younger, and the teacher and student. Thus, in Christian life the minister holds a position to which the people (the elders and the ordinary congregations) should obey him or her with loyalty. In this respect, the Korean Christian churches were comfortably accommodated into the "orthodox" tradition which Confucianism emphasized. In short, ancestor worship, the hierarchical structure,

---

69 Kyoung Jae Kim, 95.

the relationship of human life, and the leadership system, are important elements forming a syncretic spirituality in Korean Confucianism and Christianity.

III. The Insertion of Christianity into the Syncretic Korean Context

This section will examine how Christianity was inserted into the Korean syncretic context. As explored in the previous sections, in Korea three great religions, Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, were prevalent before Christianity. These religions in various degrees have syncretized with each other, and Korean people have taken their religious rituals, their prayers, and their ethical modes of life from them. On the one hand, this religious syncretism might reveal a lack of strong religious conviction or a lack of a critical sense in the Korean people; on the other hand, this syncretism has offered a rich religious life, namely, the high ethical and moral standard of Confucianism, the inspiration and intellect of Buddhism, and the mysteries of the spiritual world of Shamanism. Syncretism in Korea may be seen as a sign of the demand for a diverse and universal religious life.

Within this syncretic context, there occurred a great event in the religious history of Korea. I refer to the insertion of Christianity into the life of the Korean people in the modern era. In the eighteenth century, Christianity in its Roman Catholic form settled into Korea, and Protestantism in the nineteenth century. We can speak positively of an encounter of Christianity with the East Asian religions; we may speak negatively of an assimilation of other religions.

This section briefly reviews the arrival and beginning of Catholicism, the growth of Protestantism, and two different kinds of spiritual movement in the early Korean church. This
review will show that Korean Christianity has developed its own spirituality in a syncretic way together with other religions.

1. The Arrival of Roman Catholicism

The date of Catholicism's introduction to Korea is not exactly known. Probably, it arrived in the late 16th century through some slight contact between Koreans and Japanese Christians in 1592.\(^\text{71}\) In Korean church history, however, the first evidence of Korean Catholicism is in the year 1784. In that year, Seung-Hoon Yi, a Confucian layman, who received a traditional training in the Chinese classics, became the first Korean Christian. He was baptized by a French Jesuit priest, Louis de Grammont in Beijing. Other converts followed quickly.

By the beginning of 1785 there was already persecution against the new Christian group, since they were viewed as espousing a "heretical" interpretation of Confucianism. The reason for the persecution was not, in fact, the doctrines of Christianity itself, but rather the perception that the new movement threatened the very fabric of traditional Korean society. As a matter of fact, the first Catholics in Korea maintained a high ethical standard, but rejected the ritual of ancestor worship which came from both Confucianism and Shamanism. Moreover, the Beijing bishop

prohibited ancestor worship for the converted Catholics. At times, however, ancestor worship was not just a religious rite for the Korean society; rather it was the central symbol of the controlling Confucian ideology. In other words, the denial of ancestor worship meant the destruction of the conservative feudalistic social structure from its root. Therefore, Catholics' undermining of the basic social structure was a major cause of persecution of Catholicism by the government. This persecution continued until the end of the 19th century.

In spite of the continued persecution, Korean Catholics petitioned a bishop in Beijing (1811-1816) to send clergy. In 1835 the Vatican eventually sent three members of the Paris Foreign Missionary Society - two French priests and one French bishop - to Korea. They were the first known Western missionaries (Jesuits) to enter the country. Even today many of the

---

72 At that time, the Vatican altered its policy position on ancestor worship due to the different positions of Jesuits from the Dominicans and Franciscans. The Jesuits argued that ancestor worship was a religious-cultural heritage of Chinese cultural history, while the Franciscans and Dominicans concluded that ancestor worship was nothing but the superstitious worship of spirits. See Julia Ching, Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study (New York: Kadansha International, 1977), chapter 1.

73 A Korean Catholic church historian, Hong-Yol Ryu points out that most martyrs in early Korean Catholicism were the common people, namely, old men and women, widows, and orphans, including only a few middle class people. See Hong-Yol Ryu, Hankuk Chunju Kyohoe Sa (A History of the Korean Catholic Church), (Seoul: Catholic Publishing Co., 1962), 535; also, see William E. Biernatzki, Korean Catholicism in the 1970s (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1975), 22.

A Korean Protestant church historian, Kyung-Bae Min agrees that most martyrs during a period of persecution in Korean church history were the common people, minjung, not the Yangban (upper class). He also says that the number of the Catholic martyrs in the period of this persecution was more than 8,000. See Kyung-Bae Min, Hankuk Kidok Kyohoe Sa (The Church History of Korea), (Seoul: Christian Literature Society, 1973), 85.

74 The two priests' names are Pierre Philibert Maubant and Jacques Hoore Chastan. The first bishop was a French priest Barthelemy Brugiere(1832), but he died on the way. The second bishop was Laurent Marie Joseph Imbert. He entered Korea in 1837.
Catholic institutions and universities in Korea are strongly influenced by the Jesuits. This was the beginning of a diocese in Korea independent from Beijing, and the development of Korean Catholicism entered a new phase with the arrival of the Western missionaries. Tragically, before these missionaries completed their ministry in Korea, they were tortured and beheaded during the persecution which broke out in 1839. Since not much is known about the mission approach of these early missionaries, we cannot know the differences between the Catholicism professed by the Japanese, the Chinese, and French.

In 1845 the first Korean priest, Tae-gon (Andrew) Kim was ordained after graduating from the seminary in Macao in China, and he managed to reenter the country later that year. However, his ministry was also short-lived, as he was arrested and executed in 1846. In spite of this continued persecution, however, for ten years (1855) the number of Christians still increased. Finally, a treaty with the French in 1886 ended the government persecution of Catholicism and eventually gave limited freedom for evangelization. This result was seen as the fruit of the blood of martyrs who had sacrificed themselves to protect the Christian faith and Church.

Sung-Hae Kim, a Korean Catholic woman theologian, outlines the history of Korean Catholicism in three main periods: (1) from the baptism of the first Korean Christian to the arrival of the French Paris Foreign Mission Society fathers (1774-1837); (2) from the arrival of the French missionaries up to Vatican II (1837-1965); (3) from Vatican II to the present (1965-Present). According to Kim, the first of the three periods is the most important in Korean

---

75 Kyung-Bae Min, 68.
Min notes that at this time Korean Catholics numbered about 9,000. (Ibid., 70.) Allen D. Clark also notes there were 1237 baptisms during this period. (Clark, 52.)

76 Allen D. Clark, 53.
Catholic history, because it was during this time that an indigenous theology in Korea was gradually developed.\textsuperscript{77} From the beginning, as Kyung-Bae Min indicates, the history of Catholicism was one of "the most romantic" and involved "incredible suffering."\textsuperscript{78} Therefore, a Korean Protestant church historian L. George Paik says of these early Catholic converts: "we must pay tribute to their heroism, their willingness to suffer hardships, imprisonment and martyrdom in the situation of persecution."\textsuperscript{79} This fact has a major historical significance for the Korean Catholic church.

2. The Growth of Protestantism

In 1832, the same year in which the first Catholic French missionary was appointed to Korea, Carl A.F. Gutzlaff, a German Protestant who had worked in China, visited Korea. His visit was not for the purpose of establishing a mission but to investigate the possibility of opening the northern ports of China to British trade. Nevertheless, during his visit to Korea, Gutzlaff distributed the Chinese Scriptures and translated the Lord's Prayer into Korean. The next Protestant who entered the country in 1865, was Robert J. Thomas, a native of Wales, who had come to China as a missionary. But in the persecution of 1866, he was martyred.


\textsuperscript{78} Kyung-Bae Min, 96.

\textsuperscript{79} Lak-Geoon George Paik, 57.
The year 1876 is an important one in Korean Protestant history. As a Korean Church historian Chai-Yong Choo insists, this was the first year of the acceptance of Protestantism. Choo provides two main reasons for this contention: The first is that in 1876, Ung-Chan Yi was the first person to be baptized in Korea by John MacIntyre, a missionary of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, whereas previous Koreans had been baptized in other countries. The second is that in 1876 the Korean government opened the door to foreigners and began to exhibit a new spirit of openness by signing the treaties of peace and amity with other countries. Nevertheless, the Korean Protestant Church officially defines the beginning of Korean Protestantism as the date of the entrance into Korea of the American missionary, Dr. Horace Allen, in 1884.

From the beginning, the approach of the Protestant missionaries was to focus their attention on the common and lower class people, who were condemned to suffer the oppression and exploitation of that time. To this end, they laid a foundation of medical and educational work on which to build the subsequent evangelization of the common people. Protestant mission work took into consideration the Korean political, social, and historical situation. Their main policy was to gain the political approval of the government and to be cautious and patient in doing their work of evangelism. Lak-Geoon George Paik distinguishes the mission policy of the first Protestant missionaries from that of the Catholic missionaries:

The Catholic converts did not have the chance to study the Bible, while the task of the Protestant missionaries was to translate the scriptures and distribute the translation. Many Catholics were involved with political intrigue, while the Protestant missionaries stood off from politics. The Catholic missionaries were all illegal intruders into the country, while the Protestant missionaries waited until the country opened her door to the outside.

---

The following statement of policy was adopted at the first meeting of the Council of Missions in 1893. The statement of policy was adopted at the first meeting of the Council of Missions in 1893. The following statement of policy was adopted at the first meeting of the Council of Missions in 1893.

1. It is better to work at the conversion of the working classes than that of the upper classes.
2. The conversion of women and the training of Christian girls should be a special aim, since mothers exercise so important an influence over future generations.
3. Much could be effected in Christian education by maintaining elementary schools in country towns, therefore, we should aim to qualify young men in our boys' schools and send them out as teachers.
4. Our hope for an educated native ministry lies in the same quarter, and should be constantly kept in view.
5. The Word of God converts where man is without resources: therefore it is most important that we make every effort to place a clear translation of the Bible before the people as soon as possible.
6. An aggressive church must be a self-supporting church and we must aim to diminish the proportion of dependents among our membership, and to increase that of self-supporting, and therefore contributing, individuals.
7. The mass of Koreans must be led to Christ by their own fellow-countrymen; therefore we should thoroughly train a few as evangelists, rather than preach to the multitude ourselves.
8. The services of our physicians can be turned to best account when it is possible to keep the same patient living under treatment, either in a hospital ward or in the patient's home, thus giving opportunity for instructions and example to sink deeply into the mind.
9. Patients from the country who have undergone a season of treatment ought to be followed up by visitation in their native villages, because their experience of compassionate dealing is likely to open a wide door for the evangelist.
10. A medical missionary should pay attention to the long distance patients taken away from home. The kindness they experienced may open their heart's door to the evangelists later.

These were principles, of course, not for the work of a well established Church, but rather for the initial stages of evangelical work in a new area. They were based upon the practical

---

81 Lak-Geoong George Paik, 52.
82 Kyung-Bae Min, 159-160; Allen D. Clark, 113-114.
experience of the missionaries, but they were also due to the official ban on religious propagation in Korea. Accordingly, their main points were "to let people abide in the calling where they were, to teach that each was to be an individual worker for Christ; to develop church methods and machinery only so far as the native Church was able to take care of and manage them; to set aside the better qualified to do evangelistic work among their neighbors; and to let the natives provide their own church buildings which were to be native in architecture and style."83

In Korean Protestant evangelism, education and social work were emphasized from the beginning. These mission methods eventually influenced much of the development not only of the church in Korea but also of Korean society in the 20th century. But the missionaries did not provide the Korean Protestant Church with an adequate theological foundation, because the policies that most of them discussed were adopted with little theological reflection, especially in the areas of mission theology and ecclesiology. This may have caused the Korean Protestant church to be more syncretistic than the Catholics had been. Kyung-Bae Min states that these missionaries exerted both positive and negative influences upon the shape of future Korean Protestantism. The evangelical and pietistic faith of the missionaries rejected the mystic and shamanistic mentality of the Korean people. However, the missionaries produced a vacuum in theology and ecclesiology, a de-socialization of faith, a dualism of faith, a dichotomy between historical and spiritual life, and an emphasis on the other-worldly.84

From 1895 to 1905, the number of Korean Protestants greatly increased. Sung-Bum Yun, a Korean Methodist theologian, states six major reasons for this rapid growth in Protestantism.

83 Ibid., 114.
84 Kyung-Bae Min, 126-127.
1) Christianity was understood as a religion of the common people; 2) Christianity stressed the use of the original Korean language; 3) The idea of heaven and hell of Christianity was akin to the Buddhist idea of Paradise or Nirvana; 4) The social situation was also favorable to the propagation of the gospel; 5) Personal evangelism was the most characteristic Christian witness; 6) Finally, Protestantism contributed to modernization in many fields, such as in education, in medicine, in social work, and so forth.\textsuperscript{85}

In addition, we could include the enthusiasm of the early missionaries. However, a more important reason for the rapid growth was that many Korean people gave a new shape to their existing spirituality by turning from their established religions to Protestantism. It provided a rallying point for modern ideas, including those of human dignity, equality for women, and especially the concern about the lower classes. Consequently, during the early twentieth century, Protestantism assumed a central role in Korea's modernization - a role that was social, political, cultural, and economic.

3. Types of Spiritual Movement in Early Protestantism

Since Christianity [Protestantism] was introduced into Korea by Western missionaries in 1884, there were two different types of spiritual movement: “the Great Revival Movement” (1907) and “The Independence Movement for Liberation” (1919). These movements can be seen as expressions of the historical desires for freedom and liberation for Korean Christians. Through these movements the Korean Christians sought social reform, national regeneration, and personal spiritual transformation. The desire was not only for personal spiritual salvation but also for social salvation. In this section I shall briefly review two movements in early Protestantism.

(1) The Great Revival Movement

In the early twentieth century the most important influence on Korean Christians was the "great Revival Movement" (beginning in 1907). This movement had originated in the "Great Awakening" and the "Revivalism" of America, dating from the mid-eighteenth century. According to the Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience, the "Great Awakening" was the first mass religious revival in America during the second quarter of the eighteenth century, and "Revivalism" was a distinctively American phenomenon, involving either one or a series of services, often highly emotional, designed to stimulate renewed interest in religion. Stephen A. Marini describes the Great Awakening as follows:

The Great Awakening was sparked by ministers and itinerant preachers who proclaimed the doctrine that saving grace came to sinful human beings through a conscious and emotional experience of spiritual transformation. The Great Awakening finally produced consequences of greatest significance in the shaping of American religion. It created a new religious style, revivalism, that became a permanent, powerful, and distinctive feature of American religion.86

Stuart C. Henry also writes.

Revivalism is intended for persons formerly identified with but now apathetic to religious life and organization. It attempts to awaken in those indifferent or even hostile toward religion a sensitivity and commitment to a particular religious form or community. American Revivalism has been largely, though not exclusively, a Protestant phenomenon.87

---


In 1907 a group of American missionaries in Korea, who had been influenced by these movements, met together in Pyongyang (the present capital of North Korea) for prayer and Bible study under the leadership of Dr. R. A. Hardie, who was a medical missionary from Canada. According to A. W. Wasson, "Dr. Hardie was not a charismatic or an emotional revivalist, but a conscientious missionary not to be carried away by sentiment or circumstance." However, through prayer and Bible study, he experienced a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In fact, this period of Japanese occupation in Korea had produced a general feeling of disillusionment and despair. The Japanese had prepared for their occupation of Korea since 1905 and annexed the country from 1910 to 1945. The popular feeling against the Japanese could easily have resulted in political disturbances. "To meet the need of a critical time in both national and church life, a special cleansing and empowering by the Spirit of God was vitally necessary to Korean Christians." Therefore, the "Great Revival Movement" in Korea was designed to prepare the Korean church not only to overcome its difficult situation, but to go forward steadfastly, in spite of discouraging national conditions. Yang-Son Kim, a Korean Church historian, offers an explanation of why Korean Christians eagerly attended such meetings:

There is no question that the progress of the Christian movement was effective because of the eagerness and the training of those who undertook it. However, there was another reason. Christians fell into deep despair when Japan took over Korea. The Christians prayed at home and at Church for God's help and protection to recover their nation. They called themselves patriots. However, God did not hear their prayers. When their prayers were not fulfilled, they confessed their own sins first, because they felt that the absence of God's blessing was not due to God, but due to

---


89 Allen D. Clark, 160
their faults.\textsuperscript{90}

Here Kim does not claim that there is a systematic and substantial link between the national crisis and the "Great Revival Movement." However, it should be noted that Korean Christians were also patriots who sought national recovery. Nevertheless, the western missionaries attempted to depoliticize Korean Christianity and were only interested in matters pertaining to religious language and church organization. Yong-Bok Kim understands this as follows:

The Great Revival of 1907 represents the first major stage in the internationalization of the Christian message in the Christian \textit{koinonia} in Korea. There arose a deep sense of \textit{koinonia} and fellowship among Christian communities; there was a moral transformation of individual lives. Besides the self-transformation in the Christian \textit{koinonia}, the Great Movement produced a powerful messianic dynamic out of the Christian \textit{koinonia}.\textsuperscript{91}

The main features of the revival meeting held in 1907 were a sermon about people's sins, the confession of sins, loud prayers, and various forms of collective emotional expression. This phenomenon was a result of the missionaries' enthusiastic efforts.

However, the missionaries' narrow view of faith eventually caused many Korean Christians to look for different or modified faith. In time, Korean Christians divided themselves into two groups, namely, those stressing an other-worldly faith and those stressing this-worldly faith -- the political and social justice minded Christians. This polarization has persisted in Korean Christianity until today. Nevertheless, it remains true that the positive effects of the "Great Revival Movement" on the Korean Church were much greater than the negative. Certainly, the Korean Church kept up

\textsuperscript{90} Yang-Son Kim, \textit{Hankuk Kidok Kyohoe-Sa Yoenku} (A Study of Korean Christian History), (Seoul: General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches, 1956), 85.

\textsuperscript{91} Yong-Bok Kim, "Korean Christianity as Messianic Movement of the People," in \textit{Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History}, 89.
the spiritual power of faith and a high ethical level, and demonstrated that the life style of converts had been changed by the Great Revival meetings. The movement provided a tremendous growth in membership in the Korean Church. This numerical increase eventually led to a degree of political power, as seen in the "Independence Movement" of 1919. At the same time, the Korean Church gave new shape to Koreans' own indigenous faith through its early morning and midnight prayer meetings, a large revival service, enthusiastic offerings, and individual evangelism. From the beginning this movement was transdenominational. In this regard, there can be no doubt that the "Great Revival Movement" provided a basis for Korean Christians' own spirituality. It was not merely to transform the people's own personal spirits but also to provide the basis for interpreting the world and history. One result was the "Independence Movement for Liberation," a political expression of their spiritual aspirations.

(2) The Independence Movement for Liberation

The "Independence Movement" against Japan, which began on March 1, 1919, emerged out of the experience of oppression of the Korean people. This non-violent resistance movement was one of the most important movements in modern Korean history. As far as the Christian Church was concerned, it was also a remarkably well planned movement for political liberation. According to Kyung-Bae Min, statistics from March 1st to May 30th are as follows: the total demonstrations were

---

92 In the case of the Presbyterians, church members increased from 54,987 in 1906 to 73,844 in 1907, and the Methodists increased 118 percent from 18,107 in 1906 to 39,613. [See, Gil-Sop Song, Hankuk Shinhak Sasdang-Sa (A History of Theological Thought in Korea), (Seoul: Christian Literature Society, 1987), 156-159.]
1,542, attendants 2,051,448, victims 23,359, and prisoners 46,306. However, the actual statistics would be higher if the people deformed by torture had been included. A disproportionate number of those arrested were Christians, and one reason for this was the prominence of many pastors in their own local communities. Furthermore, the large number of Christian signers of "the Declaration" immediately served to confirm government suspicions about the political character of the Church.\(^93\)

This movement had been secretly prepared by the leaders and, amazingly, kept secret by the masses. Eventually, a "Declaration of Independence" was formulated and signed by thirty-three key leaders.\(^94\) Copies of "the Declaration of Independence" were secretly delivered to the people through church organizations. Christians were the largest organized group in the country and the success of the plan depended in large measure on their taking part.

The fundamental and concrete causes of the "Independence Movement" were described well by Kyung-Bae Min: "the strict Japanese military regime and its cruelty; the Japanese imperialists' attempt to eradicate Korean nationality; the discrimination among the administrative officials and their brutality; the loss of freedoms -- speech, press, faith, and association; the policy of the extermination of religions; the prohibition against travel and against the education of Koreans; and despoliations of the land."\(^95\) In a word, since the official annexation of 1910, the Japanese military


\(^94\) Kyung-Bae Min says that of the 33 signers, 16 were Christians, 15 Chundokyo, and 2 Buddhists. But A.E. Clark writes that 33 signers were 15 Christians, 15 Chundokyo, and 3 Buddhists. [See. Kyung-Bae Min, 176-184; Allen Clark, 198.]

\(^95\) Kyung-Bae Min, 255.
regime politically oppressed, economically exploited, and culturally brutalized the people. This was the total oppression of the Korean people.

The "Independence Movement" did not bring political freedom to Korea, but it did provide a spiritual ground that allowed the Korean church not to be just the church of missionaries but that of the Koreans themselves. This means that the church was at last attaining a national identity and unification through its work for justice, freedom, and liberation. A more important significance is that in this historical experience of the "Independence Movement," many non-Christians came into the church. Local Bible conferences and special meetings about the spiritual life of the church were continued, and prayer meetings became special aids to spiritual growth in the church.

In summary, Korean Christianity (especially, Protestantism) was introduced into Korea by western missionaries. Their main mission work besides evangelization was to lay a medical and educational foundation for the common people of the lower class. From the historical perspective, therefore, early Korean Christianity was crucially concerned with the socially oppressed, exploited and alienated. Through the "Great Revival Movement" (1907) and the "Independence Movement" (1919), Korean Christians experienced national regeneration and personal spiritual transformation, and aspired to freedom and liberation, namely, both individual and social salvation. These historical experiences became the major sources, together with other elements of their religious heritage for the development of a distinctive Korean Christian spirituality.
CHAPTER THREE

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON SYNCRETISM AND INCULTURATION
FOR KOREAN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

The discussion of Christian spirituality for the syncretic Korean context must necessarily be situated within the broad contemporary debates about syncretism and inculturation. In this chapter I shall selectively explore the literature on these themes as essential background for a vision of Korean Christianity.

In the preceding chapter I showed that Korean Christian spirituality has developed on the basis of Pungryudo and the great traditional religions of Korea - Shamanism, Buddhism and Confucianism. This indicates that Korean Christianity lives within a particularly syncretic context, which, for Christians, gives rise of the problem of religious syncretism. Nevertheless, syncretism has usually been seen as a "problem" by most "conservative/evangelical" Christians, depending upon the way that they have received the Christian message, concerning the "uniqueness" and "normativity" of Jesus Christ. However, some "progressive/radical" Christians, who perceive a "syncretic dynamic" as a form of liberating action, have understood their indigenous religious traditions and culture in a positive way, as something to be cherished.

Of course, such a positive understanding not only helps Korean Christians to link their spirituality to other religious traditions, but also leads them to search for "inculturation" as an ongoing process for the development of a deeper Korean Christianity. In this chapter, therefore, I shall deal with the theological question of syncretism in search for inculturation. Because the value of syncretism and the necessity of inculturation depends upon observers' viewpoints, I shall
briefly review the theological debate about syncretism, propose my own view of it, and then focus on the necessity of inculturation for a Christian spirituality in the syncretic context. The concept of "interreligious dialogue" will inevitably be part of this discussion, but for the sake of simplicity I shall not engage thoroughly in a discussion of that concept.

I. Theological Understanding of Syncretism

"Syncretism" is passionately debated in contemporary theological circles. In general, the term has often been used neutrally by anthropologists and historians of religions. In theological circles it has been used both positively and negatively by theologians and church leaders. The term is in fact "tricky" because it is used with both an objective and a subjective meaning.

According to Andre Droogers, "the basic objective meaning refers neutrally and descriptively to the mixing of religions. The subjective meaning includes an evaluation of such intermingling from the point of view of one of the religions involved."¹ This confusion of meanings has motivated theologians and church leaders to debate it vigorously, since people's religious identity and sense of truth is at stake. Since the term is ambiguous and complex, it will be appropriate to begin this section with the question of the definition of syncretism.

1. The Question of the Definition of Syncretism

The term "syncretism" usually refers to connections of a special kind between languages, cultures, or religions. This term is most frequently used in the history of religions, in which a special effort has been made to give it a more precise meaning. In *The Encyclopedia of Religion* Carsten Colpe informs us that "the origin of this term, derived from *sugcretismos*, occurs in Plutarch. It was probably based on *sugkretos* ("mixed together") and was explained by popular etymology or by Plutarch himself as referring to the behaviour of Cretans, who, despite the discord habitual among them, closed ranks when an external enemy attacked them."² Hendrik Kraemer thus characterizes syncretism as originally a *political* term. According to him, the inhabitants of Crete, who usually lived in a state of internal discord, always showed a united front (*synistanto*) in the face of a common enemy; it has to do with a temporary alliance. Plutarch called it "*syncretismos*," which originally means unity, born of a dangerous situation on opportunist grounds, that is to say, among the Cretans who are opposed to any "mixing" with the enemy. So, Kraemer, who is opposed to any ‘mixing’ of Christianity and other religions, contends that "the custom to derive ‘syncretism’ from the Greek word *synkerannum*, which means to mix, is therefore historically speaking wholly wrong."³

In the seventeenth century the term became very common among theologians. However, it gradually took on a negative character and came to refer to the illegitimate reconciliation of

---


opposing theological views. That is, the term acquired its prime connotation of a mixing of inharmonious, conflicting religious elements. Thus, syncretism became a polemical term employed to defend true religion against heresy. From the second half of the nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century, there has been a tendency to objectify the term by applying it to the earliest forms of Christianity. Nevertheless, it also retained its negative meaning, and was often used to designate sect-like groups. Droogers thus indicates that "syncretism was shown to be present in the earliest form of Christianity, and finally retained its negative meaning, denoting a deviation from original purity."4 In fact, this negative tone was held in order to preserve the uniqueness or particularity of Christianity among many religions in the world.

According to Droogers, however, most scholars such as G. van der Leeuw, Hendrik Kraemer, Jacques H. Kamstra, and Michael Pye, who participated in the debate, mainly discussed objective definitions of syncretism, even though some scholars like W.A. Visser't Hooft and Wolfhart Pannenberg were criticized for being too theological and subjective in their approach.5 Thus, Droogers finally suggests "the possible subjectivity of objective definitions" in three points: "the correlation of the conception, the context of religions, and the emphasis on the

4 Andre Droogers. 9.

doctrinal and the official." This shows that perfect objectivity is impossible. So he argues that "syncretism cannot be defined in either exclusively objective (religious intermingling) or purely subjective (illegitimate mixing or - less frequently - legitimate mixing) terms. This concept refers rather to both unquestioned and controversial interpretation of religions." His conclusion is that syncretism is put "in a wider social and cultural context," and that "asymmetrical relations of power are essential to the understanding of syncretism." In the next section I shall examine these questions, by categorizing the theological debate about syncretism in terms of negative and positive approaches.

Peter Schineller first classifies syncretism briefly both in the history of its usage and in contemporary usage.

Originally, it was applied to political alliances in ancient Greece. Some Old Testament scholars use it to describe the process by which ancient Israel assimilated elements from surrounding cultures. In the age of the Reformation it pointed to the links between Christianity and humanism; and also to the need of Protestant and Catholic churches to come together. Today it retains many of these meanings, with both positive and negative connotations. Most recently, the focus of the debate has been shifted by the development of local theologies. That is, syncretism has been discussed in the light of the process of inculturation or contextualization, as part of the task of relating to a particular cultural context. This new interest maintains

---

6 Ibid., 15.
7 Ibid., 8.
8 Ibid., 20.
that syncretism is not only inevitable but that the results are often positive and desirable. This shift of new interest reflects the social sciences' use of the term "syncretism," viewing that usage as a lens to refocus the discussion within Christian theology. Robert Schreiter thus suggests that three major factors affect the use of the term in contemporary theological discussion: "an obstacle for missiologists in conservative traditions, an understanding of culture and the Christian faith, and globalization and acute particularization of the world's cultures."\textsuperscript{11}

Here an important point is that syncretism refers to beliefs and culture. Carl Starkloff summarizes this point as follows:

1) the mixing of religious forms through borrowing and blending, perhaps consciously, perhaps unconsciously; 2) a mixing that also includes other currents flowing from ideologies, culture, and from empirical social sciences; 3) both a process, describing what is happening or was happening, and a result, describing what presently exists (we might use the terminology of "diachronic" and "synchronic" description here); 4) an experience at the origin of a religion or as a later threat to it; 5) a problem of symmetry and asymmetry: that is, one asks whether the religions involved are mutually contributing to the process, or whether one of them is dominating the other. (This element involves the very important problem of power.) Finally, 6) syncretism may be defined either functionally or conflictively. As a function, syncretism seeks to overcome ethnic and cultural contradictions and thus render religion into a service to society. As a contradiction, it takes on a Marxist coloring and is seen as a mask for the conflicts within society involving various interests and serving as an instrument of oppression. In this light, an apparent religious harmony creates only the illusion of unity.\textsuperscript{12}


On the other hand, the whole concept of syncretism, where religion is concerned, is seriously challenged by the Dutch theologian Jacques Kamstra. He rejects the use of the term "syncretism" using as an example the Japanese situation. Instead, he prefers to use the term "phenomenalism." For him, "this '-ism' does not imply some kind of false ideology, nor is it a mixture or osmosis of several abstract ideas; rather it is the best characterization of the religious mind of the Japanese."\(^\text{13}\) Because the term "syncretism" has often been used pejoratively by western Christians, he considers that western Christian preconceptions are the main impediments to a good understanding of Japanese religion.\(^\text{14}\) In fact, these preconceptions are applied not only to Japan but also many Asian countries, including Korea, which has a religiously and culturally similar context, although their folk religions have different structures and forms.

According to Kamstra, the first prejudice western theologians have is the theological distinction between faith and superstition, and they are still inclined to misunderstand folk religion as superstition or magic. A second set of western prejudices stems from some deeply rooted prudish Western feelings which consider non-sexual symbols to be real religion, and sexual symbols to be magical aberration. But the complex of the sexual fertility of people, animals, and plants is an essential part of the religion of common people, and is harmoniously interwoven with other religious phenomena, being a source and well spring in human religious beliefs. A third complex of biases is that the westerns have feelings of cultural, theological, and philosophical superiority. The final complex is the use of concepts such as syncretism and

---


\(^{14}\) Ibid., 135-137.
dialogue. The use of these concepts, according to Kamstra, is an enormous barrier to understanding religion, because the problem of syncretism or dialogue exists mainly in the minds of western intellectuals. This is particularly the case in theologians' minds and the minds of scholars of comparative religion. not in the minds of common people.

For Kamstra, "syncretism is therefore a problem which originated in Western dichotomies within religion, such as true and false in theology, sacred and profane in comparative religion, and culture and nature in cultural anthropology." As Kamstra sees it, the Japanese [Korean] way of thinking and acting is almost antipodal to these western prejudices and ways of their thinking. In Japanese [Korean] religion, thus, "synthesis is emphasized more than analysis, and holistic philosophy is preferred to a piecemeal approach." Therefore, he concludes, "Division of this religion into several independent compartments bespeaks a misunderstanding of the holistic 'system' of Japanese [Korean] religious phenomenalism." I have already suggested in the preceding chapter that this holistic system of Korean religious phenomenalism is shown in the Hahn thought of Pungryudo, the foundation of Korean spirituality.

We should note that for large numbers, probably even the majority of present-day Christians, including Korean Christians, syncretism, as a concept, continues to be feared as a danger to the integrity of Christianity. Moreover, many are concerned about the current ecumenical emphasis on interreligious dialogue, suspecting that such dialogue will lead ineluctably to syncretism. Those who seek "inculturation" or "contextualization" often use it in a

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 137-138.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 138.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 139.
positive, sometimes almost proud and challenging sense. On the other hand, there are those who seek ways to maintain the essentials of Christian faith, while genuinely, humbly, seeking wisdom and truth from others, through "dialogue," and even "syncretism." The warnings of Karnstra need to be heeded. for they sharpen our awareness of the difficulties involved. While we are not now in a position to resolve these enormous problems, we may raise some questions which may move toward a solution to the problem. Does the problem of syncretism truly exist in a particularly syncretic context? How, and by whom can the problem of syncretism be solved? What does it mean to be in a positive relationships with other faiths in the already syncretized context?

The answer to these questions, or the attempt to answer them, may provide a new way for Christian spirituality in a syncretic Korean context. Here I would suggest that it may be appropriate to use words "open heart and mind to others." rather than "dialogue with others," since the term "dialogue" has become suspect as a western invention. Insofar as the problem of syncretism refers to "a way, a style or an attitude of human life," it is more important to respect and listen actively to others than to defend ourselves against the loss of uniqueness, normativity, and purity. But we must now turn to the specifically theological debate about syncretism within Christianity.

2. The Theological Debate

In this section I shall discuss the theological debate about syncretism. It consists of two general viewpoints - the negative and positive. The former adheres to the position of
"conservative/evangelical" theologies, using the "from above" method; the latter that of "progressive/radical" theologies, stressing the "from below." There are, of course, variations within these positive and negative attitudes. Some are relatively positive, but very cautious about syncretism, while others are very enthusiastic and incautious. Some are negative about syncretism (as they understand it) but positive about dialogue. Because the theological debate on this matter in Korea goes on within the world wide, ecumenical debate, here I shall depend upon and briefly survey the wider, ecumenical discussion, while attending also to some Korean thinkers. On the positive side of syncretism, especially, I shall distinguish "radical syncretism" from "Christ-centred syncretism." I prefer to identify my own position as "a positive Christ-centred syncretism."

For Christians today, the following question has always been a matter of central concern: What is the proper Christian attitude toward the world, toward other cultures, other religious traditions and their adherents? Christian theology, especially the theology of religions, both Catholic and Protestant, has begun to be concerned about this question ever more seriously with the widespread study of other religions and interreligious dialogue. A highlight of ecumenical discussion on the Christian relation to other religions has been a declaration of the Report of the 1975 Nairobi Assembly of the World Council of Churches: "No other culture is closer to Jesus Christ than any other culture."18 This affirmation led significantly and naturally to further theological debate about syncretism and dialogue. The theological issues of interreligious dialogue and syncretism are always like the two sides of a coin in ecumenical circles.

Of course, during the earlier period from 1910 to 1963, development within the ecumenical movement was an important factor in the evolution of today's new disposition. At the outset of the modern Protestant ecumenical movement, however, the real debate on other religions and syncretism emerged in the 1920s and 1930s in connection with bitter theological controversy. In this period, according to Gerald Gort, Western Christianity was divided into two disputatious camps, the so-called, "Continental" and the "Anglo-Saxon" schools. Especially the "Continental." strongly influenced by the theology of Karl Barth, were deeply opposed to the "syncretistic" and "social gospel" tendencies of the "Anglo-Saxon" school and maintained that Asian and African religions exist in a state of total darkness. This interpretation by Gort may be a little too simple. Certainly there were both German and Anglo-Saxon circles on both sides of this debate, and today the divisions within the field of theology of religions cannot be neatly drawn in this way.

A very negative rejecting attitude may be seen to be rooted in their western/Christian theological, philosophical, and cultural superiority. Those who have a negative position on syncretism today have mostly been influenced by the theological views of the "Continental" school in which the Dutch theologian Hendrik Kraemer has had wide influence. Here Kraemer's basic theological stance was the "uniqueness of God's revelation in Jesus Christ disclosed in the Christian Scriptures," and "without faith in Jesus Christ, there is no true salvation, and the

---

19 Gerald D. Gort suggests that the year 1963 "constitutes a watershed of sorts between an older and newer period in the history of thinking with respect to the religions." [See, "Syncretism and Dialogue: Christian Historical and Earlier Ecumenical Perceptions," in Dialogue and Syncretism: An Interdisciplinary Approach, 40.]

20 Ibid., 42.
relationship between Christianity and other religions is one of dissimilarity, antithesis, and discontinuity." While a great many theologians, past and present, take a negative stance toward syncretism, we only have space here to look at the views of Hendrik Kraemer, who has been very influential in world-wide, as well as in Korean theological circles.

(1) The Negative View of Syncretism

For theologians who take a negative stance toward syncretism, it is seen as an attempt to integrate foreign elements into a religious tradition which conflict with the original content of that tradition. Especially, as mentioned before, Hendrik Kraemer has left a large mark on the Protestant discussion of syncretism in this century. His main argument was that each religion is a total reality and can brook no mixing with another religion. For him, syncretism is simply a manifestation of "naturalistic monism." His view was essentially a Barthian approach to the absoluteness of the Word of God in Christ, which in effect triumphs over all religion, even Christian religion. In a word, he was extremely "exclusivist." Kraemer finally defines syncretism as "illegitimate mingling of different religious elements in contrast to adaptation, which is legitimate." That is to say, syncretism is the amalgamation of religious elements without reference to any criterion of evaluation, and it is theologically illegitimate. "To assimilate the cardinal facts of revelation in Christ as much as possible to fundamental religious ideas and

---


22 Ibid., 203.
tastes of the pre-Christian past is syncretistic, .... and this syncretistic amalgamation is a great danger."23

This idea is based on his view of world religions which can be divided into two categories: on the one hand, there are "naturalistic," monistic religions aiming to attain self-realization, namely, "an unreflected, spontaneous form of primitive syncretism."24; on the other hand, the prophetic religions in possession of divine revelation. The former category includes Asian religions, namely. Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto; the latter Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Here he simply understands that syncretism is a basic characteristic of all "naturalistic" religions, while the prophetic religion of the biblical tradition fails to exhibit such syncretistic tendencies, but tends rather to adopt an exclusivist attitude. For him, all naturalistic religions have their real 'living and moving' in the search for human integration in the totality of the cosmic and natural order. As he puts it.

The great masses of the people, even when they are incorporated in a concrete cult or religious body, with all its institutions and forms of behaviour, live, as regards their spontaneous reactions towards life and the world, in a 'dynamistic' and mythological sphere, in which the conception of the 'numinous' is dominated, not exclusively, but to a great extent, by the knowledge that it can have both a harming and a furthering effect for the continuance and strengthening of life......Every item of 'religious' material (a rite, a festival, a place of pilgrimage, a concept), whatever the concrete religion in which it may belong, is unhesitatingly assimilated, when the spontaneous conviction arises that it can yield that mysterious power which strengthens the collective or cosmic order or meet deep personal desires.25

This phenomenon occurs everywhere in which different religious systems, ways of faith, of rites

23 Ibid., 308.

24 Hendrik Kraemer, "Syncretism as a Religious and a Missionary Problem," 262.

25 Ibid., 262.
and of salvation meet and mingle in a spectrum of primitive religiosity. Thus, this phenomenon of unreflected, spontaneous, primitive syncretism becomes very important for understanding and evaluating conscious and genuine syncretism as the guiding principle in formulating the problem of ultimate religious truth. The enormous importance of this primitive syncretism is, as Kraemer admits, that "it is the matrix, the latent form of genuine, self-conscious syncretism." In other words, to the adherents of these naturally syncretized religions, syncretism affords no problem at all. To them, it is rather self-evident, and the only reasonable attitude consistent with human dignity, self-respect, and respect for others. It thus represents the summit of tolerance: it is as natural an element as water for fish. But syncretism brings a problem in a prophetic religion like Christianity.

Syncretism only becomes a problem, and in certain situations a matter of life and death, when a prophetic religion, especially a prophetic-apostolic religion like Christianity, based on the assumption of God's initiative in the work of self-disclosure, encounters a naturalistic-cosmic (or naturalistic-monistic) religion, whether on the plane of the latent, non-rationalized primitive syncretism of popular religiosity, or on the plane of identity-mysticism. This has been so from the days of the Old Testament prophets, in their struggles with Canaanite religious naturalism, till our day. A careful reading of the New Testament reveals abundant evidence of the battle of emerging Christianity with its necessarily syncretistic environment.

Kraemer goes on saying that the educated, intellectual representative of a syncretistic religion cannot but immediately advance his or her fundamental principle of tolerance as the only right solution for an encounter between religions. On the other hand, Kraemer says,

..... western thinkers express the problem in terms that are too exclusively dogmatic, and that therefore from the outset they betray a lack of imaginative insight. It would be an entirely different matter if it were expressed in a prophetic way, because the true

26 Ibid., 263.

27 Ibid., 264.
prophetic tone transcends all patterns of theological and rational thinking. This, however, is something that has never happened."28

While he wishes to adopt a refined and nuanced stance, for Kraemer, syncretism remains a constant danger to Christian authenticity, because the gospel is "from God" and should always remain centred in the Christ of God. Syncretism ultimately is but another form of Christ-rejection. Therefore, he urges that Christianity is, on principle, "un- and anti-syncretistic."29 Others, like Kamstra, see this negative view of syncretism arising from intellectual arrogance and the cultural superiority of western Christianity.

To avoid these criticisms, Kraemer distinguishes syncretism from "adaptation." in the sense of "absorption," "adoption" or "digestion" into a new and changed circumstance in the process of the contact of the gospel with other cultures and religions. For him, this distinction is "not an attempt towards syncretistic equalizing, but the incorporation and use of these elements as the means for its own dynamism."30 He thus contends that "adaptation is not only unavoidable but also necessary and imperative" in the field of natural and responsible contact with the world, because "the Church has to live, to witness, to grow in that specific world."31 For him, therefore, "adaptation does not signify compromise or 'interesting experiment,' but the expression of the Christian faith in a style which is not that of a pot-plant, but of a seed sown in a specific soil."32

28 Ibid., 266.
29 Ibid., 265.
30 Ibid., 261.
31 Ibid., 268, 269.
32 Ibid., 269.
In other words, it is part of the true basis of "building the [indigenous] Church in the world" and "proclaiming the gospel to the world." As I shall argue later, this term "adaptation" is also inadequate for describing the work of inculturation. However, this negative view of syncretism has become one of the basic elements and theological criteria of Christian theology for a long time, and remains fundamental even today for many churches and missions.

(2) Positive Views of Syncretism

In this sub-section I shall review contemporary theologians' positive views about syncretism. Their theological positions, unlike negative views that stress the purity of the gospel, Christian identity, and the threat from other religions, especially focus on interreligious dialogue or the encounter with other religions. On the one hand, some say that, since negative views of syncretism come from the tradition of Western theology, we in the East should be able to move beyond them toward the construction of our own positive theological reality. More moderately, on the other hand, others tie their views of syncretism to Christ-centred criteria, and then seek the grounds for a creative and dynamic syncretism in the "incarnation" of Christ, namely within the framework of traditional theology. Therefore, I shall call the former the "positive radical view"; the latter the "positive Christ-centred view."

(i) Radical Syncretism

A representative theologian of the positive radical view about syncretism is the Korean
feminist theologian, Hyun Kyung Chung. Her views resemble those of the *minjung* theologian Nam-Dong Suh (whom we shall discuss later). Chung's presentation in Canberra for the Seventh General Assembly of the World Council of Churches (1991) evoked a lively debate about syncretism, although K. C. Abraham insists that "she provided a challenge to our mode of theologizing, which often ignores the primordial elements of our bond with creation and people....To dismiss Professor Chung's presentation as another effort at syncretism was indicative of our tendency to put the religious sensibilities of all peoples into our theological framework."33

In Canberra, nevertheless, her presentation and performance were offensive to many traditional theologians, but also challenging to many.

Above all, the starting point of her theology is a reflection upon the personal experiences of struggle and liberation. Through the experiences of her life, she came to realize that deconstruction of every aspect of theological imperialism must become a main focus of her theological work. She shifted her theological direction existentially from deconstruction to reconstruction when she discovered her biological mother after 30 years, and listened to her mother's life stories - her struggle for mere survival in this unfriendly world. She says:

To meet this woman, my birth mother, opened another dimension of my theological consciousness. Several theological questions I struggled with theoretically became existentially clear to me. Encountering my mother helped me to identify my theological concerns, especially as they relate to the norm and sources of Third World women's theology. Theological languages, paradigms, and questions that come from the life experiences of Western male intellectuals, who are the brains of the cultural hegemony which reduced poor Asian women to the status of non-persons for Asian women's theology. The resources for Asian women's liberation theology must come from the life experiences of Asian women themselves. Only when we Asian women start to consider our everyday concrete life experiences as the most important source for building the

---

religious meaning structures for ourselves shall we be free from all imposed religious authority.34

Here Chung contends that "The text of God's revelation was, is, and will be written in our bodies and our peoples' everyday struggle for survival and liberation...Our life is our text, and the Bible and church tradition are the context which sometimes becomes the reference for our own ongoing search for God."35 In a word, her theology is radical, revolutionary, and hostile to traditional Christian theology. She continues to say,

What matters for them [Asian women] is not doctrinal orthodoxy. Male leaders of the institutional church always seem preoccupied with the doctrinal purity of their religions. What matters to Asian women is survival and the liberation of themselves and their communities. What matters for them is not Jesus, Sakyamuni, Mohammed, Confucius, Kwan In or Ina, but rather the life force which empowers them to claim their humanity. Asian women selectively have chosen life-giving elements of their culture and religions and have woven new patterns of religious meaning.36

Thus Chung suggests that the future of Asian women's spirituality and theology must move away from Christocentrism and toward life-centrism. Finally, she proposes that we should risk "survival-liberation centred syncretism"37 as a new model for understanding Asian women's liberation theology for the deeper understanding of God's activity in this pluralistic and divided world.

To be sure, Chung's proposal is an attack upon traditional Western theologians who believe that syncretism destroys Christian identity, is dangerous, and is the lazy and irresponsible way of

34Hyun-Kyung Chung, Struggle to be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women's Theology (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1990), 5.

35Ibid., 111.

36Ibid., 113.

37Ibid., 114.
combining different religious heritages without any principles. But a German theologian, Theo Sundermeier positively evaluates her proposal on syncretism: "Chung's life experience is one of the most impressive stories in Asia...and her theological presentation is an example of the theology of inculturation. Of course, we can ask whether such personal experience may be a theological norm..., but at the same time we can answer it in the process of inculturation and syncretism." We may indeed empathize with Chung's defence of her Korean religio-cultural context and her rejection of western religious imperialism. Yet we may be critical of her failure to take seriously the Christ-centred faith of her Korean compatriots. Her "survival-liberation centred syncretism" is unfortunately very vague, and provides no clear criteria for that which serves "life." Further, very few Christians could agree to dismiss the Bible as "text" to be replaced by "context."

The argument about syncretism must take into account the experience of genuine interreligious dialogue, which invalues willingness to respect other people's faith. If dialogue involves true listening, it will surely involve learning true wisdom from "the others." But the emphasis of true dialogue, as Dirk Mulder says, "is not on the existence of God, nor on transcendence or the absolute, nor on the common spirituality or faith," but on the question of "truth" and "salvation." This common concern can certainly be common ground for encounter


or dialogue, and it can create "an openness for listening to people of other faiths - God's people - without the fear of syncretism." For Christians, in my view, syncretism must be a "Christ-centred syncretism," if Christian faith is to remain recognizably Christian. It also must be located in a wider social and cultural context, and must include consideration of power structures. However, the great value of authors like Chung is that they increase over-awareness of the imbalance of power among religions in an imperialistic situation. They also press us to realize that interreligious dialogue, when it is genuine, presupposes and implies some form of syncretism, which is essential to a better mutual understanding and cooperation for the well-being of humankind.

(ii) Christ-Centred Syncretism

Here I shall deal with two major contemporary theologians who adopt a positive Christ-centred syncretism: a Protestant theologian, M.M. Thomas, and a Catholic, Leonardo Boff. Carl Starkloff says. "they are the most symphathetic writers on syncretism." M. M. Thomas, a former director of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society in Bangalore, India, and a former moderator of the World Council of Churches, first presupposes that syncretism is a socio-historical reality, and thus inevitable in Christianity as a

39(...continued)
1995).]

40 Ibid., 211.

41 Carl Starkloff. 84. [In his article, Starkloff adds one more Protestant theologian, Wolfhart Pannenberg to two positive viewers of syncretism. (Ibid., 85-86.)]
historical religion. As seen before, the leaders of churches or theologians who have a negative view on syncretism have been so afraid of the danger of syncretism (and possibly still are) that all inter-religious contact was banned in a real sense, and the result was that anti-adaptationists strengthened themselves at all levels. But Thomas' approach is that the churches should emphasize the positive potentialities of interreligious dialogue rather than the danger of syncretism.

By using a more positive concept of syncretism, thus, Thomas attempts to rescue the word from its negative connotations, for those remain a continuing hindrance for Christians who wish to enter into dialogue with other religions. For him, a neutral or even positive definition of syncretism encourages interchange between religions and cultures, and then distinguishes between a wrong and right kind of syncretism. Accordingly, he speaks of a neutral and positive term, "Christ-centred syncretism as the goal of interfaith dialogue" for Christians.42 It would enable Christians to be open to interpenetration at cultural and religious levels, but with Jesus Christ as the principle of discrimination and coherence.

Of course, Thomas also tries to use the term "adaptation" in a positive sense, as "the legitimate assimilation by one religion of foreign religious elements without losing its fundamental character."43 That is, "legitimate syncretism does not create a new religion."44 In


43 Ibid., 394-395. [Thomas understands that this positive way was used among Old and New Testament scholars, like Harnack, Gunkel, and Bultmann, who discerned in the history of Israel and of the church of New Testament times an interpenetration of elements from different cultural and religious traditions, controlled by faith.]
this sense, syncretism is rejected by all established religions. Therefore, he insists that the Christian goal should be a "Christ-centred syncretism," since, for Christians, this opens "the possibility for a process of interpenetration, directed and controlled by Christ-centredness." He explains:

To use the phrase "centrality of Jesus Christ" is more appropriate in Christology. We can then speak of other realities of the world and life as real as they are centred in Jesus Christ. Even various apprehensions of the totality of the world and life, i.e. religious and secular faith, need not be denied validity so long as they can be redefined or transformed in the light of the centrality of Christ.

However, Thomas points out that a negative view of syncretism is based on the stress of radical theocentricity, the centrality of God's action in Jesus Christ in judgement and redemption. He agrees that the gospel is from God and should ever remain centred in the Christ of God. He emphasizes that theology should involve politics and the concern for political and social justice. That is, the gospel is for the human person, and therefore divine truth should not be divorced from human values and social ideology. Therefore, he contends that "a Christ-centred humanism is integral to the gospel and has its own evangelistic dimension. If theology is Christologically oriented, it need not be opposed to anthropology."

In another publication, Thomas draws "a Christ-centred humanist approach to other

\[\text{\footnotesize (continued)}\]

\[44\text{Ibid., 395.}\]

\[45\text{Ibid., 396.}\]

\[46\text{Ibid., 387.}\]

\[47\text{Ibid., 391.}\]


(continued...
religions" in four aspects. The most important aspect is, first, the insight that faith in Christ needs to be distinguished from all its historical expressions in religion and culture and be seen as transcending them. This transcendence is the basis of their continued re-formation through their openness to other religions and cultures. Second, Christ-cenredness does not mean the absolutization of any Christological doctrine. If faith in Christ transcends Christian religion and traditional Christological creeds, an inescapable implication is that it is possible to hold that faith within the framework of other religions and secular ideologies. Third, Christ as the criterion of the spiritual evaluation of all religions including Christianity, enables a discernment of the spirits in them. This will lead to exclusive, inclusive, and pluralistic attitudes depending on the spiritualities encountered in one and the same religion. Finally, the spiritual ultimacy of the person of Jesus or the way of Jesus would find expression in different doctrines of Christ in different cultural settings, as the Christologies of the New Testament show.

According to Thomas, today all religions and cultures are in various stages of disintegration and reintegration. Thus every religion must accept a good deal of unprincipled mixture of elements from various religions and secular faiths before the process of internal reintegration can successfully take place. In fact, it is what makes interfaith relations internal in every person, in every religion, and in every culture. He puts it,

Most of us in situations of pluralism know only too well in living experience that we live with elements of culture, philosophy and cult drawn from different religious and secular ideological traditions. There is no other way of living. It is the nature of our central decision for Christ and our continuous effort to centre these various elements in some

---

48(...continued)
form of coherence around it that make us Christian.⁴⁹

In this sense, the "unintegrated mixtures" of religious, ideological and cultural elements, which Kraemer calls syncretistic, are inevitable. Therefore, Thomas insists that such unintegrated mixtures are "legitimate for the Christian and the church as long as they are not seen as a goal in themselves but indicate a movement towards a new integration or adaptation based on Christian fundamentals," and "all Christians are pagans in parts. More so today. synthesis is a long way away, it is almost 'eschatological'."⁵⁰

The main thing that Thomas here emphasizes is that "the conscious decision should be Christ-centred, and that the process of conversion should be taken seriously."⁵¹ Accordingly, unlike Kraemer, he redefines syncretism "not as an illegitimate mingling of religious elements but more neutrally as converging legitimate, relatively legitimate, and illegitimate mingling of different religious elements - the ultimate principle and goal of legitimacy being left to each religion or ideology," and calls it a "rehabilitation of syncretism."⁵² This is his significant contribution to a new view of syncretism. because this rehabilitation, as Indonesian theologian Peter Latuihamallo says, shifts to "creative syncretism" under the control of the gospel of Christ. Latuihamallo says that "what we call adaptation, accommodation, amalgamation and the like,

---

⁵⁰ Ibid., 392.
⁵¹ Ibid., 393.
⁵² Ibid., 393.
seem to stem from the same spiritual home of syncretism," and further points out that social
unity in a multi-religious situation requires a dynamic understanding of syncretism.

Syncretism is sometimes dynamic and creative. I mean to say that a syncretistic
background, either religiously or culturally, may help to create situations for a liveable
life. The Indonesian society is rapidly becoming a mosaic multigroup society within the
nation's unity. The principle problem is how to maintain and strengthen that unity.54

Another theologian who takes a positive view of syncretism is the Brazilian liberationist,
Leonardo Boff. He has recently attempted to treat the topic critically from the perspective of
social concerns. He recognizes that "power" is a key issue of syncretism, and stresses an
approach to religious praxis that assures more self-determination to the common people. He
realizes, above all, that "the value of syncretism depends on the viewpoint of the observer, but
our understanding of syncretism has always come from those who have been afraid of it: the
defenders of theological and institutional knowledge."55 Writing to understand the perspective of
an outsider to Roman Catholicism, he says,

If the observer sits in the privileged places within Catholicism - understanding it as a
signed, sealed, and delivered masterpiece - then he or she will consider syncretism to be a
threat to be avoided at all costs. If, however, he or she is situated on a lower level, amid
conflicts and challenges, in the midst of the people who live their faith together with other
religious expressions, on a level that understands Catholicism as a living reality and
therefore open to other elements and the attempt to synthesize them, then syncretism is
seen as a normal and natural process.56

54 Ibid., 56.
55 Leonardo Boff, Church: Charism & Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 89.
56 Ibid., 89.
This means, as Andre Droogers also argues, that the imbalance of power, including power structures, is essential to the understanding of syncretism.\textsuperscript{57} For Boff, thus, syncretism is not only culturally inevitable, but also theologically dictated for Christianity, which, as a "universal religion." takes on flesh in various cultures. In this sense, Boff understands Christianity as "one huge syncretism."\textsuperscript{58}

According to Boff, the ruling Church leaders claim that Christianity cannot be syncretic because it is a revealed religion. They also say that Biblical Judaism is the historical revelation of Yahweh. But he argues that the Old and New Testaments are both composed of syncretic writings that have assumed the surrounding influences of their own and other cultures. The writings contain Judaic, Judeo-Christian, Greek, Roman, gnostic, stoic, and many other elements - elements not simply juxtaposed but assimilated, starting always from a strong Christian identity with particular christological criteria. So, the Church as a structure is as syncretic as any other religious expression. He says.

Pure Christianity does not exist, never has existed, never can exist. The Divine is always made present through human mediations which are always dialectical. They are divine in the reality of history (identity), revealing divine identity while, at the same time, hiding it because of their intrinsic limitations (nonidentity). What exists concretely is always the Church, that is, the historical-cultural expression and religious objectification of Christianity.\textsuperscript{59}

Therefore, for Boff, syncretism is not only natural and inevitable, but even a manifestation of the principle of incarnation. In other words, syncretism is not necessarily evil nor does it represent a

\textsuperscript{57} Andre Droogers, 16-22.

\textsuperscript{58} Leonardo Boff, 92.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 92.
pathology of pure religion; it is a normal condition of the incarnation, expression, and objectification of a religious faith.

Boff here seeks in the church's own theological understanding a basis for the validity and legitimacy of syncretism. Thus he reflects upon the positive aspects of syncretism in some key categories of Christian theology; for example, "the offer of universal salvation, religion as the syncretic expression of faith, and the essential catholicity as identity in plurality." However, he admits that there is true and false syncretism. and develops two types of criteria for authentic syncretism that will lead to the growth of the true catholicity of the church: "criteria intrinsic to syncretism and criteria from Christian self-understanding." Carl Starkloff summarizes Boff's delineated criteria as follows:

Under the first: 1) the need to maintain a balance between the component elements of syncretism as a sociological phenomenon; 2) the need for religion always to be undergoing conversion and serving faith; 3) the need for faith to realize its need for "religion." Under the second: 1) a central Christian identity summed up in Jesus of Nazareth; 2) an eschatology aiming towards the Kingdom of God; 3) Jesus' mission from the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, Boff adds two other fundamental criteria present in the Scriptures and also taken up by Jesus: "spiritual worship and ethical commitment that gives witness in life to the truth." These criteria enable one to discern between true and false syncretism, whether it is within the Church itself or in the encounter with other cultural or religious expressions. Starkloff, in

---

60 Ibid., 93-99.
61 Ibid., 99-106.
62 Carl Starkloff, 86.
63 Leonardo Boff, 105.
another article, suggests that Boff's criteria for discernment of legitimate syncretism should serve as provisional criteria for facilitating the insertion of the gospel within a cultural system, and also emphasizes the necessity of the gospel to touch the networks of cultural systems.64

Boff’s conclusion is that the future of Christianity depends on its ability to develop a "pedagogy of flexibility" to formulate a new syncretism which is impossible without the preservation of Christian identity. This new syncretism demands a missionary and evangelizing zeal that is directed toward conversion to Jesus Christ as God, who communicated himself to humanity. Also, this conversion is only possible if Christian faith has the courage to give up its own existing syncretism and risk a new one, accepting, assimilating, integrating, and purifying the values found in the religions of other cultures.65

As mentioned before, still, there are no doubt many Christians, particularly in "evangelical" circles, who believe that their faith is pure, untainted, and non-syncretic. Their attitude to syncretism is very negative, against what they see as the threat of the dilution and distortion of their faith. This attitude, as already mentioned before, is frequently directed against interreligious dialogue as well. But the recent tendency of more "mainstream" Christians is quite positive about syncretism. They discern an opportunity to respect and learn from other

64 Carl Starkloff, "Inculturation and Cultural Systems (part 2)," Theological Studies 55/2 (June 1994), 282-283. [Starkloff here uses Geertz’s four cultural systems to show how the gospel might affect them - that is, ideology, religion, common sense, and art. See, Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures (San Francisco: Basic Books, 1973), part III and IV.]

65 Leonardo Boff, 106-107.

66 Perhaps this so-called "mainstream" is a minority of Christians in Korea.
cultures, and take the opportunity to introduce and assimilate elements from other religions into their own Christian reflections. In short, their concerns are: "the question of interreligious dialogue," "a religious approach to praxis on the imbalance of power," and "inculturation as the ongoing process of the development of Christian life." These concerns are finally directed to a new understanding of syncretism. I call it "a new healthy syncretism."

What, then, are the criteria of this new healthy syncretism? Needless to say, its criteria are Jesus Christ, the Bible, the tradition of the Church - both Roman Catholic and Protestant - and the experiences of the whole of human life. We would always need a conversation about the "essentials" of Christianity. Therefore, a positive "Christ-centred" syncretism presupposes that all cultures need to be converted in such a way that they cease to be what they are, and become expressions of Christian faith.

In Boff's words, the criterion is "conversion": without conversion "Christian identity is corrupted and absorbed by the identity of each culture." However, when we speak of Christian identity, we must recognize that "there is no such thing as a chemically pure Christian identity; it is always syncretized." Therefore, it is inappropriate to discuss its historical objectification only in western Greco-Roman-European culture, since Christian identity is not essentially theory, but Christian experience, a way of life. This experience is rooted in Jesus of Nazareth, namely, his life, death, and resurrection; and thus it must be able to be realized in any religious and cultural situation.

Starkloff summarizes a few principles for the discernment of a healthy syncretism. They

---


68 Ibid., 102.
are five basic principles which Schreiter originally delineated: (1) Good evangelization will bring about cultural change. (2) Syncretism is fundamentally not about theology (which expresses a view of life) but about sign systems, which represent a way of life. (3) Religion is not simply a set of ideas but a phenomenon that varies from culture to culture. (4) Syncretism is also a matter of "interest" (This is a similar observation to those of Droogers and Boff about "power"). (5) Syncretism is a historical, temporary phenomenon in a gradual process, and thus should not be seen as a lapidary condition in a culture. 69 These principles refer to what contemporary Christians now call "spirituality." in the sense that it means "a way of life."

As described before, an adequate understanding of syncretism presupposes interreligious dialogue and inculturation (a theme to be discussed later), rather than purity of religion or superiority of faith. Interreligious dialogue, as Jeffery Carlson points out, is not an encounter between, for instance, "pure Christian" and "pure other religious person," since these dialogue partners cannot exist. In other words, we are all syncretic selves. Therefore, he suggests that recognition of the nature of "inner Christian" or "inner Buddhist" plurality is the key to a new interpretation of and response to the plurality among what we have usually called the "religions." 70 This recognition is key to a new healthy syncretism.

Basic also is a genuinely open and honest "conversational" approach to dialogue. But here I shall not enter into the debate among theologians of religion about "exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism." However, David Tracy helpfully describes dialogical conversation as:

69 Carl Starkloff, "The Problem of Syncretism in the Search for Inculturation," 87. And also see, Robert Schreiter, Constructing Local Theologies, 157-158.

a game with some hard rules: say only what you mean; say it as accurately as you can; listen to and respect what the other says, however different or other; be willing to correct or defend your opinions if challenged by the conversation partner; be willing to argue if necessary, to confront if demanded, to endure necessary conflict, to change your mind if the evidence suggests it.71

A conversational approach, therefore, seeks to listen to and respect what other religious traditions say. It is the only credible response to the living, profound reality of other religious traditions. Only through this approach to other religious traditions can inculturation become truly the incarnation of Christian life in any particular cultural context: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14).

In conclusion, this approach is necessary to construct a dynamic theological work in the search for authentic synthesis and inculturation. As D'Costa explains, "salvation comes through God in Christ alone. God's salvific will is truly universal, and the inclusivistic paradigm can be characterized by an openness and commitment to other faiths."72 This point of view does not imply that Christian identity or purity will be threatened or lost by the encounter with other religions; on the contrary, it creates a new spirituality for the richer and deeper development of Christian life. Such a positive view of syncretism embodies the good news of Jesus Christ in the individual and communal, socio-economic, historical and religio-cultural dimensions of life. Thus it is basic to the holistic spirituality which is our goal for Korean Christians.


II. Theological Understanding of Inculturation

Since our concern is a Christian spirituality for the syncretic Korean context, "culture" is obviously a key concept for us here. The relation of faith to culture is an enormous subject, and for our purpose, we shall consider it under the heading of "Inculturation."

Inculturation is one of the ways in which the pluriform character of contemporary Christianity manifests itself. The term "inculturation" was originally used by Roman Catholic Jesuit theologians; however, it was soon accepted by many Protestants, especially in the World Council of Churches (WCC) and is today one of the most widely used concepts in missiological circles. But this term is often used synonymously with other words, e.g. "indigenization" and "contextualization," because they point to a dynamic cultural and social phenomenon. However, "this use." as Ruy Costa points out. "deflates their peculiarities."  

---

73 David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 447. [According to Bosch, it was J. Masson who first coined the phrase *Catholicisme inculture* (inculturated Catholicism) in 1962. It soon gained currency among Jesuits, in the form of "Inculturation". In 1977 the Jesuit superior-general, Peter Arrupe, introduced this term to the Synod of Bishops.]

74 Ruy O. Costa, "Introduction: Inculturation, Indigenization, and Contextualization," in Ruy O. Costa, ed. *One Faith, Many Cultures: Inculturation, Indigenization, and Contextualization* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988), ix. [Costa says that these terms are "evangelistic-apologetic concepts." That is, "inculturation and indigenization are apologetic methods focused on the translation/interpretation of a received text for a given culture, whereas contextualization sees this translation/interpretation as a dialectical process in which text and context are interdependent" (Ibid., xii.).]
To understand more clearly the contemporary use of the term "inculturation," Gerald A. Arbuckle summarizes the evolution of this term as shown in Table 1. It will be helpful for elucidating a working definition or description of inculturation because the term is complex and still unfamiliar to many. In this section, therefore, I shall examine, first of all, other words

---

related to the term "inculturation"; next, describe the meaning of the term as defined by scholars and theologically reflect upon it; and finally, emphasize the necessity of inculturation in the syncretic Korean context, because, as explored in the previous chapter, it is a concept that helps us to distinguish between positive and negative views of syncretism, and to find an authentic Korean Christian spirituality.

1. Other Words Related to Inculturation

To understand inculturation more succinctly, it will be helpful to examine the meaning of other words related to it. The common root of all these words is "culture." One of the leading anthropologists today, Clifford Geertz, borrows the concept of culture from Clyde Kluckhohn and summarizes it as follows:

(1) "the total way of life of a people"; (2) "the social legacy the individual acquires from his group"; (3) "a way of thinking, feeling, and believing"; (4) "an abstraction from behavior"; (5) a theory on the part of the anthropologist about the way in which a group of people in fact behave; (6) a "storehouse of pooled learning"; (7) "a set of standardized orientations to recurrent problems"; (8) "learned behavior"; (9) a mechanism for the normative regulation of behavior; (10) "a set of techniques for adjusting both to the external environment and to other men"; (11) "a precipitate of history"; and turning, perhaps in desperation, to similes, as a map, as a sieve, and as a matrix.76

Geertz has his own formulation of culture from the perspective of anthropology: "culture denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions, expressed in symbolic forms by means of which human beings communicate,

perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."\textsuperscript{77} Here we can see a need for clarification in his definition. It is the key word "symbol" which has to be further clarified. In his words, "it [symbol] is used for any object, act, event, quality or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception -- the conception is the symbol's meaning."\textsuperscript{78} For example, a red flag is symbol of danger and a white is that of surrender. At this point, Aylward Shorter takes basically the same approach to the definition as Geertz does. He says, it is "a set of symbols, stories, myths and norms for conduct that orient a society or group cognitively, affectively and behaviorally to the world in which it lives."\textsuperscript{79} Therefore, here I shall utilize the definition of Geertz and Shorter, who are essentially agreed.

The question of "inculturation" arises when we consider the interaction of one culture with another. The term needs to be carefully distinguished from other similar terms: "enculturation," "acculturation," and "interculturation." Enculturation is a sociological concept which has been used analogously by theologians for the theological notion of inculturation.\textsuperscript{80} Shorter first

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 89.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 91.

\textsuperscript{79} Aylward Shorter, Toward a Theology of Inculturation (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 5.

According to Louis J. Luzbetak, culture is a way of life, a society's design for living. He defines it as "(1) a plan (2) consisting of a set of norms, standards, and associated notions and beliefs (3) for coping with the various demands of life, (4) shared by a social group, (5) learned by the individual from the society, and (6) organized into a dynamic (7) system of control. [See, Louis J. Luzbetak, The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 156.] We note that this is similar to the definition of Geertz and Shorter, but lacks the key concept of "symbol."

\textsuperscript{80} An anthropologist M. J. Herskovits, who coined the term "enculturation," may have preferred this to "inculturation," because of the possible equivocation given with the prefix "in -," (continued...)
suggests that "in order to differentiate between the sociological and theological uses of this term, it is better to preserve the spelling 'enculturation' for the sociological context, and 'inculturation' for the theological context." Also, however, enculturation refers to the cultural process of the learning experiences of the individual, the process by which people are inserted into their own culture. It is a concept that is closely related to that of "socialization," another term employed by social scientists to refer to the cultural education of an individual.

Ary Roest Crollius here notes the difference between enculturation and inculturation.

According to him, just as the individual becomes inserted into his or her own culture (becomes enculturated), the Church also becomes inserted into a given culture (becomes inculturated). Therefore, "the main difference between enculturation and inculturation is that in the first case, the individual does not yet have a culture, and acquires his culture in the process of enculturation. whereas the Church, though it is bound to no particular culture, does not enter into a given culture unless already linked with elements of another culture." 

\[80\] (...continued)

-", which can also express a negation, as in the English word "incult." Since the same difficulty exists in several languages, the form "enculturation," rather than "inculturation," has been adopted by anthropologists writing in these languages. [See M.J. Herskovits, Man and His Works: The Science of Cultural Anthropology (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1952), 39.]

\[81\] Aylward Shorter, 5.

\[82\] M.J. Herskovits proposes to replace this term "socialization" by "enculturation," because the process of becoming inserted into one's culture is not only in view of an "adjustment to social living," but has also, and prominently, aspects which concern the growth of the individual. (M. J. Herskovits, 39)

\[83\] Ary Roest Crollius, "What is So New about Inculturation?," in Ary Roest Crollius and T. Nkeramihigo, eds. What is So New about Inculturation? (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1984), 7.
The word "acculturation" is another one which is closely associated with the theological concept of inculturation. *Acculturation*, a distinct anthropological concept, pertains to the encounter between one culture and another, in which changes occur. This is perhaps the principal cause of cultural change; it is a historical process which is a necessary concomitant of culture itself. It refers to the meeting of two or more cultures and the accommodation each culture makes with respect to the other(s). As Crollius points out, "Acculturation could then also retain its anthropological signification, as synonymous with 'culture-contact,' and is better not confounded with 'inculturation'." Therefore, from an anthropological point of view, "the process of inculturation has also the characteristics of a process of acculturation."^85

In this regard, Shorter's definition of acculturation is identified with that of Crollius: "[acculturation] is an encounter between two different sets of symbols and conceptions, two different interpretations of experience, two different social identities."^86 It seems useful to use the word "acculturation" to refer to the reality of moving "away" from certain aspects of one's own culture, through encounter with another. Therefore, he points out that "in dealing with culture and the encounter between cultures, we are confronting a dynamic and diachronic phenomenon, and not a static, unchanging one."^87 But here too there is a difference from inculturation, because the Church or the Christian tradition is not in our view simply another culture, but has its own special nature and mission. So the process of inculturation calls for not only contact but also for

---

84 Ibid., 6.

85 Ibid., 7.

86 Aylward Shorter, 7.

87 Ibid., 7.
The term "interculturation" means the transfer of faith from one culture to another, and from a Christian point of view, the insertion of the Christian message into a given culture. It seems to suggest that the process of mission or evangelization is a one-way process. Inculturation, however, is carried out in partnership by individuals who represent different cultures; it implies that the Christian message transforms a culture, but also that the culture modifies or transforms our understanding of the message. But, as Shorter distinguishes between inculturation and interculturation, "the word 'interculturation' correctly expresses the sociological and the theological reality, both at the individual and collective, cultural levels."88

On the other hand, in A Handbook of Inculturation, Peter Schineller amplifies the meaning of "inculturation" by pointing to several images that describe its work. He discusses inadequate and more adequate words for conveying what inculturation involves: three negative words - "imposition," "translation," "adaptation," and three positive words - "indigenization," "contextualization," "incarnation."89

The term "imposition," which means "place over," clearly has a negative meaning. It refers to a method or process by which doctrines, religious customs, morals, and ways of praying and acting are brought from outside, from a foreign or alien culture and tradition, and imposed or forced upon the new culture. It shows no appreciation, no respect or regard, for the values, customs, and religious traditions of the group that is the object of mission. Therefore, as

88 Ibid., 14.

Schineller points out, "the problem with imposition is that it sees Christianity as a finished product, or package, that can be neatly exported from one culture to another."\textsuperscript{90} With regard to spirituality, it must be said that a deep and authentic spiritual life cannot be "imposed" on a people.

A second term used to describe missionary activity is "translation." This is a necessary starting point, for obviously some translation is necessary, some degree of communication between the old and new cultures. But, as Schineller says, "the danger is that translation becomes not only the starting point but the only method." That is, "the entire catechism, the prayers and liturgy, and the Bible are simply translated into the new languages with no creative adaptation or modification in accord with local customs or thought patterns."\textsuperscript{91}

The third inadequate term "adaptation," which means "making fit," refers to a more creative method of pastoral activity, and implies more serious listening to and study of the culture involved. Yet Schineller points out that adaptation has also been criticized as inadequate, in fact as a subtle form of imposition, and accused of not truly taking the local culture seriously.\textsuperscript{92} So, adaptation remains outside or above, and is only willing to make or allow extrinsic, accidental, superficial changes in ways of being Christian. It also seems to presume not only that there is a definite kernel or center of the gospel, but that it can be clearly known. This center remains the same, untouched, while peripheral expressions can change or be adapted.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 15.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 15.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 17.
For Schineller, a more adequate word for understanding inculturation is "indigenization."

To be indigenous means to be a native, one who is born into a particular context or culture. Indigenous people are those who grow up with and know the culture from inside, and, where Christianity is concerned, those who live and understand Christianity from that insider's perspective. Accordingly, this word contrasts with the outsider, the translator or adaptor. But cultures are always changed by outsiders, namely, modernization, technology, education and so on. Therefore, a danger in the term "indigenization," as Schineller points out, is that "it might result in a too static view of culture."93 Crollius also indicates that this term is rejected because in some languages, "indigenous" and its cognates have a restricted meaning -- that is, for some people, "indigenous" and "natives" can be found in exotic countries, or everywhere except where they themselves come from.94

A word that does take into account precisely this changing nature of culture is the term "contextualization."95 Literally, this term means a "weaving together," thus an interweaving of the gospel with every particular situation. Instead of speaking of a particular culture, whether traditional or modern, it speaks of contexts or situations to which the gospel must be found

93 Ibid., 18.
94 Ary Roest Crollius, 4.
95 This term was introduced around 1972 by the staff members of the Theological Education Fund in the World Council of Churches. In its original employment, the term referred primarily to theological education in non-Western countries, but soon it was felt that the concept could be used also for other aspects of the life and mission of the Church. "Contextuality" and "contextualism" are other expressions which made their first appearance in these circles. Here, especially, "contextualism" occurred in discussions on Ethics among Reformed theologians in the United States towards the end of the 1950s. [See, Ary Roest Crollius, 3. and Max L. Stackhouse, "Contextualization, Contextuality, and Contextualism," in Ruy O. Costa, ed. One Faith, Many Cultures: Inculturation, Indigenization, and Contextualization, 3-13.]
relevant. Contextualization thus shows greater awareness of the particularity of contexts; it also shows greater awareness of the historical development and change that is ongoing in all contexts. Stephen B. Bevans uses the term "contextualization" as the preferred term for describing the theology that takes culture and cultural change seriously. He notes, "the contextualization of theology - the attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of a particular context - is really a theological imperative. As we understand theology today, contextualization is part of the very nature of theology itself." And he further explains contextualization, by distinguishing it from indigenization mentioned above.

Indigenization focused on the purely cultural dimension of human experience, while contextualization broadens the understanding of culture to include social, political, and economical questions. In this way, culture is understood in more dynamic, flexible ways and is seen not as closed and self-contained, but as open and able to be enriched by an encounter with other cultures and movements.97

But there may be some possible dangers in this term: "one could mix Christianity and culture in a way that does not enhance but compromises and betrays Christianity," and also "it may overemphasize the present context to the detriment of continuity with the past." Lesslie Newbigin sees these problems in the distinction between "false and true contextualization." He finds its criterion in the question about how the gospel "comes alive" in particular contexts. That is, "true contextualization happens when there is a community which lives faithfully by the

97 Ibid., 21.
98 Ibid., 17.
99 Peter Schineller, 19.
gospel and in that same costly identification with people in their real situations as we see in the earthly ministry of Jesus. When these conditions are met, the sovereign Spirit of God does his own surprising work."\(^{100}\)

Lastly, the most directly theological word to express the meaning of inculturation is "incarnation." From the gospel text (Jn. 1:14 - "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us"), the word "incarnation" carries its original depth significance, and thus refers to the entire Christ-event: the coming, birth, growth, daily life and struggle, teaching, healing, resting, celebrating, suffering, dying, and rising of Jesus Christ. Jesus was born, lived, and died in a particular context or culture. He learned the language and customs of his people, and in and through these things he expressed the truth and love of God. Of course, he did not consciously indigenize or inculturate, but instinctively took part fully in the culture he was born into, and then critically affirmed and challenged that culture in light of the Spirit. This stance becomes the model for Christian mission today. Therefore, as Schineller emphasizes, "incarnation presents us not with an option but an obligation."\(^{101}\) For it is only in and through particular cultures and contexts that God's love and truth are revealed and made present.

2. Inculturation: Definition and Theoretical Reflections

Now I shall focus more closely on the term "inculturation" itself, which is at the centre of


\(^{101}\) Ibid., 21.
our discussion, which is so important for our concern with Korean spirituality.

Inculturation, as we have seen, is a theological term which combines the theological significance of contextualization and incarnation. In this regard, the process of inculturation should learn from the social sciences, and especially from cultural anthropology, which clarifies the various meanings of culture. To present a working definition of inculturation, thus, offers positive advantages for articulating the content of both spirituality and mission. According to Schineller, there are four advantages:

First, instead of adhering to more deductive understandings of culture and more philosophical, universal understandings of human nature, inculturation introduces us to the data of the social sciences such as cultural anthropology, sociology, and ethnology. Second, it leads to a fruitful dialogue or interchange between culture and gospel/church. Third, it moves beyond imposition, translation, and adaptation toward the reorientation, renewal, and transformation of culture from within, in light of the gospel message. Finally, the notion of inculturation underlines the central role of the local church and community in the mission of the church in the modern world.102

This means that inculturation should not be limited to some particular area of Christian life and mission; rather, it involves all aspects of being a Christian. Thus, Aylward Shorter offers a brief definition of inculturation: "the on-going dialogue is between faith and culture or cultures. More fully, it is the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and a culture or cultures."103 M. de C. Azevedo notes that inculturation is "an insertion of the Christian life into a culture; an ongoing process of reciprocal and critical interaction and assimilation between

---

102 Ibid., 23.

103 Aylward Shorter, 11.
Pedro Arrupe defines it more theologically as follows:

Inculturation is the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about "a new creation."

The focus is on the "new creation", on the transformation of the old. In this way, inculturation ultimately returns to the incarnation of Jesus Christ: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14). That is, Jesus proclaimed the good news of the Kingdom, and called apostles and disciples to continue that work after his own death and resurrection. Therefore, inculturation is necessitated and emphasized by the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Thus, Gerald A. Arbuckle also characterizes inculturation as follows: first, it is strictly a theological word and is synonymous with evangelization. It aims to emphasize the fact that evangelization, as a process of reliving the incarnation itself, demands the insertion of the gospel within the very heart of a culture. Second, it is an interaction between two cultures. It is not a simple encounter between the gospel and a culture, because the gospel comes to our times as already embedded in the particular culture of the time of the evangelists and comes anew to every culture embedded in the culture of those who communicate it. Third, it is a process of exchange. For example, new insights can be achieved into the message of Christ as the

---


106 Gerald A. Arbuckle, 18-20.
evangelizer listens to, and is questioned by, the people being evangelized. Fourth, it is first and foremost a *converting* encounter with the person of Christ (see Acts 9:3-9, 22:6-11, 26: 12-23). Fifth, it is a process of *critical interaction*, that is, the ultimate measure of every culture is Christ; cultural attitudes and structures must be measured against his justice and his love. Sixth, it is a *dialogue* between a community of faith and cultures.

In these respects, there are differences between inculturation and other concepts used prior to its emergence. Its fundamental differences are, as Bosch summarizes well,\(^\text{107}\) that, first, it differs in respect of the *agents*. Inculturation has two primary agents, the Holy Spirit and the local community, under the power and inspiration of the Spirit. Second, the emphasis is truly on the *local* situation. At this local level, inculturation impacts much more than culture in the traditional or anthropological sense of the term. It involves the entire context: social, economic, political, religious, educational, etc. Third, inculturation also has a *regional* or macrocontextual and macrocultural manifestation. The decisive consideration may not be, then, whether a church is Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, or Lutheran, but whether it has its home in Africa, Asia, or Europe. Fourth, inculturation consciously follows the model of the *incarnation*. In this paradigm, it is not so much a case of the church being *expanded*, but of the church being *born anew* in each new context and culture. Fifth, inculturation suggests a *double movement*: there is at once inculturation of Christianity and Christianization of culture. Sixth, since culture is an all-embracing reality, inculturation is also all-embracing.

But inculturation also has a *critical* dimension. As Bosch points out, "the faith and its

---

\(^{107}\) David J. Bosch, 453-455.
cultural expression - even if it is neither possible nor prudent to dislodge the one from the other - are never completely coterminous." Inculturation does not mean that culture is to be destroyed and something new built up on its ruins. However, it also does not suggest that a particular culture is merely to be endorsed in its present form. Therefore, inculturation remains a tentative and continuing process, not only because cultures are not static, but also because the church may be led to discover previously unknown mysteries of the faith. The relationship between Christian message and culture is a creative and dynamic one. Along with this insight, Peter Schineller speaks of two reasons for the emphasis on inculturation today: the first is that we are in an age of mission, and the church has been greatly challenged; the second is that we are in an age of global awareness, which includes an appreciation of cultural diversity. He finally concludes that "the church today, in view of the imperative of inculturation, must often undo what has been done poorly, and must re-evangelize what was badly evangelized when the gospel was presented in westernized categories and thought patterns."110

In this sense, inculturation should occur naturally and spontaneously, wherever the gospel is lived and shared. It should not be something added on or something optional but rather the ever-present attitude in all Christian life and mission. It is the ongoing way of engaging in Christian spirituality. Therefore, inculturation refers to the appropriate way of living and sharing our Christian faith or spirituality in a particular context or culture. As an example, Jesus was

---

108 Ibid., 455.

109 Peter Schineller, 6.

110 Ibid., 12.
born, lived, and died in a *particular context or culture*. He learned the language and customs, and, in this context, he expressed the truth and love of God. He did not consciously indigenize or inculturate, but instinctively took part fully in the culture he was born into [en-culturation], and then critically affirmed and challenged that culture in light of the Spirit [in-culturation]. This stance becomes the model for Christian mission today. Pedro Arrupe thus writes,

> The Incarnation of the Son is the primary motivation and perfect pattern for inculturation. Just like him, and because he did so, the Church will become incarnate as vitally and intimately as it can in every culture, being enriched with its values and offering it the unique redemption of Christ, his message and the resources for a new life.\(^{111}\)

As followers of Jesus Christ, therefore, we are to identify ourselves with the culture, people, and history we are part of. For it is only in and through particular cultures and contexts that God's love and truth are revealed and made present. Jesus Christ is the paradigm of Christian life and missionary activity. but he also affirms the seeds of the Word already present in particular cultures. Accordingly, there is no authentic church, and no authentic spirituality without mission, without that sense of being sent to bring gospel values, the good news, to one's particular context and culture. The inculturation of the Church is the integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the culture of its people, in such a way that this experience not only expresses itself in elements of this culture, but becomes a force that animates, orients and innovates this culture so as to create anew unity and communion, not only within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the Church universal.

Inculturation, then, is the ongoing way of being Christian wherever one finds oneself. It is

---

\(^{111}\) Pedro Arrupe, 13.
being fully and truly Christian in a particular cultural context or situation. In the process of inculturation, the church as Christian community of faith plays a significant role through individual Christians. In other words, all Christians must be involved in inculturation if they are to be effective in the circumstances of life. Thus, inculturation includes listening to other cultures rather than merely teaching or speaking to other cultures. It is an act of faith in the saving will and presence of God offered to all people. If the church is spiritually inculturated into the multiform cultures around the world, then the church has a world-wide basis of mission. Accordingly, inculturation should transform the life of the individual and community in the power of the Holy Spirit. For the Spirit is present within the whole process of inculturation, revealing both the mystery of Christ and the cultures in which the Word is to be preached. In this sense, inculturation is primarily more practical than theoretical. It is praxis of Christian life. It includes all human abilities where reflective experience has its place and role.

This practical significance of inculturation overlaps the concerns of political and liberation theologies regarding the relation of the gospel to social analysis and social justice. Theologies of inculturation have often tended to ignore this dimension. In fact, theology of inculturation and liberation/political theology need to be brought together. The same circular dialectic or interaction, found in theology of inculturation, pertains in the concept of "praxis," found in political theology. A Canadian theologian, Harold Wells, points out that praxis is an action informed by theory, but in such way that theory is in turn informed by action. According to him, "praxis refers to the circular traffic, the dynamic, critical interaction of theory and practice."\(^ {112} \)

\(^ {112} \) Harold Wells, "Social Analysis and Theological Method: Third World Challenge to (continued...)"
This concept implies that there is no true theology without practical engagement in mission. Yet that practical engagement is informed by theological thought, and ceases to be Christian mission if it is not based in and governed by the Word of God.

Wells further explains that "in faith and under the Word, we act, and think, and act again, in an ongoing circle, in such a way that action and thought critically inform one another." Therefore, he emphasizes the necessity of social analysis as the attempt to understand the functioning of a social order, to lay bare its network of relationships and structures of power. In considering the relation of social analysis to theology, thus, he contends that "a distinguishing mark of that theology is its explicit contextuality -- its stated intention to relate Christian faith to its own cultural and socio-political circumstances, and therefore to a thought out social analysis." In his recent book, A Future for Socialism?, Wells indicates that social analysis may concern itself with global systems, such as patterns of international trade, foreign aid and investment. It may be interested in national structures, -- profits and tax systems, interest rates, labour unions, ownership and control of resources and industry. Or it may attend to a local community and particular local issues, i.e., housing and food prices employment patterns.

112(...)continued

113 Ibid., 205.

114 Ibid., 205.
neighbourhood ethnic and race relations. In fact, all of these are intricately related, but it is at this local community level that the necessity for analysis is most visible. Therefore, the process of inculturation should be all-embracing of these, because, as mentioned before, there is no doubt that it takes place by itself in any case, wherever faith is alive. What must be especially emphasized is that cultural or social analysis, linked to mission and praxis, also transforms our theological understanding, for the gospel is a vital dynamic reality, always offering a fresh, living Word for every new and different circumstance.

3. Towards Inculturation in the Syncretic Korean Context

As examined in the previous chapter, the Korean context is characterized by religious syncretism: Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity. Korean Christianity was introduced into an already syncretic situation, and developed alongside other religions in various ways. As David Chung observes, the mission of Catholicism was a "miracle," while Protestantism was a "success." But this early mission of Korean Christianity, as seen in Chapter Two, exemplified typical "translation" and "adaptation" models which have been found inadequate as compared to inculturation. In this section, borrowing some of Stephen Bevans' concepts, I shall consider models for inculturation in the syncretic Korean context as threefold: "translation model," "praxis model," and "synthetic model."


(1) The Translation Model

A typical translation model in Korean Christianity, called “the sowing model” by Kyoung Jae Kim, has generally been practised by Western missionaries and some elite groups of indigenous Christians. It means not only a literal, word-for-word translation but also a doctrinal translation of Christianity which assumes functional or "dynamic equivalence" between two cultural entities. The aim of this dynamic equivalence method of translation, as Stephen Bevans says, “is to elicit the same reaction in contemporary hearers or readers as in the original hearers or readers.” In Charles Kraft’s terms, “Its aim is to be ‘faithful to the original documents.’ But this ‘faithfulness’ centers almost exclusively on the surface-level forms of the linguistic encoding in the source language and their literal transference into corresponding linguistic forms in the receptor language.” Accordingly, any translation has to be a translation of meaning, not just of words and grammar. In this regard, Schreiter explains that it begins with translation of the Church tradition, such as translation of Roman liturgy or the Bible, and then

---

117 According to Kyoung Jae Kim, “the sowing model” is based on an analogy with seed and soil within “the parable of the sower” (Mk. 4:1-32). This model emphasizes the absolute stance of the life-giving power of the seed. In contrast with the seed, the soil is regarded as relatively neutral, barren, or desolate. Yet any true farmer testifies that the land is not a dead entity, but a living organism. In the history of the Korean church, the seed in the sowing model was a puritanic, reformative, conservative, and orthodox theological system, which was a part of the fundamentalist theology formed in the 20th century American church. The soil in the analogy of the sowing model is the tradition: Korean religions and cultural heritage. (Ibid., 120-121.)

118 Stephen B. Bevans, 32.

adapts them to a local setting by translating them into the local language.\textsuperscript{120} But it takes little consideration of the positive patterns and values of local culture in the process of adapting the tradition of the Church, but rather presupposes the supracultural nature of the Christian message.

A representative Korean theologian of this model is Hyung-Nong Park (1897-1978), who "inherited a puritanic pietism and a fundamentalist conservative reformation theology from the missionaries."\textsuperscript{121} Park's theology contributed to the formation of the conservative theology of the Presbyterian Church in Korea, which became the theology of the evangelical majority of the Korean church. Park states, "My [theological] purpose is to introduce the reformed traditional theology of Calvin to Korea. My wish is to pass on the true theology to a new generation as we received it from the missionaries 80 [now 112] years ago."\textsuperscript{122} Here what he means by the "true theology" which the missionaries introduced to Korea 80 years ago is the conservative fundamentalist theology which the American missionaries brought with them to Korea in 1885. As I shall examine in the next chapter, this theological paradigm formed conservative Calvinist spirituality in the Korean church. His theological emphases are, as Kyoung Jae Kim also points out, "first, the absolute sovereignty of God; second the absolute authority of the Scriptures as the Word of God; third, the inner spiritual discipline of Christians in fighting against secularism; fourth, the respect of the visible church as the faith community; and fifth, the emphasis on

\textsuperscript{120} Robert J. Schreiter, 7.

\textsuperscript{121} Kyoung Jae Kim, 121.

\textsuperscript{122} Hyung-Nong Park, \textit{Gyoui Shinhak} I (Dogmatic Theology I) (Seoul, Lily Publishing Co., 1964), Introduction.
redemptive salvation through Bible study.”

Park's "conservative Calvinist" theology regarded Korea's traditional culture and religions as an entity to be dominated by the pure Christian gospel, not as a partner in dialogue or encounter with the gospel. He never accepted religious syncretism or traditional religions as a stepping stone to the Christian gospel, while he treated as absolute the American traditional orthodox theology as a professing Calvinist. His conviction was that the theological system of this "conservative Calvinist" theology was the true gospel itself or the eternal message of Christianity, and that the traditional culture and religions of the Korean context were nothing but weeds and thistles to be pulled out. He succinctly summarizes his theological stance as follows:

First, in order to explain the supernatural origin of Christianity, it is necessary to divide the world into two dimensions: natural and supernatural. Yet, comparative religion does not acknowledge this dichotomy of natural and supernatural. Therefore, it is dangerous to accept this view. Second, comparative religion, especially the religious-historical view, denies the autonomy and independence of Christian doctrines, and rather accepts the view that they were influenced by myths and other ancient religions. This kind of view is dangerous, so it should be rejected. Third, the religious tolerance which accepts Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism believing that these paganism may have something in common is to be outlawed. It is against the real truth. According to the great command of Jesus, the pagan world should be converted to Christianity. Fourth, the syncretistic interaction between Christianity and the pagan religions should also be rejected. Fifth, one should not make the mistake of not emphasizing the peculiar truths of Christianity by indulging in the implied truths of the pagan religions. In the encounter with the other religions, one should point out the difference, and the unique nature of Christianity, rather than dwelling on its similarity and common features. Sixth, the relationship between pagan religions and Christianity is not to be viewed as the former being fulfilled or completed in the latter. In the encounter with the pagan religions, Christianity does not recede. There is only submission and conversion. Seventh, the attitude of Christianity towards the pagan religions is not sharing. Christianity is the final and absolute religion.

123 Kyoung Jae Kim, 122-123..

124 Hyung-Nong Park, A Review of Modern Theological Problems (Pyungyang: The (continued...))
His theological stance clearly takes an exclusivistic attitude to other religions. This exclusivism, and the negative reaction of some Korean Christians to it, eventually caused the Korean [Presbyterian] church to be split sharply into two camps and led the larger Korean [Presbyterian] churches into a rigid dogmatism, so that today they remain far away from the inculturationist approach which is predominant in ecumenical circles.

As a result, on the one hand, Korean Protestant Christianity has generally accepted the cultural superiority of traditional western Christianity, while suggesting that the essence of Christianity is supra-cultural. That is to say, the Korean Christians who have accepted this model have believed that the message of the gospel comes from "above" and "beyond" this world, not from "below" or "within" this world. Korean Christianity has experienced, then, the aggressive imposition of Western civilization in the process of accepting the gospel. Western missionaries generally have ignored the particular syncretic context of Korea, and imposed their own cultural superiority and domination. Many Korean Christian leaders followed in the same way. Under their influence, Korean Protestants have usually disregarded the complexity of culture which comes from the inner motivation of the history and historical consciousness of the people who have attempted to create and to preserve their own social biography through their struggle in history. At this point, contemporary Korean Christianity requires a "paradigm shift" to move toward the positive concept and practice of inculturation, which is called the "praxis model."

\[124\] (...continued)

(2) The Praxis model

A typical model for this paradigm shift in contemporary Korean Christianity is the "praxis model," which has been associated with Korean "minjung theology." The praxis model focuses on the identity of Christians within a culture as that culture is understood in terms of social change. According to Bevans, "the praxis model is a way of doing theology that is formed by knowledge at its most intense level - the level of reflective action." In Gustavo Gutierrez's words, it is the model of "a new way of doing theology as a critical reflection on praxis." This model is about discerning the meaning and contributing to the course of social change, and so takes its inspiration not primarily from tradition but from present realities and future possibilities.

As we began to see in the previous section, the praxis model begins with an analysis of the social reality within a culture, and then analyses what the aspirations and commitments of the people are. Using Scripture as its basic source, it interprets how the ongoing action of God is revealed in history here and now. However, it does not take the object and task of theology as the development of "static" dogmatic statements, but finds the ultimate goal of theology from practice. Accordingly, this model reflects theologically upon historical praxis in a socio-economic and political context. The starting point and criterion of this model, in one sense, are the experience of struggle and oppression for social, economic, and political liberation. As a new way of doing theology, therefore, this model has fundamentally challenged the traditional concepts and methods of theology. While for more traditional ways, theology might be described

\[125\] Stephen Bevans, 63.

\[126\] Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, 6.
as a process of “faith seeking understanding,” this model would say that theology is a process of “faith seeking intelligent action.” So, for the theologian who takes praxis seriously, as Leonardo Boff says,

the first word is spoken by what is done, that is, by a conscious act aimed at changing social relationships. It is therefore an inductive theology. It does not start with words (those of the Bible or the magisterium) and end in words (new theological formulations), but stems from actions and struggles and works out of a theoretical structure to throw light on and examine these actions.127

Roger Haight suggests that this kind of model is "not yet a systematic theology but a movement."128 This model takes the concrete situation more seriously than any other model, since it regards theology not as a generally applicable, finished product that is valid at all times and in all places, but as an understanding of God’s presence in very particular situations. Korean minjung theology resembles other liberation theologies as a form of "praxis" theology, and as political theology.

In Korean minjung theology, the "praxis model" is linked to what Kyoung Jae Kim calls the "converging model"129 for interreligious encounter. According to Kyoung Jae Kim, the "converging model" does not refer directly to a biblical metaphor, but indirectly points to Jesus’ parable of the sheep and goats in connection with the Great Judgement (Mt. 25:31-46). The converging model takes as its ruling metaphor two streams coming together to form a larger river. A characteristic of this model, as it is found in minjung theology, is that it denies the


129 Kyoung Jae Kim, 131-132.
gospel's pre-eminence and its acceptance as a norm. This model does not see the world as a thing to interpret, but as an object to be transformed. Theologians who emphasize this model regard the salvation experience recorded in the Scriptures as equal to the salvation experiences of the minjung in their daily life. In Korea, then, the "praxis" model has been linked to a pluralist approach to inculturation and interreligious encounter in that it de-centers Jesus Christ, and relativizes the gospel in relation to other religions.

In Korea a representative theologian of the praxis model, which is also named the "converging model" is Nam-Dong Suh (1918 - 1984), who was known as the pioneer of minjung theology. Suh believed that the living God and resurrected Christ are not confined to the tradition of the past or the Scriptures, but rather are found in the suffering minjung in their souls and bodies. He thought that Western theological systems and doctrines are stumbling blocks to a meeting with Christ, and thus suggested a radical shift of theological paradigm.

The task of Korean minjung theology in Korea is to testify to the minjung tradition of Christianity in converging with the tradition of the Korean church in the form of Missio Dei. We regard the present events which are happening before our eyes as the intervention of God into history, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the Exodus event. We participate in these events and translate them with theological meaning. Participation means to inherit the tradition. In order to translate them, we need the reference to tradition. This writer calls it pneumatological-synchronic interpretation. This is contrasted with the traditional Christological-diachronic interpretation... In Christological interpretation, Jesus of Nazareth died 'for me’ or 'on my behalf,’ yet, in a pneumatological interpretation I represent Jesus, and the Jesus event is occurring here again. These two views are not alternative choices, but complementary. However, minjung theology is concerned with the work of Holy Spirit and the received tradition works as the reference for interpretation.130

Here, we can see the non-Western radical and dynamic nature of Suh’s model. Kyoung Jae

130 Nam-Dong Suh, Minjung Shinhak ui Tamgu (In Search for Minjung Theology) (Seoul: Hangil-sa, 1983), 78-79.
Kim summarizes Suh's theological stance quoted above as follows: first, *minjung* theology presupposes the *Missio Dei* and believes the salvation work of God is evident not only in the religious realm but also in daily living; second, *minjung* theology does not presuppose another salvation history far from secular and realistic history. Salvation history is only the inner meaning of universal historical reality. Therefore, there is no separate salvation history in parallel with universal history; third, the interpretation of history for *minjung* theology requires participation in actual events recreating the tradition here today. The typical salvation events in the Scriptures are the Exodus and Cross events. They are to be reactualized in the hearts of the *minjung* today; fourth, the inner power for the converging model comes from the Holy Spirit. This pneumatic synchronic interpretation means that the past and future become present experience through the work of the Holy Spirit; fifth, the event which comes into being by converging the *minjung* tradition in the Scriptures with the *minjung* tradition in Korean history is the concretization of God's kingdom on earth in the form of justice, freedom, and peace.131

From the perspective of the praxis model, therefore, the gospel should be a continual reinterpretation of the salvific message of Christianity in each changed human situation. Human cultural-religious history is a liberation process developing toward the eschatological completion of human liberation in the creative reality of life. The truth of each religion is not to be compared on the basis of dogmatic theories or doctrinal systems, but in the active power of the practical liberation of the human community. Accordingly, any salvific paradigm of religions which cannot effectively liberate human life from all kinds of bondage becomes a controlling ideology oppressing the people. Thus Kim declares that "such a religion should be criticized, and such

131 Kyoung Jae Kim, 134.
people should be liberated."\textsuperscript{132} From this perspective, Kim criticizes Suh's converging model.

However, as long as minjung theology is a theology, which aims at the building of a faith community, then the exodus and cross events cannot be just a reference only. Also the story about Jesus is not just an example of another minjung's story, but it is a story which has the 'power to save.' The converging model "does not fully appreciate the ultimacy of the cross and resurrection events of Jesus Christ and its unique power in transforming the old into the new.\textsuperscript{133}

In other words, the praxis model is more "radical" than any other model for inculturation; that is, it is not "Christ-centred."

Suh's emphasis on political praxis and liberation is surely sound and important. However, as I already indicated in earlier comments on Hyun Kyung Chung, Suh's position does not take with sufficient seriousness of the Christian devotion to Jesus Christ himself. A syncretistic stance that is not centred in Jesus Christ loses its Christian authenticity. Indeed, Jesus, though he identified with the minjung, and is one of the minjung, loses his authority and saving power. Nor can the minjung, sinful and mortal as they are, replace the crucified and risen Jesus as Saviour and liberator. Suh's emphasis on the Holy Spirit, however, - on the here and now saving presence and power of God - is a needed emphasis for any theology of inculturation.

Now I shall consider the "synthetic model" as a more helpful and appropriate model for the inculturation of Korean Christianity.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 135.

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 134-135.
(3) The Synthetic Model

A good model for inculturation in the syncretic Korean context is, I suggest, the "synthetic model." According to Bevans, it is "a middle-of-the-road model," which lies in the centre of the continuum, midway between the emphasis on cultural/social change and the gospel message/tradition. It is a "both/and" model, which takes pains to keep the integrity of the traditional message, while acknowledging the importance of taking culture and social change seriously.

As Bevans also describes it, first, this model tries to preserve the importance of the gospel message and the heritage of traditional doctrinal formulations, while at the same time acknowledging the vital role that culture has played and can play in theology. Second, this model reaches out to the resources of other cultures, other religions, and other theological expressions for both the method and content of its own articulation of faith. Third, this model is synthetic in the Hegelian sense of attempting not just to put things together in a kind of compromise, but of developing in a creative dialectic, something that is acceptable to all standpoints.

Accordingly, the synthetic model might be called a "dialectical model," "dialogical model," "conversation model." or "analogical model." since it involves constant dialogue, and employment of what David Tracy named the "analogical imagination." It might also be called a

134 Stephen Bevans, 81.

135 Ibid., 82.

136 Ibid., 82-83.

137 See, David Tracy, Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 405-456. [The following paragraph expresses Tracy's (continued...)]
"semiotic model." by which Schreiter attempts to discern culture itself as major resource for constructing local theology by means of semiological analysis. The task of semiotics is to interpret the contents of signs, their interaction, and their rules within a specific culture.

A fundamental presupposition of this model is the composite nature of human culture or the situation in which people live. What is important for this model is the emphasis on both uniqueness and complementarity, since one's identity emerges in a dialogue that includes both. The strongest aspect of this model is its basic attitude of "openness" and "dialogue." and thus, more than any other model, it witnesses to the true universality of Christian faith. But, as Bevans points out, the weakness of this model is that it is "always in danger of 'selling out' to the other culture or tradition, and so always needs to be appropriated with some suspicion."  

Korean theologians who belong to this model are Chai-Joon Kim (1901 -1987) and Tong-Shik Ryu (1922 - present). although Kyoung Jae Kim characterizes them as representatives of

---

137[...continued]

and the synthetic model's purpose succinctly: "We understand one another, if at all. only through analogy. Who you are I know only by knowing what event, what focal meaning, you actually live by. And that I know only if I too have sensed some analogous guide in my life. If we converse, it is likely we will both be changed as we focus upon the subject matter itself - the fundamental questions and classical responses in our tradition. The analogical imagination sees and is a very small thing. And yet it does suffice." (Ibid., 454-455.)]

138 According to Schreiter, "Semiotics is the study of signs (from the Greek semeion = sign). It sees a culture as a vast communication network, whereby both verbal and non-verbal messages are circulated along elaborate, interconnected pathways, which, together, create the systems of meaning. Central to this process are the bearers of the message. How these bearers are identified will depend upon the semiotic approach followed. They are called "symbols," "signs," or "signifiers," depending upon nuances desired by different authors." (Robert Schreiter, 49.)

139 Stephen Bevans, 88.
different models: "the yeast model" and "the graft model." In his theological endeavour, Chai-
Joon Kim tries to break the rigidity, exclusivism, and sectarianism of Korean Protestantism,
namely, the traditional model which has been influenced by the conservative missionaries from
America, in order to proclaim freedom for both the church and theology. In particular, he
emphasizes "freedom in faith, freedom in academic pursuit, acceptance of the ecumenical spirit,
participation in the transformation of history and society, harmony between study and piety, and
the building up of a Korean theology and an autonomous theological education in Korea." He
states,

As for history. Christianity is putting the redemptive history of God’s kingdom into
history so that human history is transformed into God’s kingdom... Now we have received
this Korea as our dough. We have received God’s commission to transform Korean
history into God’s kingdom... Therefore, we should endeavour to make the Christian
spirit to be the transforming soul in the fields of politics, economics, education, and

140 According to Kyoung Jae Kim, the “yeast model” is based on an analogy with yeast
and dough. The parable of the dough (Mt. 12:33; Lk. 13:20-21) becomes the biblical paradigm of
this model. The gospel is like the yeast which penetrates inside the dough, and the dough is the
life-situation of the cultural and social entity. The yeast has a changing power and it is found and
revealed in the power of the new being, Jesus Christ, as truly human and truly God. So, a basic
characteristic of this model is the understanding of the incarnation. That is, the essence of
Christian gospel is the “word becoming fresh” event. Therefore, in Christ both humanity and
history should be renewed and transformed. (Kim, 126-129.) The “graft model” is that of the
creation of a new life through the joining of two independent organic entities. This is an
encounter between two living entities. A biblical basis of this model is that grafting takes place
by inserting a shoot or branch, which one wishes to grow into another tree which has roots (Rom.
11: 17-27). The purpose of grafting is to produce good seeds or fruits, with an increase of harvest
by inserting a good gene into an old tree. From the perspective of the grafting model, therefore,
the indigenous culture and traditional religions are not to be neglected or destroyed, rather they
should be an active agent in receiving the gospel. (Kim, 135-136.)

141 Kyoung Jae Kim, 128. [The churches and seminary, which agreed with those
principles, formed the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) as a minority. later
developed into Hanshin University, and produced many progressive theologians inculding
minjung theologians.]
culture of Korea.\(^{142}\)

Since the gospel is not a particular doctrine or a complete theological system, but a dynamic spiritual reality which is active in the Holy Spirit, the kingdom of God is not only transcendental but also immanent; it is a present and yet also a future life reality. Therefore, the kingdom of God is manifested in all the particular contexts of human history. The kingdom of God is basically the work of the grace of God and of the Holy Spirit, yet it requires human participation. This must be a work both for God and for humankind.

In his other articles, Chai-Joon Kim notes the relationship between the gospel revealed in Christ and the traditional religious culture of Korea.

Religion is a relationship between the absolute being and a human being. Without the Ultimate Reality, there is no religion. Since it involves an objective relationship with men, beside the absolute being itself, there can be no other thing that will take its place. For example, the scriptures, doctrines, ministry, church may be sacred, yet none of them can be absolute by itself. This is just because it involves a relationship with a human being.\(^{143}\)

The Koreans have had some religion such as Confucianism and Buddhism for nearly 1500 years. For good or bad, these religions have formed the Korean mind and established the norm in Korean society. However, the first missionaries to Korea regarded the Korean mind and the culture as vacant. Whatever was there, they thought it not worthy of consideration but of destruction. They wanted to destroy the Buddhist statues, and the rites of Confucianism as idol worship... We do not regard other religions as products of demons, but as piece of God’s word being worked out by the Holy Spirit. It is dim and not complete as if one sees it in a moonless night, but now it can be made clear and complete in Christ.\(^{144}\)


\(^{144}\) Ibid., 341-342.
From the above two quotations, we can see that Chai-Joon Kim's theology adheres to what is sometimes called "inclusivism" and exhibits characteristics of the synthetic model, namely, the both/and way or a midway between the exclusivist "translation" model and a pluralist "converging" model.

A Methodist theologian, Tong Shik Ryu, is another representative theologian who has delved into the question of indigenization or inculturation in the Korean church. In his theology Ryu says that there are two streams in the understanding of the gospel in the Scriptures: the understanding of salvation history as God's redemptive work for humankind and the existential understanding of God's salvation event. The basic form of the gospel seen in the Scriptures is, according to Ryu, the election of God, the covenant with Israel, the breaking of the covenant by his chosen people, penalty and death, the sending of his only begotten Son, the sacrificial death on the cross, the forgiveness of sins, an eschatological church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the second coming of Christ and the last judgement, and the completion of the kingdom of God. In a word, as Kyoung Jae Kim expresses it, "it is a linear salvation history from creation to the eschaton, and in its centre there is the redemptive event of Jesus Christ. And it moves towards the ultimate completion of the kingdom of God."146

Here we can see that Ryu entirely adheres to traditional Christian theology. For Ryu, salvation belongs only to the gospel of Christ and it is the "Christ-centred universal truth." Also,

145 "Inclusivism" is a theological term which refers to an attitude approaching to other religions. This approach affirms the salvific presence of God in non-Christian religions while still maintaining that Christ is the definitive and authoritative revelation of God. [See, Gavin D'Costa, Theology and Religious Pluralism, chapter 4.]

146 Kyoung Jae Kim, 139.
“the essence of the gospel is manifested in the incarnation of Christ, the cross event, and the resurrection event.”\textsuperscript{147} However, these events are continually manifested within the inner world of human beings in general and within the cultural community. Thus, Ryu emphasizes the particular context and life experience of people who receive the gospel. At this point, we see the difference between the translation model of Hyung-Nong Park and Ryu’s model, that stresses the importance of the traditional culture and religions in the process of inculturation.

The following statement shows Ryu’s Christ-centred universal truth and the necessity of the encounter with other religions for inculturation.

If the gospel in the scriptures is the word of God grasped in Judean culture, then Western theology is the understanding of the gospel through Graeco-Roman culture. Though the word of God is transcendental by itself, it has to be incarnated in order to work out salvation. The flesh is under the submission of culture and history. Therefore, though the gospel should be illuminated as the universal truth in the light of eternity, it needs a subjective cultural eye to capture it in order to make it a real and living truth. The subjective eye can be formed within concrete culture and history; therefore, each nation receiving the gospel has to have its own theology. The Jews had their own eye to see the word of God, so did the Westerners. Likewise we Koreans have ours. The eye here refers to its national spirit. Theology serves the mission of the church. So theology has to be subjective and from that standpoint it can begin a dialogue with the gospel. In other words, it translates the gospel from the point of national spirit.\textsuperscript{148}

For Ryu, however, the question is whether the traditional religions of Korea, such as Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, have the power of salvation by themselves, or indeed whether they have anything in common with Western Christianity. Ryu finally affirms that “the religions of Korea have some significance not because of their relationship with historical Christianity, but in the reflection of the gospel through their forms. Though they will express


\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 39-40.
themselves through their own religious forms, they will reflect justice and love by self-negation. Only in that sense will they have the significance of the gospel."\textsuperscript{149} Kyoung Jae Kim points out that "[Ryu's] Christ-centred universal truth leans towards a functional and dynamic pneumatic Christology. This may be the difference between the Latin Western Christianity and Korean Christianity."\textsuperscript{150} And Kim also argues that Ryu's [grafting or synthetic] model is "the most appropriate model for the East Asian mission theology of our day,"\textsuperscript{151} and "a new paradigm in 21\textsuperscript{st} century mission theology and the theology of religions."\textsuperscript{152} For, first, it is dynamic, processing, and dialectical. A living thing is transforming and growing and creating new life; further, it presupposes mutual interdependence and mutual contribution between the trunk and the scion. If the trunk is the traditional culture, the scion is the gospel. As the scion is grafted into the trunk to become one organic branch, so a successful indigenization of the gospel is incarnated into the culture and becomes an entity inseparable from it.

I have suggested that what Bevans calls the "synthetic model" (or what might also be called "inclusivist" model) is the most helpful of the three models discussed in this section. The "translation" (exclusivist) model fails to take the cultural context seriously and falls short of true "inculturation." The so-called "praxis" model, while important and valid at the political level, linked in minjung theology to the "converging" model, fails to take seriously the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the gospel, and runs the danger of allowing Christian faith to be swamped by

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 14.

\textsuperscript{150} Kyoung Jae Kim, 140.

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 141.

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 143-144.
ideology. The "synthetic" approach, holding together, in dialectical tension, the uniqueness of the gospel and the truth and wisdom of the religio-cultural context, resonates to the "both-and" way of Korean *Pungryudo* spirituality. We seek not a diluted compromise, but a genuine harmony of the traditional and the new, of creation and redemption, and of gospel and culture. To put it differently, we seek an inculturation which serves a holistic Korean Christian spirituality.
CHAPTER FOUR
PARADIGMS OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY
IN KOREAN PROTESTANTISM

In this chapter I shall explore actual, existing paradigms of Christian spirituality found in the Korean Protestant Churches. These are variously characterized as "conservative" Calvinist spirituality, Pentecostal spirituality, and minjung spirituality, which have developed in the Protestant Churches since Christianity was first inserted into the Korean syncretic context. A theological analysis of the relation of Christianity to Korean traditional religious culture, as Kyoung-Jae Kim has suggested, might be categorized according to four models: "the sowing model as fundamentalist conservative theology; the yeast model as progressive culture-changing theology; the converging model as socio-political theology of the minjung; and the grafting model as religio-cultural theology."¹ From the perspective of spirituality, however, the paradigms I shall analyze in this chapter are based upon the actual, practical experiences of Christians, of existing churches and church life. This chapter, then, is largely descriptive and analytical.

I suggest that the Korean Protestant Churches exhibit two general kinds of spirituality. The one is the "conservative/evangelical"; the other is the "progressive.radical." The former (conservative/evangelical) has within it two distinct sub-types, the conservative Calvinist and the Pentecostal. These have expressed themselves as rivals, and as polarities in contemporary Korean Christianity. Here my intention to add the term "conservative" to Calvinist spirituality is to

¹ Kyoung Jae Kim, Christianity and the Encounter of Asian Religions: Method of Correlation, Fusion of Horizons, and Paradigm Shifts in the Korean Grafting Process, 120-144.
distinguish "conservative" Calvinists from "progressive" Calvinists, because most Korean
Protestant theologians who emphasize radical minjung spirituality have been developing their
theologies within the Calvinist Presbyterian tradition. Accordingly, my discussion of the
paradigms in this chapter will be theological reflections upon each of the distinct "spiritualities"
which are present and operative in contemporary Korean Protestant Churches.

I. "Conservative" Calvinist Spirituality: The Evangelical Majority

The "evangelical" majority of contemporary Korean Protestantism, which exists in large
measure in the large conservative Presbyterian denominations, has been influenced mainly by
Calvin's theology of the Christian life. This form of Christian spirituality does not take into
consideration the syncretic context of historic Korea. Thus, they have taken a very negative view
of syncretism, and operate out of the so-called "translation model" influenced by early American

---

2 For my purpose, here I have somewhat simplified the scene, though I believe I have not falsified it. There exist groups that do not fit neatly into these categories. For instance, the Methodist Church is not Calvinist in its historical origins, but Wesleyan. It includes within itself both conservative/evangelicals and a few moderate or radical leaders and members. The Evangelical Holiness Church, another smaller but significant group (also of Wesleyan heritage), lives somewhere on the continuum between Methodists and Pentecostals, being overwhelmingly what we here call "conservative/evangelical." Anglicans, a still smaller group, exhibit the typical via media characteristics of Anglicans elsewhere, being mainly conservative and in various degrees Catholic in their worship and spirituality. Yet some Anglicans and Methodists belong to the radical minjung group. Again there exist minor groups of Baptists. Members of these denominations more or less fit into the these categories I here discuss.

Some statistics about these churches in Korea are: Presbyterians, 9,345,285; Methodists,
1,405,593; Pentecostals, 1,031,435 (?); Baptists, 996,007; Evangelical Holiness, 884,670;
Anglicans, 78,000; whereas, Catholics, 3,294,451. [See, Hankook Chongkyo Nyungam (A Year
Book of Korean Religions) Seoul: Hankook Chongkyo Sahoe Yunkuso (The Institute of Korean
Religions and Society), 1995.]
Protestant missionaries. The missionaries came to Korea with a passionate pietistic and "conservative" faith. They presented a simple and literal interpretation of the Scripture and strict Calvinist doctrine. As a Korean theologian, Il-Sup Shim points out, "the reason that the Presbyterian Church simply adopted the Westminster catechism (seventeenth century British) rather than making Korea's own confession was that the missionaries distorted the Korean church's evangelical passion. They feared any church involvement in political struggle, as well as resistance against the missionaries' politics."³

In this section, first, I shall briefly explore Calvin's spirituality in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559) in order to better understand the character of Korean Presbyterian life. Of course, Calvin did not use the term "spirituality," because it was a term that was at that time used exclusively by Roman Catholics (as explored in Chapter One). However, since the aim of his writing was to provide a spiritual guide to Christian faith and life. Calvin dealt with spiritual issues and provided important sources of spirituality, even if he did not use the term. William Bouwsma has recently stressed that Calvin saw himself as a spiritual writer and not primarily as a dogmatician.⁴ In this regard, an understanding of Calvin's spirituality must be placed within his historical context. Calvin's ideas of spiritual life had their origins in the rhetorical tradition of fifteenth and sixteenth century Renaissance humanism, and the distinctive character of his


spirituality was a response to the challenge of his context. Even if contemporary Korean Christians live in a very different context, as mentioned before, they have been very much influenced by Calvin's ideas in their spiritual life. I cannot claim here to present a thorough treatment of Calvin's spirituality (a fit subject for a whole dissertation), but rather to simply identify the source of one major contemporary form of Korean spirituality.

1. The Starting Point of Calvin's Spirituality: "Piety"

The term "piety" is key in understanding Calvin, for within the Reformed tradition, the word has been used most commonly to mean what we refer to as "spirituality." The term "piety," used in the Christian context, essentially means devotion and consecration to God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. It signifies a pattern or style of Christian life, and involves a commitment of Christian life through faith. It is nothing less than the pattern by which we shape our lives before God. Therefore, "piety is," as Rice defines it, "the way we exercise our Christian freedom as people whose lives have been touched by grace and who are thus keenly aware of being responsible to God," and "the way we live our lives responding to God's presence by attending carefully to that presence."\(^5\)

By distinguishing between spirituality and piety, T. Hartley Hall IV defines piety as "a person's behaviour as regards the duties and obligations inherent to religion."\(^6\) However, piety in

---


\(^6\) T. Hartley Hall IV, "The Shape of Reformed Piety," in Robin Maas & Gabriel (continued...)
Scripture is always characterized by inward zeal or consecration, godly fear, and total dedication. It is directed to the holy God incarnate in Jesus Christ. For Calvin, piety is the basis of Christian life and a symbol for the whole understanding and practice of Christian faith. His understanding of piety was certainly related to his own conversion from Catholicism, which was influenced by Romans 1:21 ("...for although they knew God they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened" - RSV). For Calvin, it was a new awareness of God's glory and free grace, of his own sinfulness, and a deep sense of gratitude leading to obedience.

As a consequence of that profound and lasting inward change, he gained a constant awareness of God and self. At the beginning of the Institutes (1559), he deals with this theme:

6(...continued)
O'Donnell, eds. Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church (Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1990). 202. Hall IV here observes that the term "spirituality" is notably absent from the works of all the classical Reformed writers and is imported from post-Vatican II Roman Catholicism. He also understands "spirituality" as an individual's interior search for meaning and wholeness. Therefore, he contends that the term piety is the better word to express what Reformed Christians have in mind when they choose to address the issues of a Spirit-filled life.


Regarding Calvin's conversion, it used to be assumed, on the evidence of a letter of Calvin to Bucer, that he took the side of the Reform as early as 1532. But Francois Wendel points out that the date of that letter was wholly uncertain, and in any case it must have been later than 1532. He argues that apart from the evidence of Calvin himself, there are some indications that enable us to date his conversion, approximately, on August 13th, 1533. It must be placed between 1532 and the later date. Furthermore, he insists that Calvin's conversion was sudden, while Luther's conversion was the result of a long unconscious preparation.[see Francois Wendel, Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought, (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 37-45.]
"without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God,"8 and "without knowledge of God there is no knowledge of self."9 That is to say, to know God is to know oneself and to know oneself is to know God. These insights are central to his spirituality in an existential way, in that they shape his "piety." However, Bouwsma maintains that "experience" is a better word than "know" to express the way that believers apprehend God's acts in the world: "Believers experience God as they experience - but can hardly be said to 'know' - thunder, one of Calvin's favourite metaphors for religious experience."10

For Calvin, therefore, piety is a requisite for knowledge of God, which is not a product of speculative thinking. Thus the secret of his mental energy lies in his piety, and its product is his theology. According to Institutes, "I [Calvin] call piety that reverence joined with love of God which the knowledge of his benefits induces."11 That is, piety is essentially a synthesis of the love and fear of God. But Calvin sets religio beside the term pietas: "...faith so joined with an earnest fear of God that this fear also embraces willing reverence, and carries with it such legitimate worship as is prescribed in the law."12 This was already affirmed in the first words of the letter which he wrote to King Francis I to explain the purpose of the Institutes: "My intention is only to offer some basic rudiments through which those who feel some interest in religion

---


9 Inst. I, 1, 2.

10 William Bouwsma, 323.

11 Inst. I, 2, 1.

12 Inst. I, 2, 1.
might be trained to true piety."13

Consequently, piety is the fruit of the Word of God which is the foundation of the Christian life, and is the source of all life. It expresses our relationship to God in love. And the sign of authentic piety is not found in zeal for an external worship but in real love for others, which is the outward sign of our love for God. Lucien Joseph Richard explains,

_Pietas_ [piety] is the comprehensive term which for Calvin designates the right attitude of man toward God, an attitude which implies true knowledge and true worship. Calvin used this word in the very first lines of his letter to the King. It was also the very last word of the _Institutes_ of 1536. God the Father was the object of this _pietas_. and Christ was our unique model and exemplar in its practice.14

In a word, piety, the predominant category of Calvin's spirituality, is the attitude of a human integrated under God's command. A pious person is one who serves the glory of God. The glory of God implies directly the basic need for a human being to worship God, a worship that expresses itself in service and praise. For, as Richard says, "commitment to the glory of God expresses itself in the life of the believer in true worship."15 and for Calvin the ultimate end of history and creation was not the salvation of humanity, but the glory of God. The final cause of creation and every manifestation of the divine will is the glorification of God. Everything in creation, good or evil, must contribute to this glory. Every created being must work for the glory

---

13 See the Prefatory Address to King Francis I of France in the _Institutes_ (1559), 9-31.


15 Ibid., 102.
of God.\textsuperscript{16} In this sense, true worship is central to a Christian life of piety and to spiritual growth toward union with God.

However, Christian life in piety is "not a matter of the tongue but of the inmost heart."\textsuperscript{17} The commitment of the inmost heart is shown in the denial of ourselves: we are not our own, but God's; we are not our own masters, but belong to God.

\textquote{We are not our own: let not our reason nor our will, therefore, sway our plans and deeds. We are not our own: let us therefore not set it as our goal to seek what is expedient for us according to the flesh. We are not our own: in so far as we can, let us therefore forget ourselves and all that is ours. Conversely, we are God's: let us therefore live for him and die for him. We are God's: let his wisdom and will therefore rule all our actions. We are God's: let all the parts of our life accordingly strive toward him as our only lawful goal [Rom 14:8; cf. I Cor. 6:19].}\textsuperscript{18}

Therefore, it is important that people depart from themselves, in order that they may apply the whole force of their ability to the service of God and the glory of God.\textsuperscript{19} This is the evidence of great progress. Accordingly, we Christians must surely be in close relation to God throughout our lives. Thus, "self-denial gives us the right attitude toward our fellow men: we perceive that denial of self has regard partly to men, partly, and chiefly, to God."\textsuperscript{20} Those talents which God has bestowed upon us are not our own goods but the free gifts of God. Therefore, self-denial proposed by Calvin is not simply a negative attitude but also implies a positive attitude toward God and the human.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 114.
\item \textsuperscript{17} \textit{Inst.} III, 6, 4.
\item \textsuperscript{18} \textit{Inst.} III, 7, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{19} \textit{Inst.} III, 7, 2.
\item \textsuperscript{20} \textit{Inst.} III, 7, 4.
\end{itemize}
In this sense, for Calvin, true piety is impossible without self-denial. It is the commencement of piety. The rule of piety is that "God's hand alone is the judge and governor of fortune, good or bad, and that it does not rush about with needless force, but with most orderly justice deals out good as well as ill to us."\(^{21}\) The purpose of self-denial is to release one's energy for those things which are pleasing to God in order to display God's glory. This clearly indicates that Calvin's self-denial is principally related to God. It means full commitment to God; it is a human attitude toward God, expressed in worship and service.

2. The Theological \emph{A Priori} of Calvin's Spirituality: Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification

The doctrine of justification by faith alone is a central theme of Protestant spirituality. For Calvin, it is the principal foundation stone on which religion is supported, and "the sum of all piety."\(^{22}\) In his \textit{Institutes} (1559), Calvin dealt with this doctrine after the doctrines of repentance and the Christian life. He wrote it, as Luther did, from his own living experience and not from abstract intellectualism; for him, it was the living breath of life. As John Leith points out, "Calvin's doctrine of justification by faith must be always predicated on his understanding of the divine claim on human life."\(^{23}\)

\(^{21}\) \textit{Inst.} III, 7, 10.

\(^{22}\) \textit{Inst.} III, 15, 7.

In dealing with this doctrine at the very centre of the divine-human relationship, Calvin starts with a question: "How can a person, in spite of sin, stand in confidence before a holy God?" Calvin here notes two possible answers to this question. One is righteousness by works; the other is righteousness by faith. But, for Calvin, righteousness by works can be achieved only in the life which discovers purity and holiness. For "he who grasps the righteousness of Christ through faith appears in God's sight not as a sinner but as a righteous man." Calvin believed that righteousness by works alone could not satisfy the demands of God's righteousness at all, because when God "examines our thousand sins, we cannot be cleansed of even one." Therefore, for Calvin, justification is simply the acceptance with which God receives us into divine favour. and also consists in the remission of sins and the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

For Calvin, quite clearly the righteousness of faith is not our own but that of Christ. It is Christ's righteousness that is imputed to us. In addition to the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, Calvin's justification by faith alone contains the forgiveness of sins, which should be understood within the same context of imputation. The forgiveness of sins here means the non-imputation of the guilt of our sins; the next step in forgiveness of sins is that this guilt is transferred to Christ. Consequently, for Calvin, "the righteousness of faith is a reconciliation with God, which consists solely in remission of sins." Thus, Wendel points out that "the logical

---


25 *Inst.* III, 12, 2.

26 *Inst.* III, 11, 21. (Calvin here continues to say, "it is obvious, therefore, that those whom God embraces are made righteous solely by the fact that they are purified when their spots are (continued...).
consequence of that doctrine of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ is that never, not even after the remission of our sins, are we really righteous." In other words, "imputation was no mechanical exchange of righteousness, but the consequence of the believers's union with the life of the Redeemer through faith."  

What, then, does "faith" mean when Calvin says "justification by faith alone"? For Calvin, first of all, faith exists only within the framework of the Word of God. Faith is people's response to the Word of God, the Word addressed to human beings. In other words, the knowledge of faith centres in Jesus Christ, who is the object of faith. Yet this faith is not a naked and frigid apprehension of Christ, but a lively and real sense of the power of resurrection; that is, it is the life of fellowship with God in Christ. For Calvin, accordingly, faith is the instrument by which the righteousness of Christ becomes humanity's and by which forgiveness is obtained through the Holy Spirit. For only the Holy Spirit leads us to Christ; without the Spirit human beings are incapable of faith. Calvin's justification by faith alone is entirely dependent upon life in the Holy Spirit.

For Calvin, justification by faith alone is an intensely personal reality which involves the reorientation of the total personality. It has two very important results: one is that the glory of God should stand undiminished; the other is that our consciences in the presence of His

---

26 (...continued)

washed away by forgiveness of sins. Consequently, such righteousness can be called, in a word, 'remission of sins'."

27 Francois Wendel, 259.

28 John H. Leith, 91

29 Inst. III, 2, 34, and 35.
judgement should have peaceful rest and serene tranquillity.\textsuperscript{30} The glory of God involves the complete renunciation of all personal glory and the ascription of everything to God. It also involves the experience of one's own life which gives to God the glory. According to Leith, it is the very nature of forgiving love, that it prohibits all attempts to deal with it on a bargaining basis; the only answer to forgiving love in human relations is selfless gratitude.\textsuperscript{31} Therefore, justification by faith, which gives to us peace of conscience, not only reorients our lives toward God in Jesus Christ, but also surrenders our lives to God's mercy. In this sense, Calvin's justification by faith alone is the precondition of all aspects of the Christian life.

From the perspective of Christian life, for Calvin, the relationship between justification and sanctification is always dynamic and vital. Justification provides the true foundation or the fertile soil from which the true Christian life grows. Thus, the confidence which comes from the experience of justification by faith is the one possible basis for real sanctification, since confidence before God is indispensable to Christian life.

In Book III of the \textit{Institutes}(1559), Calvin discusses sanctification before justification by faith. However, Calvin links the relationship between justification and sanctification with the process toward the restoration of the image of God in the Holy Spirit. Calvin says,

\begin{quote}
In a word, I interpret repentance as regeneration, whose sole end is to restore in us the image of God that had been disfigured and all but obliterated through Adam's transgression. ... Accordingly, we are restored by this regeneration through the benefit of Christ into the righteousness of God.\textsuperscript{32}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Inst.} III, 13, 1.

\textsuperscript{31} John H. Leith, 93.

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Inst.} III, 3. 9.
Thus, justification and sanctification are mutually effected in the restoration of the image of God. This does not mean that there is confusion between these two concepts; that is, "the grace of justification is not separated from sanctification although they are things distinct." If justification is genuine, it turns into a sanctification which is effective externally. Thus, justification is not only the initial moment of the process toward the restoration of the image of God, but it also accompanies the process. Lucien Richard expresses this relation as "the dialectic tension which implies ongoing process and progress." In other words, justification is based on what Christ has done for us: sanctification is based on what he does within us. Sanctification is the continuing regenerative work of the Holy Spirit in us. Indeed, Calvin's understanding of the relationship between sanctification and justification implies an idea of growth, which is certainly the movement of process, but necessarily also of progress.

What, then, does Calvin mean by the "image of God"? His treatment of the term in the Institutes (1559) is highly characteristic. He likes formal definitions:

Accordingly, the integrity with which Adam was endowed is expressed by this word [imago], when he had full possession of right understanding, when he had his affections kept within the bounds of reason, all his senses tempered in right order, and he truly referred his excellence to exceptional gifts bestowed upon him by his Maker. And although the primary seat of the divine image was in the mind and heart, or in the soul and its powers, yet there was no part of man, not even the body itself, in which some sparks did not glow.

What Calvin seeks in his definition is comprehensiveness. The image is anything and everything that sets human beings apart from the rest of God's creation. In this sense, the image is not

---

33 Inst. III, 11, 11.

34 Lucien Richard, 107.

destroyed by sin. However, the image begins to be restored in the process of redemption.\footnote{Inst. I, 15, 4.} Calvin had in mind the metaphor of an image seen in a mirror - "a reflection of God's glory."

The image of God is not something static impressed upon human beings, but is expressed dynamically by human living in response to God's grace. These concepts of the image of God and of the order of human life in creation are interchangeable. The proper order is a reflection of God's glory. Thus, it is the clearest proof of disorder if we do not seek God's glory in our action. Indeed, there is no doubt that the first man, Adam, when he fell from his innocent state, was alienated from God by His defection. Still, the image of God was not totally annihilated and destroyed. The root of this defection is, needless to say, infidelity or unfaithfulness.

Accordingly, the whole purpose of redemption and of the process of sanctification is the restoration of the lost image of God. The restoration, says Calvin, is obtained "through Christ, who is also called the Second Adam for the reason that he restores us to true and complete integrity."\footnote{Inst. I, 15, 4.} The work of Christ is precisely to restore us to order by renewing in us the image of God. In this regard, we see how Christ is the most perfect image of God. Lucien Richard puts it.

For Calvin the ultimate end of history was not the salvation of man, but the glory of God. In fact, one of Calvin's fundamental intuitions is expressed in the saying, \textit{soli Deo gloria}. Nothing in creation should ever obscure this glory. The final cause of creation and every manifestation of the divine will is the glorification of God. Everything in creation, good or evil, must contribute to this glory. Every created being must work for the glory of God.\footnote{Lucien Richard, 114.}
Consequently, concerning the relationship of justification to sanctification, Calvin considers the process of sanctification, with its explicit christological and pneumatological emphases, as the restoration of the image of God. He clearly shows that in the process of sanctification Christian life is a life of obedience to God, and leads us at the same time to a better understanding of the nature of the imitation of Christ.

3. The Bond of Calvin's Spirituality: Union with Christ/ Unio Mystica

To discuss the real centre of Calvin's spirituality, it is necessary to explore further the nature of the unio mystica, the mystical union with Christ. For Calvin, the term unio mystica always refers to union with Christ. He uses the term in Book III of his Institutes (1559):

Therefore, that joining together of Head and members, that indwelling of Christ in our hearts - in short, that mystical union - are accorded by us the highest degree of importance, so that Christ, having been made ours, makes us sharers with him in the gifts with which he has been endowed. We do not, therefore, contemplate him outside ourselves from afar in order that his righteousness may be imputed to us, but because we put on Christ and are engrafted into his body - in short because he designs to make us one with him. For this reason, we glory that we have fellowship with him.

For Calvin, then, what is the nature of mystical union? Calvin speaks of our having a share in the substance of Christ. However, he here refers to what happens in the Holy Spirit, not to a crass mixture of substances, which elsewhere he rejects in the most emphatic terms. Indeed, Calvin stresses the Holy Spirit as the bond of a spiritual (yet absolutely real) union with Christ.

39 Inst. III, 11, 10 [John T. McNeill, the editor of Institutes of the Christian Religion, here quotes Wilhelm Niesel's remark that Calvin's notion of union with Christ "has nothing whatever to do with the absorption of the pious mystic into the sphere of the divine being." See, Wilhelm Niesel, The Theology of John Calvin, trans. by Harold Knight, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 126.]
Calvin insists: "For we hold ourselves to be united with Christ by the secret power of his Spirit.

...He says that we are one with Christ. We agree. But we deny that Christ's essence is mixed with our own." However, when Calvin speaks of union with Christ as "spiritual", he does not mean "figurative." This becomes clear in the following passages:

Christ is not outside us but dwells within us. Not only does he cleave to us by an invisible bond of fellowship, but with a wonderful communion, day by day, he grows more and more into one body with us, until he becomes completely one with us. Therefore, when Calvin brings up the question about the exact nature of the union, as Dennis E. Tamburello points out, it is "mysterious." In other words, the basis of unity with Christ is certainly by grace through faith. Clearly, Calvin's union with Christ is rooted in faith, which is absolutely essential.

In describing union with Christ, Calvin uses imagery: "engrafting" with "communion" or "fellowship," "partaking," and "adoption" in Christ. These terms are used both in Calvin's general discussion of union as a direct consequence of justification and in his discussion of union in

---

40 Inst. III, 11, 5. [On the controversy with Osiander, see Niesel, Theology of John Calvin, 133f.]

41 Inst. III, 2, 24.

42 Here Calvin opposes the idea that unbelief and hope can reign alternatively: "As if we ought to think of Christ, standing afar off and not rather dwelling in us! For we await salvation from him not because he appears to us far off, but because he makes us, engrafted into his body, not only in all his benefits but also in himself."[III, 2, 24.]

relation to the church and sacraments. Thus, Calvin combines the image of engrafting with communion or fellowship. Calvin also uses the image of the spiritual marriage (cf. Eph. 5:30-32). This image of the spiritual marriage is applied not to contemplative experience, but to the union that flows from faith. In this sense, Calvin's image of spiritual marriage is intended to describe the union which exists between the Christian and Christ. So, Calvin speaks of "a sacred wedlock" between Christ and the Christian through which "we are made flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, and thus one with him."44

But Calvin never mentions the mystical union in terms of ecstatic experience. He naturally speaks of mystical union in terms of "the integral subsistence of the properties of man [people] and those of the Christ."45 Therefore, it is somewhat difficult to understand the nature of union with Christ in the context of the analogy of mystical marriage and substantial union. It is quite evident that Calvin here is not speaking of absorption into Christ or of total identification with Christ. Wilhelm Niesel asserts that "that union of the faithful with Christ which Calvin teaches has nothing whatever to do with the absorption of the pious mystic into the sphere of the divine being."46 In this regard, it is very clear that union with Christ should be realized in the present life. Calvin writes definitively of the necessity of the union in the present life.

We must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us what he has received from the Father, he has to become ours and to dwell within us. For this reason, he is called "our head"[Eph. 4:15], and "the first-born among many brethren"[Rom. 8:29]. We also, in

---

44 Inst. III, 1, 3.
45 Francois Wendel, 235.
46 Wilhelm Niesel, 126.
turn, are said to be "engrafted into him" [Rom. 11:17], and to "put on Christ" [Gal. 3:27].

In this formulation, Calvin seems to be speaking of an absorption into Christ or a mystical identification that diminishes human personality in a certain sense. However, he is not speaking of an ontological absorption or identification; rather, he is referring to soteriological grace. For Calvin, therefore, the mystical union must be an extraordinary, intimate experience between us and Christ, by the bond of the Holy Spirit in faith. This union with Christ is not only the fruit of spiritual life, but also the indispensable condition for perfection.

For Calvin, the Christian life is a life of progress, of spiritual growth toward final and complete communion with God. The restoration of God's image in Calvin's spiritual life is a search for progressive renovation and renewal through a continual if slow advance. In this regard, union with Christ is the ongoing sanctification on the way to the highest perfection. But Calvin did not expect "perfection" in this life, in the sense that we would ever become actually sinless. He did not teach "entire sanctification" (as Wesley did later). Thus perfection is only eschatological. Calvin's "the image of Christ" and "union with Christ" become interchangeable terms. The concept of the union is emphatically "Christ-centred." 48

For Calvin, union with Christ has a constant relation to faith, and cannot be separate from it. The union itself can be achieved only by faith in the hidden work of the Holy Spirit. This implies that human beings can never be the initiators of the movement which ends in union with

47 *Inst.* III, 1, 1.

48 Dennis E. Tamburello, 93. [Tamburello here emphasizes that union with the humanity of Christ is a spiritual union for Calvin; and the flesh of Christ is the "channel" by which his divine life flows into us. He also insists that Calvin's notion of unio contains a trinitarian element: "the Father, who sends the mediator; Christ, in whom we are engrafted; and the Spirit, who sanctifies us."]
Christ; its initiation goes back to Christ himself, who works in us through the Holy Spirit. In this sense, faith is the principal work of the Holy Spirit; we are united to Christ through the Holy Spirit by faith alone.

Indeed, Calvin most characteristically speaks of union with Christ in relation to faith and makes a succinct statement about faith and union: "Christ, when he illuminates us into faith by the power of his Spirit, at the same time so engrafts us into his body that we become partakers of every good."49 It is clear that he considers engrafting to be "simultaneous" with faith. Calvin here introduces the term "illumination" to describe the inner working of the Holy Spirit. Although faith is received from the Word,50 the Word accomplishes nothing without the illumination of the Holy Spirit.51

For Calvin, faith is more than mere knowledge of God's promise in Christ, more than a simple assent to the objective truth and abstract certainty of revelation; it is "the assistance and trust of the heart in God's mercy."52 Indeed, for Calvin, faith is a firm and certain conviction of one's own personal salvation in Christ. That is to say, by faith we are indissolubly connected with the body of Christ, who dwells within us,53 and in his body we have been engrafted through

---

49 Inst. III, 2, 25.
50 Inst. III, 2, 6.
51 Inst. III, 2, 33.
52 Ibid.
the secret working of the Holy Spirit. Niesel comments: "union with Christ is 'already' made a reality by the work of the Holy Spirit in faith in this earthly life; nevertheless, it is subject to the 'not yet' in terms of spiritual perfection." From this perspective, the spiritual movement toward complete union is an exercise of faith.

To whom, then, is the experience of mystical union granted? Calvin's answer is "to the elect." He says that "election has holiness of life as its goal; indeed all our good endeavours arise from election." He believes that some people are definitely excluded from election and therefore from being engrafted into Christ. And he puts it, "If he [God] willed all to be saved, he would set his Son over them and would engraft them into his body with the sacred bond of faith." However, "it is clear that the doctrine of salvation, which is said to be reserved solely and individually for the sons of the church, is falsely debased when presented as effectually profitable for all." Thus, Tamburello understands that Calvin would exclude a definite part of humanity a priori from justification and therefore from the unio that accompanies it. In any case, for Calvin, all of the elect share in unio mystica as soon as they have come to faith, and union with Christ must have consequences for our relationships with each other. In short, the Holy Spirit brings the elect, through the hearing of the gospel, to faith; in so doing, the Holy Spirit

54 *Inst.* III, 2, 30.

55 Wilhelm Niesel, 125

56 *Inst.* III, 23, 12.

57 *Inst.* III, 22, 10.

58 Ibid.

59 Dennis E. Tamburello, 94
engrafts them into Christ.

In this context, as I have already noted, Calvin's union with Christ embraces both justification and sanctification. The latter follows as a direct consequence of the former. Therefore, all those who are among the chosen are in union with Christ as an immediate consequence of justification by faith. At this point, Tamburello also points out that "while the unio of justification is in a sense total, the unio of sanctification is always partial and growing." However, Calvin discusses repentance as a lifelong process of union with Christ. Calvin stresses that repentance is continual:

Therefore, I think he has profited greatly who has learned to be very much displeased with himself, not so as to stick fast in this mire and progress no farther, but rather to hasten to God and yearn for him in order that, having been engrafted into the life and death of Christ, he may give attention to continual repentance.

Here again, we can see that this notion of progress in sanctification is a recurrent one in Calvin. What of mortification, that severe self-negation that has been part of some Catholic ascetic traditions? Calvin is not opposed to mortification, as long as this is not done in a spirit of righteousness: "God reigns where men, both by denial of themselves and by contempt of the world and of the earthly life, pledge themselves to his righteousness in order to aspire to heavenly life." In any case, Calvin sees the struggle for holiness as properly taking place not in the monastery, but in the world. Yet, his understanding of union with Christ is that it is a

---

60 Ibid., 101.


63 Tamburello notes that Calvin, like the mystics, spoke of the "nothingness" of the world-
"spiritual" union that brings experiential knowledge of God. He does not speak explicitly of a "union of wills," but of the desire to follow God's will and to keep his commandments as a direct result of engrafting into Christ. This occurs unquestionably through faith and the life of active love that flows from faith.

In this section we have explored Calvin's theology of the Christian life as piety in order to grasp the nature of Protestant spirituality in Korea, which, in large measure, stands in the Calvinist/Presbyterian tradition. In fact, classical Calvinist theology and spirituality is, I suggest, more alive in Korea than in most Reformed and Presbyterian denominations in the West. Conservative Calvinist attitudes to Scripture, and Reformation doctrines of election and justification are enthusiastically taught and preached in the large Korean Presbyterian denominations, though, as I shall point out later, certain Korean religio-cultural patterns can be seen as well. This presence of conservative Calvinism in Korea reminds us of Hyung-Nong Park's statement, referred to in the last chapter: "My purpose is to introduce the reformed traditional theology of Calvin to Korea. My wish is to pass on the true theology to a new generation as we received it from the missionaries 80 years ago." At this point, Calvinist spirituality has been "translated" but not "inculturated" into the Korean context. For example, conservative Calvinism in Korea still affirms the Westminster Confession (a British Calvinist statement of 1646).

---

63(...continued)

nevertheless, he knew he was called to a task in the world, for the world is a theatre of God's glory. (Tamburello, 101.)

II. Pentecostal Spirituality: A Substantial Minority

A rather different Protestant spirituality in Korea is to be found in the large and growing Pentecostal churches. Korean Pentecostalism must be seen in relation to the broader world-wide Pentecostal (or charismatic) movement, since it is very much part of that wider phenomenon, although it displays specific Korean characteristics. Pentecostal spirituality stems from the experience of rapidly growing numbers of Christians all over the world, both within and outside the historic churches. Pentecostal churches, as distinct denominations, exist in strength all over the "first world" and are a growing presence also in Africa and Latin America, as well as Korea. Moreover, a Pentecostal (or charismatic) element exists as a minority also within the "mainstream" denominations, including the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian.

Pentecostal spirituality emerged early in the first half of the 20th century, and forms a substantial minority within contemporary worldwide Protestantism. It emerged largely, though not entirely, from the holiness churches of the nineteenth century - revivalist groups of mainly Wesleyan origin, which sought personal and ecclesiastical renewal through the spiritual experiences of Christian life. Grant Wacker analyzes its emergence, however, in at least four traditions: "the Wesleyan idea of entire sanctification, the Reformed tradition of power for Christian service, the Plymouth Brethren idea of dispensational premillennialism, and a highly protean theology of faith healing." But Korean Pentecostalism was strongly influenced by

---

American Pentecostalism.

Under the influence of these traditions, theologically, Pentecostals emphasize the Holy Spirit and the contemporary relevance of the gifts of the Spirit, reflect many aspects of conservative Christian orthodoxy, and value personal religious renewal. Unlike other conservative evangelicals, they especially emphasize “the baptism in the Holy Spirit” accompanied by “speaking in tongues,” as a third distinct experience for Christians; namely, following conversion and sanctification. They place highly specific demands on personal religious experience.

Today Pentecostal spirituality may be seen as one of three major approaches that constitute the universal Church. Answering the question, “By what is the Church constituted?” Lesslie Newbigin characterizes the three approaches as “the Protestant, the Catholic, and the Pentecostal.” Speaking of these three in turn, he says: “The first answer is briefly that we are incorporated in Christ by hearing and believing the Gospel. The second is that we are incorporated by sacramental participation in the life of the historically continuous Church. The third is that we are incorporated by receiving and abiding in the Holy Spirit.” For him, the Catholic and Protestant understandings of the church are or tend to be static, while there is a dynamic dimension in Pentecostalism. He thus writes,

The Catholic-Protestant debate which has characterized the ecumenical movement needs to be criticized and supplemented from what I have called the Pentecostal angle... The debate has to become three-cornered. The gulf which at present divides these groups from the ecumenical movement is the symptom of a real defect... and perhaps a resolute effort

---

to bridge it is the next condition for further advance.69

Despite Newbigin's insight into the distinct character of Pentecostalism, I regard it here as a form of Protestantism, since it arises out of Methodism, and in some respects resembles the Anabaptist tradition. It is distinctly like Protestantism generally; that is, it emphasizes Scriptural authority, lay ministry, and (like the Baptists) practices only believers' baptism.

In his recent work *Fire from Heaven*, Harvey Cox, one of America's preeminent theologians, views the most vital expression of Christianity in the world today as the vibrant, primary spirituality of Pentecostalism. According to him, unlike traditional Protestant and Catholic churches, whose memberships are dwindling, Pentecostalism, the most experiential branch of Christianity, has become the fastest-growing form of Christian spirituality, and thus, if present trends continue, it could surpass even Catholicism by the turn of the century. Finally, he comes to the conclusion that this explosion of spirituality represents a tidal change in what religion itself is and what it means to people.70

In Korean Protestantism Pentecostal spirituality exhibits a dynamic church growth, an emphasis on spiritual healing, and other typical aspects of the charismatic movement in Christian life. Korean Pentecostals, like those in North America, emphasize "the baptism in the Holy Spirit" and "speaking in tongues," and sometimes also prayer and fasting. The phenomenon of Pentecostalism in Korea, as Boo-Woong Yoo points out, appears to derive primarily from two

---

69 Ibid., 93-94.

sources: “The first is belief in the Holy Spirit, to whom the church expresses a particular commitment. The other is the nature of the movement as a socio-historical structure in which the reality of the Holy Spirit is manifested.” An extraordinary example of Pentecostalism's vitality is the rise of the Yoido Full Gospel (Pentecostal) Church in Seoul, the largest congregation in the world - now approximately 800,000 membership. The theological characteristics of this church are summarized as the “five gospels and three blessings” Principle by David Yonggi Cho, who has been the minister of this Church since 1958 and has become the leader of Korean Pentecostal churches. The Principle is five gospels - “rebirth, filled-Spirit, healing, blessing, and second-coming gospels,” and three blessings - “spiritual, physical, and material blessings.” According to Cho, "the five gospels are the theory and doctrine of the Full Gospel Church, while the three blessings are the practice and application of the five gospels." These Principles are based upon major theological themes of Pentecostal spirituality throughout the world. While it is impossible

---


72 The Yoido Full Gospel Church, which has been ministered by Rev. David Yonggi Cho, began with an initial membership of five in 1958. In 1961, within three years of its founding, the church had 1,000 members. By 1964 there were 3,000; by 1968 there were 8,000; by 1971 there were 15,000; by 1981 there were 200,000; by 1992 there were 700,000 members; by now there are 800,000 members. [See, *Kukje Shinhak Yonguwon* (International Institute of Theology), *Yoido Soon-Bokum Gyohoe ui Shinang kwa Shinhak* (Faith and Theology of Yoido Full Gospel Church) (Seoul: Seoul Publishing Company, 1993), 182-195.]

73 Ibid., 38-45. [Also see, David Yonggi Cho, *Qiung Bokum kwa Sambakja Chukbok* (Five Gospels and Three Blessings) (Seoul: Seoul Publishing Co., 1990).] Regarding material blessing, is commonly held that an obedient, Spirit-filled Christian will prosper economically, (though this idea of faith for material gain hardly merits the name "spirituality").

74 David Yonggi Cho, 238.
to discuss all of this thoroughly here, some of these concepts must be dealt with if we are to understand Korean Pentecostal spirituality.

1. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

"The baptism in the Holy Spirit" may be seen as the major distinctive theological undergirding of Pentecostal spirituality both in Korea and elsewhere. It refers to a particular, vivid spiritual experience. Pentecostals usually prefer the designation "baptism in (or with)" rather than "baptism of (or by)" the Spirit. For, as Frederick Dale Bruner points out, "while every Christian, on becoming a Christian, has been baptized of or by the Spirit-as-agent (I Cor. 12:13a), Pentecostals believe that not every Christian has yet been baptized by Christ-as-agent in or with the Spirit-as-element (Mk. 1:8; 1 Cor. 12:13b)." That is, the Spirit has baptized every believer into Christ (conversion), but Christ has not yet baptized every believer into the Spirit (Pentecost). Hence, Pentecostals believe that since every Christian has been baptized by or of but not yet in or with the Holy Spirit, the preposition "in" is usually important for describing the special Pentecostal spiritual baptism which follows conversion.

Here, J. Rodman Williams says that the word "baptism" is quite expressive because of its connotation of totality; that is, "To be baptized can signify an experience of being inundated by, submerged in, or pervaded with some reality.... Baptism with the Spirit points to a whelming of

the person -- an event wherein man in his conscious and subconscious experience is penetrated by the Spirit of God."  

In other words, "baptism" is not subjugation, or absorption, or translation, but the actualization of a dynamic whereby the whole person is energized to fulfill new possibilities. In that sense, it is not a kind of "instant sanctification." It is important to recognize that "the baptism in the Holy Spirit" as such has nothing to do with holiness of character, but with penetration of life. Accordingly, the effect of this "baptism" is not a certain quality, but a way of life in which one is open to the work of the Spirit. In Williams' words, "the event of the Spirit does give power for more adequate dealing with human perversity; consequently, there should be progress in sanctification."  

Another expression of "baptism in the Holy Spirit," frequently used, is "filled with the Holy Spirit," which may refer to the event of entrance into Pentecostal life and experience. According to Williams, the word "filled" or "full" has the advantage of expressing totality even more markedly than the word "baptism." So, to be "filled with the Spirit" is to express the situation in which the whole of human existence is activated by the divine reality. That is, it expresses, with particular force, the background for the operation of spiritual gifts which become obvious signs and indications of Spirit-filled existence. Other terms used for the event of the Spirit include such words as "effusion," "outpouring," and "falling" of the Holy Spirit. These words may be referred to as simply the "coming" of the Spirit. In this sense, as Williams says,  

---


77 Ibid., 13.

78 Ibid., 13.
"the event of the Spirit is no gradual, passive thing, but a decisive endowment of power and energy." 

What, then, are some of the aspects of the situation in which this event of the Holy Spirit happens? As Williams suggests, there are five aspects: First, everything centers in Jesus Christ. That is, Jesus Christ is the one who "baptizes with the Holy Spirit." Second, "Pentecost" is a present experience. Hence, Pentecost represents more than a once-for-all incident in the life of the early church. Third, this event occurs within the arena of faith. Faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is the essential precondition. Fourth, the event of the Spirit cannot be simply patterned or programmed. Commonly the matrix for the event of the Spirit is an attitude of openness and expectancy, of acknowledged spiritual hunger and thirst. Fifth, the event of the Spirit is basically a community happening. It often comes about when people are gathered for worship and fellowship. From these aspects, Bruner also writes,

The Pentecostal doctrine of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) is centered in the crisis experience of the full reception of the Holy Spirit. In the study of Pentecostalism it is soon discovered that Pentecostal pneumatology emphasizes not so much the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as it does the doctrine (or, as Pentecostals would prefer to say, the experience) of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. For it is not so much the general biblical doctrine of the Spirit or, particularly, the Pauline doctrines of the walk in or fruit of the Spirit (Rom. 8; Gal.5), or the Johannine work of the Spirit Paraclete (John 14-16) from which Pentecostalism derives its name or its special doctrine of the Spirit, though it wishes of course to include all these emphases in its life. Pentecostal pneumatology is in fact primarily concerned with the critical experience, reception, or filling of the Spirit as described, especially, by Luke and Acts.

---

79 Ibid., 14.
80 Ibid., 14-17.
81 Frederick Dale Bruner, 57.
Accordingly, for Pentecostals, to be “baptized” in the Spirit is “to be filled with” (Acts 2:4), “to receive” (Acts 2:38), “to be sealed by” (Eph. 1:13), or “to be anointed with” (2 Cor. 1:21) the Spirit. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is simply the full reception of the Holy Spirit. Hence, the baptism in the Holy Spirit in Pentecostalism finds the following doctrinal definition in the “Assemblies of God,”* the largest Pentecostal denomination in North America:

*The Promise of the Father: All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the Baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church.... This wonderful experience is distinctive from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth. Acts 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9.

*The Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost: The baptism of the believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance. Acts 2:4. The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (I Cor. 12: 4-10, 28), but different in purpose and use.*

Korean Pentecostals are associated with American "Assemblies of God," and also ascribe to this statement. This is a failure of inculturation in Korean Pentecostalism.

As seen above, the most important characteristics of the Pentecostal understanding of the baptism in the Holy Spirit are that the evidence is usually “distinct from and subsequent to” the new birth, that it is evidenced initially by the sign of speaking in other tongues, and that it must be earnestly sought. In a word, the characteristic is “a decisive subsequent experience in the life of Christians.”* Don Basham thus says that, according to Pentecostal teaching, “The baptism in

---

* The Assemblies of God formed the General Council of the Assemblies of God in Arkansas in 1914. [See, Grant Wacker, “Pentecostalism,” 938-940.]

* Quoted from Bruner, 61.

* Ibid., 62.
the Holy Spirit is a second encounter with God (the first is conversion) in which the Christian
begins to receive the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit into his life."85 In this regard,
Pentecostals go beyond other evangelicals, most of whom generally identify regeneration with
the baptism in the Holy Spirit and insist that every "born again" or "new birth" Christians have
received the Holy Spirit. However, since the word "receive" is used in both John 20:22 for the
"indwelling" and in Acts for the "infilling," there are, according to Pentecostals, actually two
receptions of the Holy Spirit - one for regeneration, the other for fullness.86

However, Dennis and Rita Bennett distinguish "indwelling" from a subsequent "infilling"
or "outpouring" of the Spirit: "to become a Christian is to live in you [God] ... to be converted ...
to be forgiven... to be born again..."87 They call this "the first step." The second step follows: "It

85 Don Basham, A Handbook on Holy Spirit Baptism (Reading, Berkshire: Gateway

A second "encounter." a second "experience," a second "blessing" is typical
Pentecostal terminology. But "In early Pentecostalism there was often stress upon Spirit baptism
as a third, distinct experience. The first work of God's grace is justification 'by which we receive
remission of sins'; the second work is sanctification 'by which He makes us holy': whereas 'the
Baptism with the Holy Ghost is a gift of power upon the sanctified life.' (Here one sees
connections with the Holiness movement of the late nineteenth century that laid stress on
sanctification as a 'second blessing' and often called it 'baptism in the Holy Spirit.') Later
classical Pentecostal teaching, however, has increasingly tended to minimize, or even disregard,
a second work of sanctification as prerequisite to Spirit baptism; neo-Pentecostals do not stress it
at all. Thus, presently, Pentecostals by and large speak of Spirit baptism as a second experience
of God's grace: not for sanctification of life but for empowerment to witness. Sanctification (in
its initiatory stage) is understood as being included in conversion or is thought of as a lifelong
process that may or may not include Spirit baptism." [See J. Rodman Williams, 62-63.]

86 How this can be related to certain passages in Acts is not clear, since there is little
evidence of a double reception of the Spirit in such accounts as Acts 8: 10-11, and 19; even more
difficult are such passages as John 7:39 and Galatians 4:6. (Ibid., 67.)

87 Dennis and Rita Bennett, The Holy Spirit and You (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International,
1971), 11-12.
is not salvation...but a second experience... When we receive Jesus as Savior, the Holy Spirit comes in, but as we continue to trust and believe Jesus, the Indwelling Spirit can pour out to inundate, or baptize our soul and body, and refresh the world around." For them, the latter is the "receiving" of the Holy Spirit, wherein the indwelling Spirit is now "received" into the entirety of one's being. According to Pentecostal teaching, the fact that a person has received the Holy Spirit is not by itself evidence that the Holy Spirit dwells in that person. To receive the Holy Spirit as an indwelling personal presence is a separate and subsequent experience. It is the privilege and at the same time the responsibility of each believer to seek this experience personally.

Doubtless, Pentecostals use the main word "power” or “empowering” to express the character of their personal experiences. It is an “enabling power,” or “the power of enablement,” to be a witness for Jesus. As Oral Roberts says, it is “to do and to be with the force of an explosion.” Thus, it includes power to heal and to cast out demons; it is understood as an enablement of the individual and/or community to carry forward witness to Jesus Christ. For viewing the baptism in the Holy Spirit as power, Pentecostals draw their biblical bases from Luke 24:49, “And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high,” and Acts 1:8, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses...”

---

88 Ibid., 18-19.

With this enabling power, finally, Pentecostals see a close relationship between the baptism in the Holy Spirit and its initial evidence, "speaking of tongues." The Pentecostal Fellowship of North America includes the following in its "Statement of Truth": “We believe that the full Gospel includes holiness of heart and life, healing for the body and the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance."\(^9\) Thus, although there is not a simple identification between the baptism in the Spirit and tongues, it is clear that the two are intimately related since the first sign of the baptism in the Spirit is this speech. It is also noted that speaking in tongues is not viewed as communication to human beings but to God. In the next section I shall deal with "speaking in tongues" as an initial evidence of the Holy Spirit.

2. Glossolalia: Speaking in Tongues

A major characteristic of Pentecostal spirituality is "glossolalia," which stems from two Greek words, glossos, meaning "tongue," and lalein, meaning "to speak." Combining two Greek words, the English term "glossolalia" literally means "speaking in tongues," which may be described as an "extraordinary gift," a "second blessing," and "the only genuine manifestation of the Spirit."\(^9\) In common usage the term refers to the spontaneous utterance of uncomprehended and seemingly random vocal sounds. More precisely, as Morton Kelsey describes, it is "an


effortless flow of usually complex structure, with the repetition and inflection characteristic of language.”

H. Newton Malony and A. Adams Lovekin express the opinion that it is “anomalous” behavior, “aberrant” behavior, and “extraordinary” behavior.

In Korea speaking in tongues is a widespread phenomenon, mainly in the Pentecostal churches, but also among "charismatics" in other churches. For there are, as I already discussed in Chapter Two, "ecstatic" phenomena in Korean Shamanism that resemble glossolalia, which make Koreans open to it or attracted to it. In this respect, glossolalia is part of a life style which has had a great impact on many of the finest people in the church, and which cannot be understood as an isolated phenomenon. In Kelsey’s terms, “it is a distinguishing characteristic of the charismatic experience. It is, however, only one small part of the divine-human encounter; nor is it essential to that experience. It is one of the least of the gifts of the Spirit.”

Speaking in tongues, however, can be a genuine life transforming experience.

Pentecostals generally insist that there are two kinds of glossolalia: “the gift of tongues” and “the sign of tongues.” The two forms sound alike but differ in function. On the one hand, the


According to authors, “anomalous” is understood to mean that which is distinct or different from something not only in degree but in kind. “Aberrant” is understood to mean abnormal; those who speak in tongues are thought to be emotionally disturbed before, during, or after the experience. “Extraordinary” is understood to mean that which is atypical or unusual for either the individual or for the society at large. Thus, these three, the anomalous, the aberrant, and the extraordinary, provide an overview for the investigations into glossolalia undertaken by social/behavioral scientists in this century.

94 Morton Kelsey, xvi.
former is intended for most but not necessarily all Christians, and its purpose is to express the longings of the heart when utterance is made in private prayer or to edify the church when it is made in public setting and interpreted by one who has the gift of interpretation. On the other hand, the sign of tongues is considered normative for all Christians, and its purpose is to serve as a supernatural sign or witness that the believer has been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Traditionally Pentecostals were convinced that all instances of baptism in the Holy Spirit were accompanied by the sign of tongues. Since this pattern appears to them to have been normative for the early church, they believe that it is normative for the modern church as well. From this perspective, Grant Wacker says that “the hallmark of traditional Pentecostalism is the conviction that all Christians who are truly baptized in the Spirit will speak in tongues at the moment of baptism (although some may never do so again).”

The biblical basis for glossolalia in general stems from references in the New Testament, e.g., Acts 2, 1 Cor. 12-14, and Mark 16:17. According to Acts 2, first, speaking in tongues occurred on the day of Pentecost. On this occasion, the early Christians were praying together in Jerusalem (Cf. Acts 2:2-5). Persons who spoke different languages heard these Christians talk to each of them in their own native language. The implication is that this incident included intelligible foreign speech (sometimes called Xenoglossia), a phenomenon not characteristic of most glossolalia since that time. Second, in 1 Cor. 12-14 where “spiritual gifts” are discussed, speaking in tongues is included in a list of ways in which God acts in people’s lives. Paul encourages the Christians in Corinth to seek the higher gift of “love.” He says, “If I speak with

95Grant Wacker, 934.
the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Cor. 13:1).

Here are two important differences between these references to glossolalia. In Acts 2, intelligible languages were heard by persons from other countries with other languages, in spite of the fact that none of the speakers knew these languages beforehand; in 1 Cor. 12-14, this is not the case. Ecstatic utterances rather than recognized languages were the norm in Corinth. Corinthian glossolalia required an interpreter for its meaning to be understood. Thus, H. Newton Malony and A. Adams Lovekin point out, “the first difference was between intelligible and unintelligible glossolalia..... The second difference in the New Testament accounts lies in the implication in the Corinthian report that glossolalia was a sign of God’s presence in certain persons but not in others. The account in Acts 2 carries no such implication.” That is to say, glossolalia generally is not intended to convey a message to people; rather it is a form of prayer. It is an effort to express to God the inexpressible indwelling of the Spirit of God, and then especially an objective witness to the presence of the Spirit of God.

It is understandable that the Christians of the first century saw in glossolalia the proof that the Holy Spirit had come upon them. The early church was born and grew in a hostile environment, and a clear, outward sign of the Spirit’s presence was necessary to indicate to the unbelievers that the work of the gospel was legitimate. Today, however, for the mainstream of Protestantism, public instances of glossolalia sometimes bring confusion, disunity, and disillusionment. From the perspective of non-Pentecostals, glossolalia may be a weird, esoteric

96 H. Newton Malony and A. Adams Lovekin, 5.
phenomenon that belongs to immature Christians who come from a low socio-economic background and who possess a fundamentalist understanding of life and the faith. However, conversely, viewed through the eyes of Pentecostals, these mainstream Protestants lack the “baptism of the Spirit.” While non-Pentecostals point to the whole context of glossolalia as a “highly charged atmosphere,” Pentecostals note that the phenomenon “can also occur in quiet surroundings, and the unleashing of emotionalism is simply not a necessary part of speaking in tongues.” While some critics of “speaking in tongues” often dismiss it as “praying in gibberish,” Pentecostal groups point to the results of the study done by Kelsey.

It seems to be a physical impossibility to duplicate tongue-speech by deliberate imitation; when gibberish is produced by conscious effort, this also produces muscular tension which soon differentiates the sounds from the effortless flow of glossolalia.

Thus, Pentecostals believe that this speech is a sign which comes from beyond the speaker’s own power to produce it. They also believe that their experience of speaking in tongues is one of the most valuable and transforming experiences of their lives.

Further, most Pentecostals think that their lives have been changed, and that many fruits of their lives, both visible and invisible, come from this experience. They find that, with religious conviction, their problems become easier to handle, and that in many cases, their physical illnesses are healed at the time of this experience. In a word, through the experience of speaking in tongues they seek the religious meaning of life. In a more positive aspect, it is associated with growth and integration of personality; namely, wholeness, balance and perfection in motion.

97 Morton Kesley, 145.

98 Ibid., 6.
Thus those who are seeking an experience of tongues may well be opening their lives for just such a "spontaneous eruption of the archetype of the self." As Kelsey expresses it, "psychologically this experience can be described as a re-connection with the deep unconscious, of which glossolalia was a confirming manifestation."\textsuperscript{99}

This experience links together people of the most diverse backgrounds in a common religious experience, and gives them a common bond. It crosses denominational, cultural, and theological boundaries. It depends upon the desire of the individual who wants to receive it, and does not depend upon one's moral perfectionism or theological belief. Therefore, it brings Christians of the most diverse backgrounds together and enables them to communicate with one another. Speaking in tongues allows people to express depths of feeling that would otherwise remain inside. From the theological and psychological perspective, therefore, Kelsey summarizes the value of speaking in tongues.

Speaking with tongues can be a most concrete means of expressing joy and praise to God. It is a genuine witness to the presence of the Holy Spirit in one's life. Speaking with tongues is one evidence of the Spirit of God working in the unconscious and bringing one to a new wholeness, a new integration of the total psyche, a process which the Church has traditionally called sanctification.\textsuperscript{100}

But in the opinion of some observers, there are negative aspects of glossolalia. In the first place, it can be seen as an unattractive, irrational, automatic, and non-conscious phenomenon. It can be seen as a deliberate attempt to abandon one's self to the irrational, unknown forces which lie beyond consciousness. Many tongue speakers have been inflated by the experience, judging

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 219.

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 222.
those who have not spoken in tongues as religiously inferior. This is a spiritual pride for every emotional, social, and personal pressure to force other people to have the experience of tongues. Another criticism of speaking in tongues is "emotionalism." The experience may be seen as a starry-eyed burst of emotion which weakens the individual and makes him or her more unstable than before. Also, it tends to be associated with moral rigidity and perfectionism. These are real spiritual dangers of glossolalia. Nevertheless, speaking in tongues is an important feature of Korean spirituality. perhaps, as I have suggested, because it is associated with ecstatic elements of the traditional Korean religion. I shall return to this connection again in the next section, and in Chapter Five.

3. Healing as a Gift of the Holy Spirit

Another major characteristic of Pentecostal spirituality, including Korean Pentecostalism, is healing, which is one very important facet of religious experience. It is at the core of the Pentecostal way of life, and at the same time has become a significant concern of all Christian denominations, including Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox churches. Pentecostal services for healing have converted many non-Christians to Christianity. Most Pentecostals believe that the healing is accomplished through the grace of the Holy Spirit, who sustains the person's trust in God. For them, therefore, healing is an integral part of vital Christianity. No doubt, Koreans are especially hospitable to ministries of spiritual healing because they resonate

101 Ibid., 225.
so well with their Shamanistic heritage.

In general, the desire for health and the need for healing are universal phenomena in human experience. As Robert L. Kinast notes, the need for healing may be seen at three levels of human experience: "The first is basic survival. This pertains mostly to physical well-being and the means for achieving it.... The second level is human dignity. This pertains to a person's acceptance by self and others and the ability to interact with other people and groups.... The third level is moral and spiritual. This pertains to a person's sense of right and wrong and attitude toward the meaning of life."102 All these three levels interpenetrate and complement one another. The New Testament shows these three levels of healing in the ministry of Jesus: "at the level of basic need (curing the blind, the lame, and the paralyzed); at the level of human dignity (forgiving the adulteress. honoring Zacchaeus); at the level of morality and the meaning of life (living the beatitudes. raising the dead)."103 For Jesus, healing was done for the sake of the kingdom of God, and in order to remove obstacles to a person's awareness of God's presence and to elicit a new response to God's love. Therefore, Pentecostals (among others) seek to share in Jesus' ministry of healing. Jesus converts the sick, provokes a change in their attitude to life, and helps people to focus on the fundamentals of the human condition. They also believe that the healing power of his presence, of his actions and his words is still available today as it was during his earthly ministry (cf. Mt. 4:24, 8:17, 9:35, 12:15, 14:36; Mk. 1:32-34, 3:10, 6:56; Lk. 4:40ff, etc.).


103 Ibid., 467.
As we see in the New Testament, Jesus especially links sickness with the "manifestation of the works of God" (Jn. 9:2ff), retrieves it from its exclusive connection with sin, and associates it with a process of growth. He especially intervenes where a disease seems to be the expression of a weakness paralyzing the "spirit" of the person (blindness, dumbness, deafness, paralysis and so on, Mt. 15:30ff). In so doing, Jesus proves that the healing process does not simply mean regaining one's physical strength. It means finding a vitality (Lk. 6:19, 8:40), often passed on by means of touch (cf. Mk. 1:41, 3:10, 6:56, 7:33, 8:22). In this sense, for Jesus, healing means conversion. According to Antonio Mongillo, "To be healed is to begin to become capable of accepting, sharing, and making the most of the concrete possibilities of human existence, in anticipation of that fullness of humanity to which we are all called in Christ, not simply on the personal plane, but on the socio-political level as well."\textsuperscript{104} He goes on, "in the Christian vision of life, healing is the fruit of harmony, solidarity, transcendence. It is a process in which God's initiative, man's response, human solidarity and involvement with the world come together."\textsuperscript{105}

In the pastoral dimension Pentecostals usually adopt the dramatic model of "charismatic" healing. It usually takes place within a communal gathering arranged with Scripture readings, preaching, prayer, song, and dance. It is very much part of the phenomenon of rapid church growth in Korea. A representative example is the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul which maintains its reputation as a centre for charismatic healing, although few Pentecostals anywhere


\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 128.
in the world would be uncomfortable with it.

A key reason for Korean Pentecostalism's extraordinary growth is its ability to absorb huge chunks of indigenous Korean Shamanism and demon possession into its worship.

Harvey Cox depicts accurately the healing process in Korean Pentecostal worship of the Full Gospel Church as follows:

.....While the shouting and singing goes on, the ministers walk through the congregation sometimes striking the palms of their hands against someone's head or back. The gesture is strongly reminiscent of the practice in some Zen Buddhist monasteries where one of the monks walks up and down among the seated meditators and, to stave off dozing, strikes this or that one on the shoulder with a bamboo rod. Finally, when the singing, shouting, and dancing are over the minister begins leading a prayer which sounds more like an incantation than an invocation. He repeats over and over again, sometimes a hundred times or more, such phrases as "Hallelujah!" or "O Lord!" or "Spirit fills!" while the congregation joins him. During these incantatory prayers, many of the women and a few of the men begin to weep and cry and flail their arms. Meanwhile, the ministers keep assuring everyone that, whatever their illnesses or infirmities might be, they will certainly be healed. When the minister returns to the podium people file by to receive both the "laying on of hands" from the ministers and possibly another clap on some part of the back or shoulders. Often a minister will address the "demons of ill health" directly with commands like "Get out!" or the Korean equivalent of "Scat. shoo!"106

This healing ministry in the Pentecostal Church is very similar to that of Korean Shamanism. Korean theologian Boo-Woong Yoo is critical of this: "His [Rev. Cho's] role in Sunday morning worship looks exactly like that of a shaman or mudang. The only difference is that a shaman performs his wonders in the name of spirits while Rev. Cho exorcises evil spirits and heals the sick in the name of Jesus."107

106 Harvey Cox, 223-224.

However, most Pentecostal ministers firmly deny that there is any similarity with Shamanism in their worship services. Rather, they point out that the New Testament is full of demon possession and exorcisms, and believe that this healing ministry is associated with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues, and drives away demons (evil spirits) from the sick by the name of Jesus. For Pentecostals, healing is unmistakably a gift of the Holy Spirit. In the words of Georges Combet and Laureat Fabre, healing "is the gesture of faith in Jesus Christ." and is "in the broader sense closely allied to the ministry of reconciliation, just as the sacrament of the anointing of the sick."\(^{108}\)

Surely, Pentecostals and other Christian charismatics are right - that their practices are well authorized in Scripture, and that healing through prayer is an important and indispensable aspect of Christian faith and life. This is a ministry which has been neglected historically through much of Christian history in the West, and is new being renewed in many places and in many modes and styles. We are aware of the danger of charlatanism, of misleading suffering people, who may be tempted to dismiss normal, natural and medical forms of care. A great many Christians of other "mainstream" Catholic or Protestant churches may be more open to healing through prayer if it is carried out in a less sensational manner. Many Korean Christians, I suggest, may be led to a genuine healing spirituality, which honors both biblical and Shamanistic sources of inspiration.

Accordingly, we should keep in mind that the Korean religious mind and culture includes not only the loud, sensational and outwardly dramatic, but also the quiet, reflective and

meditative dimensions associated with Buddhism and Confucianism. Holistic forms of Asian [Korean] healing practices, combining Christian prayer and meditation with traditional acupuncture and herbal remedies, also constitute genuine forms of inculturation for the Korean syncretic context.

III. Minjung Spirituality: A Radical Minority

As mentioned in previous chapters, *minjung* spirituality in the Korean church developed as a minority alongside the emergence of "*minjung* theology" in the early 1970s, rooted in the socio-political and religio-cultural experiences of Christian life. Since it focuses on the "liberation from bondage" of the *minjung* (the poor and oppressed) in their political struggle, it is a theology and spirituality of liberation which critically reflects upon and inspires historical praxis in the light of faith. In Korean Protestantism, *minjung* spirituality has arisen among progressive and radical Christians specifically within and for the particular Korean context. Consequently, they have begun to discover a new spirituality of the *minjung* which is relevant to the traditional syncretic context. One might speak here of a genuine, spontaneous process of inculturation and syncretism.

A Japanese theologian, Kosuke Koyama observes that "*minjung* theology recently developed in Korea is keenly aware of the Korean religious spirituality."\(^{109}\) American Black theologian James H. Cone understands *minjung* theology as follows:

---

On the one hand, minjung theology is an example of what Korean Christians in particular and Asians generally are doing to liberate themselves from the stifling effects of European theology. But, on the other hand, minjung theology is an affirmation of Korean culture and history as the context in which Koreans must do theology. Minjung theology is Korean theology; it is a theology that is accountable to the liberating history and culture of poor people in Korea.\footnote{James H. Cone, “Preface,” in Yong-Bok Kim, ed. \textit{Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History}, x.}

According to a Taiwanese theologian, C. S. Song, “theology is not just concepts; it is the life of minjung-people.”\footnote{C. S. Song, “Building a Theological Culture of People,” \textit{Asia Journal of Theology} 1:2 (1987), 284.} From this assumption, he explicates minjung theology: “[Minjung] theology must be a body language, heart-semantics, or soul-syntax, to be able to understand statistics and analytical data, to grasp and experience the pain and suffering of minjung, and to reconstruct cultures already richly embedded in the life and history of minjung.”\footnote{Ibid., 285.}

Minjung theology, then, resembles other liberation theologies (e.g., Black theology and a Latin American liberation theology) in that it emphasizes the life of the people as a theological theme, and focuses upon the people's experience of struggle against oppression; it stresses “a new way to do theology” (G. Gutierrez) and “a methodological revolution” (J. L. Segundo). It differs from these, however, in that it values aspects of Korean/Asian peoples' religion and culture. Korean minjung theologians call minjung theology “the theology of Han” that is, a reference to the minjung's life as a suppressed, amassed and condensed experience of bitter oppression. Our first task here, then, is to elucidate the meaning of the word “minjung,” because
it is a spirituality of and for the minjung, and then "Han" as a theological theme of minjung spirituality.

1. The Meaning of the Word, "Minjung"

The word "minjung" is a Korean synthesis of two Chinese characters: "min" and "jung." "Min" literally means "the people" and "jung" denotes "the mass or the crowd." Combining these two words, one gets the idea of "the mass of people" or simply "the people." When we try to translate "minjung" into English, however, as David K.S. Suh says, "the mass is not adequate for our theological purpose, and the people is politically dangerous in anti-communist circles of Korea, because the people has become a communist word in Korea."\(^{113}\)

Though a biblical term "the people of God" may seem to be the safest expression both in Korean and in English, the minjung cannot be translated into "the people of God" theologically or politically. It is not easy for non-Koreans to understand fully the meaning of the word "minjung." It is not a notion which submits easily to academic analysis but one which has its

\(^{113}\) David K.S. Suh, "Minjung and Theology in Korea," in Yong-Bok Kim, ed. Minjung Theology: People As the Subjects of History, 18.

Korean sociologists and historians distinguish the word minjung from other Korean words, Inmin (people), Daejung (great masses), and Simin (citizen) which have similar meanings. According to them, these words are derived from Western concepts, while the word minjung is rooted in an Eastern idea. Inmin is the term mainly used by communists; Daejung is usually used in reference to a non-ideological and non-political people; and Simin denotes the citizen or populace of the country. [See, Andrew Sung Park, "Minjung and Pungryu Theologies in Contemporary Korea: A Critical and Comparative Examination" Ph.D. diss., (Berkeley: Graduate Theological Union, 1985), 18-20; also see, Jae Joung Lee, "Cultural Dynamics and Its Implications in Constructing a Local Theology: A Study of Minjung Theology as a Contextual Model," Th.D. diss., (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988), 173-175.]
origin in practical experience, and in the political struggle for justice and freedom. A Korean minjung theologian, Byung-Mu Ahn explains that "The notion of the minjung is a holistic, dynamic and changing reality which escapes categorization. Once it is subjected to definition, it becomes the victim of ideology and the object of speculation. It is, therefore, unwise to define it." To understand the minjung in Korea, therefore, we must be aware of the distinction between the oppressor and the oppressed or between the Yangban (upper class) and the common people. Yet oppression is wider than class. Oppression and marginalization include differences of social, political, cultural and intellectual conditions. For example, women belong to the minjung when they are sexually dominated by men; an ethnic group is a minjung group when it is politically or socially dominated by another group; a race is the minjung when it is dominated by another powerful ruling race.

The notion of the minjung is even more inclusive, since all the common people may be seen as the minjung, that is, the economically poor, the politically powerless, and the socially deprived. At the same time, however, in another sense the minjung are collectively rich and have power. They are rich in culture and history, and their power comes from this heritage. This is what makes the minjung different from people who are poor and oppressed in Latin America. American theologian, Robert McAfee Brown makes an explicit comparison between minjung experiences in Korea and those of the oppressed in Latin America:

They [Latin Americans] see liberation in the Latin American context as centering on liberation for the victims of material poverty, and therefore as having a strong

---

114 Byung-Mu Ahn, "Maga Bokum esau bon Yeoksa ui Juche," (The Subjects of History in Mark) in Minjung kwa Hankuk Shinhak (Minjung and Theology in Korea) (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1982), 160.
emphasis on overcoming the oppressive structures that go hand in hand with a capitalist economy. The Korean experience, they claim, is, by contrast, a much more widely oppressive situation, in which liberation is needed from cultural, social, political, and economic oppression.115

These experiences of the Korean minjung, unlike those of the poor in Latin America, have led to an interest in the positive traditional culture of the minjung and in their response to oppression throughout the centuries. "The reality and identity of the minjung," as Yong-Bok Kim points out, "is known not by philosophical or scientific definition in terms of essence of nature, but rather through their own stories [experiences] - their 'social biographies' that the minjung themselves create and therefore can tell best."116 The minjung are the custodians of the indigenous religio-cultural and historical heritage of the Korean people. According to Kim, the story of the minjung or their "social biography" is told to disclose the power structure that rules the people. Power is the antagonist in the story, while the people are the subjects of history.117 In other words, the story of the minjung is a history of oppression. Historically, the minjung have often been subject to romanticization, idealization or idolization. However, they should not be either glorified or absolutized.

What, then, is the distinction between the minjung and the Marxist "proletariat"? Yong-Bok Kim clearly distinguishes the minjung from the "proletariat":


117 Ibid., 107-108.
The proletariat is defined socio-economically, while the minjung are known politically. Politics as power relations is understood comprehensively and thus includes socio-economic relations. Philosophically speaking, the proletariat is confined to socio-economic (materialistic) determination, so that it is bound to historical possibilities and the internal logic of history. The minjung suffer these limitations in reality; yet the minjung as historical subjects transcend the socio-economic determination of history, and unfold their stories beyond mere historical possibilities to historical novelty - a new drama "beyond" the present history to a new and transformed history.\textsuperscript{118}

This distinction between the minjung and the proletariat involves a different understanding of history. Minjung history has a strong spiritual/transcendent dimension - something that lies "beyond" history which is often expressed in religious terms. The minjung's perception of history is closely related to religion, and even when minjung history does not involve religious elements in an explicit manner, its folklore or cultural elements have a transcendent function similar to religion. Minjung consciousness, then, is very much a matter of "spirituality" in Korea.

The political and socio-economic conditions of the minjung are not just objective realities for socio-economic analysis. Rather, they are the total subjective experiences of the minjung: their aspirations and sufferings, struggles and defeats which form their "social biography."

Accordingly, our reflection on the minjung involves not only objective socio-economic analysis but also an openness to their expressive language, culture and religion. In this sense, the minjung, as mentioned before, are not a completely defined notion, but a dynamic, living entity. The minjung reality can be known only through imaginative participation in their story of hope and suffering.

\textsuperscript{118} Yong-Bok Kim, 107.
2. The Biblical Relevance of the Minjung: "Ochlos"

The word "ochlos" (the crowd) is an important theme in the New Testament which is intimately related to the Korean minjung. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament denotes the non-biblical usage of the term ochlos as fourfold: (1) crowd, (2) host, troop, and army, (3) people or population, and (4) a measure, a great number. The term ochlos is the "public" as distinct from the private person or the small closed circle which is differentiated from public appearance. The ochlos mainly means a "crowd of people." The crowd denotes for the most part the anonymous people in the background of Jesus' ministry. In the Gospel of Mark they gather to see or hear Jesus (Mk. 3:20, 9:25). And Jesus calls the crowd to Himself to proclaim the gospel (Mk. 7:14, 8:34).

In many cases, according to Byung-Mu Ahn, a minjung biblical scholar, the motive is that of the Lord's pity and love for the ochlos (Mk. 6:34). They want to see the miraculous healings of Jesus. It thus seems that those who merely seek marvels or are simply curious are held at a distance. In this way a tension is increased and the faith of true seekers underlined (Mk. 2:4f). The crowd has an essential role in the Gospels as the chorus which confirms Jesus' words and acts by joy, admiration, astonishment and fear. On the other hand, the ochlos throng and harass Jesus (Mk. 3:9, 5:30f), and speak and argue about him. In a word, they are fickle in mood and

---


120 Ibid., 586-587.
defenseless against clever propaganda. They are induced to condemn Jesus (Mk. 15:11).\textsuperscript{121}

Here Ahn has determined five characteristics of the *ochlos* by examining the occurrences of this term in Mark as follows:

First, wherever Jesus went, there were always people who gathered around him. They are called the *ochlos* (2:4, 13; 3:9, 20, 32; 4:1; 5:21, 24, 31; 8:1; 10:1). In most instances, there is no clear reason as to why these people follow Jesus. They form the background of Jesus' activities. Second, these people are the so-called sinners, who stand condemned in their society. Especially at the beginning of his Gospel, Mark applies the term *ochlos* in a typical way to the tax collectors and sinners. Third, there are cases where the *ochlos* are different from the disciples (8:34; 9:14; 10:46). In some instances, Jesus teaches only the disciples (4:36; 6:46; 7:17, 33). Thus it seems that Jesus placed the disciples above the *ochlos*. However, Jesus often fiercely rebuked the disciples. There are no instances of Jesus rebuking the *ochlos*. Fourth, the *ochlos* are contrasted with the ruling class from Jerusalem who attack and criticize Jesus as their enemy. The *ochlos* took an anti-Jerusalem position and were clearly on the side of Jesus (2:4-6; 3:2-21; 4:1; 11:18, 27, 32). In this connection, it is important to note that the *ochlos* were the *minjung* of Galilee. Fifth, because the *ochlos* were against the rulers, the rulers were afraid of them and tried not to arouse their anger (11:18, 32; 12:12; 15:8,15).\textsuperscript{122}

When Jesus was arrested the rulers are said to have given money to mobilize the *ochlos* - a fact which indicates the strength of the *ochlos*. However, the fact that they were mobilized in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{121} Byung-Mu Ahn, "Jesus and the Ochlos", in *Minjung kwa Hankuk Shinhak* (Minjung and Korean Theology) (Seoul: Korean Theological Study Institute, 1982), 87-88.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 88-89
\end{itemize}
such a way does not mean that they were necessarily anti-Jesus, but that they could be manipulated.

Ahn also holds that Mark uses ochlos not merely to refer to a crowd but as a significant theological concept. For Ahn, the term refers to the poor, the oppressed, the despised, the sick, as well as tax collectors and sinners. He points out that "Jesus did not love all equally but rather had a partisan love for the ochlos, accepting them unconditionally and protecting them without judging them in any way."123 "Jesus' decision to return to Galilee which was the land of the oppressed, alienated, and exploited, after the arrest of John the Baptist (Mk. 1:14-15), indicates that he entered into the situation of the minjung as one of them."124 According to Ahn, this means that "Mark's presentation of the life and fate of Jesus is not a biography of an individual but a 'social biography' of the ochlos."125 He concludes that Jesus is not to be separated from the ochlos. As a carpenter, Jesus was one of the ochlos, and he lived and worked in rural Galilee, the land of the ochlos. Even more, the reports in Mark should not be understood in terms of Jesus' acts for minjung, but rather as the projection of the minjung's own potentiality. Jesus' passion and crucifixion are to be understood in the same way - "it was not Jesus of Nazareth but rather minjung who were unjustly tried and crucified..... Jesus as the Son of Man is just a collective symbol."126

---

123 Ibid., 91-92.


125 Ibid., 177.

126 Ibid., 182-183.
Drawing this same concept of the *ochlos* and this interpretation of Mark's theology, Nam-Dong Suh also concludes that "Jesus is the personification or symbol of the *minjung*. The crucifixion of Jesus is the inescapable climax of suffering involved in the process in which the *minjung* become their own masters."127 "Jesus was truly a part of the *minjung*, not just for the *minjung*."128 This indicates that the salvation of the *minjung* takes place first and foremost in the political realm, and that this salvation is not something accomplished for the *minjung* by someone else, but rather something they achieve themselves in an unending revolution. In this regard, *minjung* theologians are strongly convinced that *minjung* theology must be based mainly in Mark's theology, which provides the "social biography" of the *ochlos*. Their contribution has been highly valued in Korea and elsewhere, because hitherto biblical textual studies of the *ochlos* had not been extensively pursued.

The *minjung* theologians are not without their critics in Korea. Kyung-Yun Chun, a prominent Korean New Testament theologian, disagrees with Ahn's interpretation of the word *ochlos* in Mark. Chun holds that it is not beyond reason to suggest that Mark might be using the term simply to refer to a group of gathered people without specifying their socio-economic status, as in the Septuagint.129 Chun thus puts it,

---

127 Nam-Dong Suh, "Du Iyagi ui Hapryu," (Confluence of Two Stories) in *Minjung kwa Hankuk Shinhak*, 244-245.

128 Nam-Dong Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," in *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, 159.

They [minjung theologians] take only by way of a selective, arbitrary, tendentious and self-contradictory interpretation of some of the Markan material without taking the whole of the Markan witness to Jesus into account.... and they ignore New Testament books other than Mark and reject New Testament Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology.130

Another Korean New Testament theologian, Se-Yoon Kim, also criticizes minjung theologians, urging that Jesus himself was "a part of minjung, not just for the minjung" as a "mere" carpenter and hence a poor man. He thus says that "they [minjung theologians] were not aware that as a skilled worker, as Martin Hengel points out. Jesus belonged to the middle class of Galilee."131

These criticisms effectively point out that minjung theologians have reduced the ochlos of the Gospel of Mark to a merely socio-political notion. We must also see in the ochlos of Mark their spiritual richness in faith. Jesus accepted them and supported them without any conditions, since they knew their own need, and were open to the Kingdom. For this reason, Jesus promised them the future of God: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mk. 2:17b). This is Jesus' basic attitude of love to the ochlos.

However, the minjung theologians are right in this; Jesus certainly loved people with partiality. He even required respect for children. In Mk. 9:37, children are identified with Jesus and through him with God. Mark says in 10:13-15, that the kingdom of God belongs to children. For Mark, the child may be seen as a symbol of the Kingdom for reasons of low and humble status. Similarly, the ochlos who gathered around Jesus are spiritually symbolized as children, or

130 Ibid., 76.

"little" ones. God's will is to side with the *ochlos* completely and unconditionally. God's will is revealed in the event of Jesus being with them as one who loves the *ochlos*. In a word, Jesus informed the *ochlos* of the advent of God's kingdom: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (1:15). This declaration gives the *ochlos* a new way and a new hope.

*Minjung* theologians are also right to apply this biblical message to Korea in our time. Whether the Korean *minjung* are economically poor, politically oppressed, or socially alienated, yet they may possess in their humility and awareness of need, a distinct spiritual richness. That Jesus always sided with the *ochlos* and manifested his divine revelation to them implies, theologically, that even today a special relationship between Jesus and the Korean *minjung* exists. Jesus proclaims the coming of God's kingdom to the Korean *minjung*, and promises the future of God to the *minjung*.

3. A Theological Explication of *Minjung* Spirituality: *Han*

What, then, are the elements of Christian spirituality for the Korean *minjung*? As we have briefly discussed in Chapter Two, *minjung* theology, which emerged from the historical and cultural context of the 1970s, is the "theology of *Han*." Han determines the quality of people's feeling and mood as experienced in their everyday life. It is not a single feeling but many feelings condensed together, including resentment, regret, resignation, aggression, anxiety, loneliness, longing, sorrow, and emptiness. That is, these feelings are "shadows of the heart, the

---

132 See Nam-Dong Suh, "Towards the Theology of *Han*," in Yong-Bok Kim, ed., *Minjung Theology: People As the Subjects of History*, 51-66.
spirituality of the negative emotions"¹³³ In general, in the cultural tradition of Korea, *Han* has been acknowledged as the main source of creative activity in the realm of culture and religion. Shamanism has served as the matrix of Korean culture throughout its history and shamans especially have played the role of resolving the people's *Han*.

From the psychological perspective, a Korean psychologist and theologian, Jae Hoon Lee, distinguishes two Korean terms, 'won-han' and 'joeong-han.' According to Lee, "anger, grudge, and resentment are the main attributes of the 'won-han' feeling, whereas, defeat, resignation, emptiness, helplessness, hopelessness, loneliness, longing for the loved one, and sadness are the attributes of joeong-han."¹³⁴ In *Han*, therefore, these feelings interact with each other dynamically to create a specific Han feeling depending on real circumstances. The feelings of *Han* have both positive and negative aspects. Lee explains,

> On the one hand, it [*Han*] can enrich the subject's emotional life by mixing and condensing various ingredients of feelings to create the most subtle and sophisticated sentiments and moods. On the other, it can endanger the subject's emotional life by intensifying a certain feeling to an almost unbearable degree. The intensification of feeling is related to its suppression. When these feelings are suppressed for a long period they turn inside and become the feelings of *Han*. Where there is suppression of emotion,


¹³⁴ Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of the Inner Wounds - Han* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 138-139. [Lee explains that there are two large streams about the discussion of *Han* in the Korean literacy tradition. First, *Han* is an individual, sentimental, lyric, pessimistic, and regressive emotion; second, *Han* is the emotion of anger that is the energy for social and historical change. The former, "joeng-han"sets off a chain reaction of resignation, adaptation to reality, and national nihilism, while the latter, "won-han" results in vengeance, social conscientization, and revolution. (Ibid., 15.)]
there is Han.\textsuperscript{135}

About the negative aspect of Han, David K. S. Suh writes, "the feeling of Han... has a negative element. It is a repressed murmuring, unexpressed in words and action. It does not change anything. It might arouse a sense of revenge at most."\textsuperscript{136} Also, a Korean poet, Chi-Ha Kim is keenly aware of the negative aspect of Han. He describes Han as something fearful which can kill, destroy, and hate endlessly. Nam-Dong Suh quotes Kim's idea: "Han, separating itself from human emotion, becomes substantial and grows into a ghostly creature. It appears as a concrete substance with enormous ugly and evil energy."\textsuperscript{137} Nam-Dong Suh also exemplifies the positive aspect of Han: "On the one hand, it is a dominant feeling of defeat, resignation and nothingness. On the other, it is a feeling with a tenacity of will for life which comes to weaker beings. The first aspect can sometimes be sublimated to great artistic expressions and the second aspect could erupt as the energy for a revolution and rebellion."\textsuperscript{138}

For Suh, both aspects are positive, because they can be sublimated to the expression of art or to the energy to change social reality. The other positive aspect of Han is expressed in the exposition of the transcendent experience in the mask dance. According to Yonghak Hyun, a sublimation of Han takes place in the experience of "critical transcendence," and that experience comes to people at the climax of the mask dance.

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 3.


\textsuperscript{137} Nam-Dong Suh, 60.

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 61.
First, it creates among the minjung the wisdom and the power to survive... They are able to bear the hardship of the world with good humour. This is especially true in times when there seems to be no exit, no possibility for effective change. Second, the experience provides the minjung with the courage to fight for change and freedom... And that happens without much self-righteousness, for this experience of critical transcendence places them not only over against others who oppress the minjung but also over against the minjung themselves.  

From both aspects of Han, minjung theology, which is rooted in Korean experiences of life and culture, considers Han as the central theme of its theological enterprise. But as Jae Hoon Lee argues, "despite its importance to minjung theology, the concept of Han has not been thoroughly explored, and remains the most inexplicable part of minjung theology."  

Most minjung theologians have understood Han as feelings caused by the subject's suppression or oppression of feelings in the face of external oppression. For them, Han was a symbol for the cry of the oppressed people, and became a political metaphor in its struggle for social justice and political democracy. Especially, David K. S. Suh included the aspect of repression as well as suppression. He refers "repression" to the Han of the individual, and "suppression" or "oppression" to collective Han on a social and political level. According to him, "the feeling of Han is not just an individual feeling of repression... This is a collective feeling of the oppressed... The feeling of Han is an awareness both at an individual psychological level as well as at a social and political level."  

---


140 Jae Hoon Lee, 5.

141 David K. S. Suh, 28.
In fact, even though Han includes the repressed feeling caused by a psychological condition, the emphasis of minjung theology is on the suppressed feeling caused by the social and political condition. Minjung theology starts from reflection upon the social and political experience of collective Han. That is, in minjung theology Han is not only understood as feeling but also as an experience. Nam-Dong Suh thus claims that any discussion on minjung has nothing to do with theology itself unless it has evolved from reflection upon the experience of Han. He argues that "we should take Han as our theme, which is indeed the language of the minjung and signifies the reality of their experience. If one does not hear the sighs of the Han of the minjung, one cannot hear the voice of Christ knocking on our door."\(^{142}\)

From this perspective, most minjung theologians are strongly convinced that the origin of Han lies in external conditions of social contradiction and injustice, and the elimination of the external causes of Han is the only possible way of resolving Han. For them, the positive element that might emerge from the accumulation of the collective Han is the transformation of the Han of the oppressed into revolutionary activity. David K. S. Suh especially emphasizes that the "sickness of Han can be cured only when the total structure of the oppressed society is changed."\(^{143}\) His view is that the original cause of Han exists in unjust social structures. For him, unless evil in the social structure is eliminated, Han cannot be successfully resolved because the Han-creating condition remains unchanged. In other words, Han is not to be simply resolved personally or socially, because social revolution is the true way of resolving Han. In this view,

\(^{142}\) Nam-Dong Suh, 65.

\(^{143}\) David K. S. Suh, 28.
for minjung theology, the psychic reality of Han becomes secondary while the reality of social evil, which exists in the socio-political arena, becomes of primary importance.

No doubt, minjung theologians are right to protest against any superficial "resolution" of Han through religion, where religion is used as a kind of "opium" (to use Marx’s concept).

Nevertheless, oppressed people still have to cope with life, with or without a social revolution. Indeed, the history of social revolutions may lead us to doubt whether any new socio-economic and political system will entirely solve the problem of Han. Therefore, the minjung require a personal and communal spirituality that will give them dignity, strength, and hope - before, during, and after the political and social transformations, which are surely necessary.

But whether Han is resolved primarily in the socio-political or at the personal level, most minjung theologians accept the idea of "Dan" that Korean Catholic poet, Chi-Ha Kim, proposed as a way of overcoming the problem of Han. The literal meaning of the Korean word Dan is "cutting off." It may be linked with Christian "self-denial" or Buddhist "nothingness." Kim personally shows this practice in his prayer.

Oh, God. I have been offering the same prayer for months. Listen to my prayer, Oh, Lord. Sharpen the sword in me. Grant me the courage to take the act of Dan, if my heart bursts in pain, so that I can start the journey for the battlefield.... Help me to cut off for the far away journey. I cannot cut off the tie that draws me into the flowery tomb of happy pleasurable home, the nest of amnesia.... Help me cut off that tie. Send me off to the wilderness, drawing under the cold wintry starts....

In this prayer we can see how desperately Kim is struggling with the inner forces that are pulling him down into a depressive state, where the happy home becomes a flowery tomb and the nest of

---

144 Chi-Ha Kim, Quoted from Dong-Hwan Moon, "Korean Minjung Theology," unpublished manuscript, (1980), 7.
amnesia. He is convinced that through the practice of Dan, Han can be cut off. His goal is to move toward the "battlefield" and the "wilderness," where he can obtain "maddeningly bitter awakenings."

To Kim, then, what does this "battlefield" or "wilderness" mean? In a word, it means "revolution." Revolution is the ultimate resolution of his Han and the Han of the minjung. However, he does not mean just a social and political revolution. Rather, it is a total revolution which transforms both persons and society from a lower spiritual state to a higher state. In order to reach the higher spiritual state, both the energy of Han and the power of Dan are needed. If there is no power of Dan, the energy of Han always explodes into the vicious circle of destruction. Only the Han that is widely restrained by Dan can bring about a total social, political, psychological, and spiritual revolution. Nam-Dong Suh thus says, "since negative forces constantly arise from Han, a repetition of Dan is necessary to suppress the explosion that can break out of the vicious circle, so that Han can be sublimated as higher spiritual power."^145

The ultimate goal of Dan is to achieve both political and spiritual revolution at the same time. If Dan means only "to cut the vicious circle of revenge" in the collective sense, it is definitely reductive in its functions. The reality of Han ultimately demands "healing" which not only listens to the cries and the sighs of the suffering of the minjung, but also takes care of their inner wounded heart. It emerges from the cry against unjust and oppressive reality, but at the same time calls attention to the source of the cry located in the heart of the minjung. This is a significant contribution to the well-being of the minjung. Han and Dan become basic dynamics.

^145 Nam-Dong Suh, 61.
in the life of the people. When linked with Dan, Han is not just a source of suffering, but also the source of creativity and energy in the process of the transformation of personality and society.

A Christian minjung spirituality, then, is a spirituality directed toward both personal and social transformation. It offers dimensions that are missing from both the conservative Calvinist and Pentecostal spiritualities. It implies a critique of these other approaches to Christian spiritual life in that it takes so seriously the objective facts of social oppression and sees that dedicated Christians must not care only for their own souls, but for the well-being of all the minjung. Yet it needs to be balanced and deepened by the insights of these other forms of Christian spirituality.

In the following chapter I shall discuss the need for the thorough integration of these differing spiritualities.
CHAPTER FIVE

HOLISTIC CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY FOR
THE KOREAN SYNCRETIC CONTEXT

In the previous chapter I categorized paradigms of Christian spirituality in the Korean Protestant churches, namely, the major conservative Calvinist group, the substantial Pentecostal group, and the smaller radical minjung group. The question of pluralism, which in Korea is associated mainly with the radical groups, has been discussed in Chapter Three on inculturation and syncretism. The above three existing paradigms of Korean Christian spirituality are clearly distinguishable from one another. In fact, they have sharply divided the Korean churches along denominational lines and even within denominations, and this has resulted in theological conflict, confusion, and a polarity of faith positions. But, as I began to suggest in Chapter One, a true and authentic Christian spirituality must be holistic. Indeed, our Korean syncretic history, through the "both-and" harmony of Pungnyudo and the cooperative co-mingling of Shamanism, Confucianism, and Buddhism, gives us a good model for a genuine "holism." The spiritual task of the Korean Protestant churches is the integration of the best elements of the divided ways of Christian life, always with an eye to our own ancient religious heritage.

In this chapter I shall propose ways forward toward a holistic Christian spirituality, attempting to synthesize the opposing approaches to Christian life for the sake of spiritual wholeness in the syncretic Korean context. It includes, first of all, a synthesis of polarities inherent in Christian faith: transcendence and immanence, contemplation and action, and the personal and the social. Next, it attempts to integrate elements of the traditional spiritualities of
the great religions within Korea's own spiritual ethos, and also some elements present in Catholic spirituality. Finally, I shall argue that this integration has pastoral implications for an understanding of conversion as an ongoing process of life, and of spiritual direction, as a Christian ministry that must help Korean people to encounter God in their specific context.

I. A Synthesis of Polarities for a Holistic Spirituality

In this section I shall attempt to integrate three divided ways of Korean Christian faith and life. They are the polarity of divine transcendence and immanence, of contemplation and action, and of the personal and social. I shall first review reflections of contemporary theology upon these subjects.

1. Between Divine Transcendence and Divine Immanence

In every era Christian theology has sought a balance between the divine transcendence and the divine immanence. On the one hand, God relates to the world as the transcendent One; that is, God the Creator is distinct from the world. God is beyond the universe, and comes to the world from beyond. On the other hand, God also relates to the world as the immanent One. This means that God is present in and to creation. The divine one is active within the universe, involved with the processes of the world and of human history. This is an important distinction for spirituality as such. The question is: Do we relate in prayer to a deity who is far above and beyond us? Or is God near at hand? Is God a holy One who dwells in splendid majesty and
mystery? Is God intimately engaged with us in the practical affairs of life? The answers to these questions need to be typically Asian and Korean: both/and. We must answer "Yes" to all of these questions. Such a realization can have a profound influence upon spiritual life.

Because the Bible presents God as both beyond the world and present to the world, Christians in every era have been confronted with the challenge of articulating the Christian understanding of the nature of God in a manner that balances, affirms and holds in creative tension both the divine transcendence and the divine immanence. A balanced affirmation of both truths facilitates a proper relation between theology/spirituality and reason/culture. Where such balance is lacking, serious problems in Christian spirituality readily emerge. Hence, an overemphasis on transcendence can lead to a theology that is irrelevant to people's lives in the cultural context in which it seeks to speak, whereas an overemphasis on immanence can produce a theology held captive to a specific culture, and negate God's freedom and sovereignty.

These dimensions of the divine reality correspond, in a measure, to the diversity and tensions that exist within and among the churches. The transcendence of God may be said to be the preference of conservative/evangelical groups in the Korean churches, and the immanence of God the preference of progressive/radical groups. For these groups, God has been experienced as transcendent, holy One and absolutely other, or as immanent One within creation and human experience. This characterization needs to be qualified, however, in that the Pentecostal (Conservative) groups also emphasize the immanent activity of God, especially in their attention to spiritual healing.

Korean Christian theology and faith have inevitably been influenced by western theology, where, in the twentieth century, questions of God's transcendence and immanence have been to
the forefront. We note briefly here some of the main trends in western theology which have helped to shape the polarities of Korean spirituality in this century.

Early in the twentieth century, the most influential Protestant theologian was Karl Barth, whose influence continues to be important in Korean theological schools. One of the great strengths of his theology lay in its recovery of the transcendent "otherness" of God, by using his theological method, "from above." At the same time, his theological passion was the centrality and uniqueness of Jesus Christ. He argued that Christian theology could not be built up from universal human experience or reason, but must be received in obedience from God's revelation in Christ. According to him, "the possibility of knowledge of God's word lies in God's word and nowhere else... The single event in history in which God is revealed is the event of Jesus Christ."¹ In Christ God reveals Himself, not merely information or a way of life. This means that "the eternal God is to be known in Jesus Christ and not elsewhere."² The transcendent "wholly Other" God, then, is exclusively revealed by a vertical, in-breaking self-disclosure. How can one know that this is true? Barth responds, "The proof of faith consists in the proclamation of faith. The proof of the knowledge of the Word [of God] consists in confessing it."³ In other words, faith in Jesus Christ as the self-revealed truth of God is self-authenticating, by the power of the Holy Spirit which comes down from above. In this sense, the structure of his theology is

¹ Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics I/1, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), 222.


³ Church Dogmatics I/1, 241.
thoroughly Christocentric and vertical. Barth's great emphasis on the divine transcendence and otherness is, then, "balanced," only by the exclusive, absolutely unique Incarnation of God's word in Jesus Christ, and by the revealing, reconciling work of the Holy Spirit. A general, universal immanence of God is hard to find in Barth. This kind of exclusivist, highly "vertical" theology, linked to the theology of Calvin, is highly influential in Korean conservative Protestant circles. However, not only in the West but also in Korea, this God was too remote from human passions and struggles.

In the 1960s and 1970s, liberation theologians struggled with the question of the presence of God in their oppressive situations, and emphasized experiences of liberation from oppression. Consequently, they shifted toward an emphasis on the immanence of God. For example, a prominent North American Black theologian, James Cone asserts that "revelation is a black event, i.e., what black people are doing about their liberation." And he concludes that revelation is more than merely divine self-disclosure, being instead God's self-disclosure to humankind in a situation of liberation. For him, "God joins in the oppressed condition and is known wherever people experience humiliation and suffering. The essence of the nature of God, therefore, is found in the concept of liberation." In other words, "God always encounters us in a situation of historical liberation." This view, as examined in the previous chapters, shares certain

---

4 In the late Barth, one can find an acknowledgement of "other lights" which God provides in the secular world [See, Church Dogmatics III/1, 116.]


6 Ibid., 121.

7 Ibid., 141.
similarities with Latin American liberation theology and with Korean minjung theology which begin with a situation of oppression of the poor.

Feminist theology also emphasizes God's presence and activity. Women's experience is a source and norm for feminist theology. Anne E. Carr thus states,

While women can make no claim to a unique knowledge of God, they can trust that their experience and understanding of God provide an important and necessary corrective to an imagery and understanding derived from an over-masculinized church and culture. And in the Christian context, the experience and insights of women allow for a genuinely critical retrieval of traditional and contemporary ways of understanding God.  

In Rosemary R. Reuther's words, "the use of women's experience in feminist theology, therefore, explodes as a critical force, exposing classical theology, including its codified tradition, as based on male experience rather than on universal human experience. Feminist theology makes the sociology of theological knowledge visible, no longer hidden behind mystifications of objectified divine and universal authority." Reuther believes that the traditional imagery of God has been dominated by male-oriented dualisms arising out of patriarchal images of society, dualisms that have served to subjugate and dehumanize women, including nature/spirit, transcendence/immanence, soul/body, creation/redemption, male/female, and good/evil.

Searching for a non-dualistic reference for God, Reuther turns to Tillich's concept of God as the "ground of being," which she prefers to call the "primal Matrix" or "God/ess." For her,

---


10 For a feminist understanding of God/ess, see Rosemary R. Reuther, 68-71.
God/ess is no more to be identified with spirit, transcendence or maleness than with matter, immanence, and femaleness. In fact, God/ess is no more to be identified with humankind than with nature. On the contrary, God/ess embraces all such dualities in a dynamic unity, so that there is no "great chain of being" with the divine at the top and inanimate nature at the bottom. Because of its unity with God/ess, all reality is radically equal. From this feminist perspective, therefore, the vision of God is clearly understood as the divine immanence.

Feminist theology in Korea has not yet become a major presence, but it has begun to appear, as we have previously noted, in the work of Hyun Kyung Chung, who was educated in the United States of America, and has learned much from American feminism. She is also very much influenced by Korean minjung theology, especially that of Nam-Dong Suh (referred to elsewhere) who also emphasizes the immanence of the divine Spirit. Her famous dictum is "the context is our text." That is, the "context" of Asian human experience is itself revelatory. In her work we find a considerable lean toward divine immanence, borrowing from Asian pantheism or panentheism. This theological approach will surely make an essential contribution to a Korean Christian spirituality in the future.

Two important western theologians, Catholic and Protestant, present more balanced theologies of God's transcendence and immanence. According to the Catholic theologian Karl Rahner, "the dilemma of the immanence or transcendence of God must be overcome without

---

11 Ibid., 86-87.

sacrificing the one or the other concern." He holds that ordinary, universal human experience is unintelligible without the transcendent, holy mystery of God, and that this holy mystery must be encountered and known in and through the historical environment that people experience in daily life.

To overcome the conflict or dilemma between the immanence and transcendence of God, the German Protestant theologian Jürgen Moltmann employs eschatological or "messianic" theology through a creative reconstruction of the doctrine of God. According to Moltmann, "From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present." This reorientation toward the future is not only biblically sound but also points a way toward solutions to the problems and impasses of contemporary theology. His theological method attempts to meet the questions of the present with answers drawn from God's revelation of the future.

For Moltmann, especially in his early work, revelation is the promise of totally new and unexpected events in the future that can be anticipated in the present. Revelation is not the unveiling of already existing truth, but the "apocalypse of the promised future of the truth." Therefore, God is transcendent in the way that the future is transcendent, but is also immanent in


15 Ibid., 84.
the way that the future is immanent to the present: "God is not 'beyond us' or 'in us' but ahead of us in the horizons of the future opened to us in his promises," so that 'the future' must be considered as mode of God's being." His conviction is that if God already fully existed, whether 'above us' or 'in us,' reality could not be truly historical. So he argues that "God is not the ground of this world and not the ground of existence, but the God of the coming kingdom which transforms this world and our existence radically." For him, then, God's transcendence is not so much that of the Creator and Sustainer of a world that already exists. Rather, transcendence is God's power that transforms the present world from the perspective of its future. That is to say, while God's transcendence lies in his coming out of the future to the world, his immanence lies in his becoming together with the world, in the trinitarian history of the kingdom within the world.

His later theology, especially in God in Creation, emphasizes God's immanence in all creation, while insisting nevertheless on God's transcendent, triune mystery as the One who has created ex nihilo. This theology combines, then, transcendence and immanence in a creative way so that it has become immensely popular and influential in Korean theological circles. Moltmann is a frequent visitor and lecturer in Korean theological seminaries.


17 Ibid., 10.

18 We note some similarity of Moltmann's thought with that of Process theology (based on the metaphysics of A. N. Whitehead) which is most notable for its overwhelming emphasis on the immanence of God. [See, Jürgen Moltmann, God in Creation, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 75-78.]
Korean Christians then have the task of determining how Christian faith can speak of the transcendence of the immanent God and the immanence of the transcendent God, and thereby forging a new and more adequate balance between divine immanence and transcendence in their own syncretic context. That is, in conversation with the Christian theologies of the West, and with their own Asian religious heritage, they need to develop a deeper sense of the transcendence and immanence of God. This effect may help them to overcome their theological conflicts and dilemmas which result from an unbalanced overemphasis on transcendence or immanence. It also may lead them to common efforts towards the vision of unity in diversity and of a holistic Christian spirituality. In the postmodern era, therefore, although it has been influenced by the western theologians mentioned above, Korean theology must have the opportunity to articulate in new ways the Christian conviction of the reality of the transcendent-immanent God.

2. Between Contemplation and Action

For Korean Christians, the second existential tension is that between contemplation (preference of conservative/evangelical groups) and action (preference of progressive/radical groups). This may be seen as a tension between the vertical and the horizontal, between the passive and the active, and between the inward and the outward in their spiritual lives. Of course, this tension does not lie in a complete distinction, since contemplation is a form of human activity and generally human action is not blind or unconscious but knowing and intentional. Moreover, some degree of both contemplation and action are to be found among all Christian groups. Thus, Jon Sobrino affirms the correlation of each to the other; that is, "contemplation is
the demand for a vivifying element of action in history, but at the same time action is a locus of contemplation." In this sense, if they are to be "whole" persons, Korean Christians must maintain a delicate balance between contemplation and action. Their relationship to God must involve prayer and contemplation, but at the same time it should be constituted by concrete loving activity for social justice. As we have said elsewhere, contemplation (as meditation) is fundamental to Buddhism (the head mode mentioned in Chapter Two); action is central to Confucianism (the body mode). Action for healing, for example is basic to Shamanism (the heart mode). Even within these Asian traditions some balance of contemplation and action is to be found. In seeking a harmony or balance of these two dimensions of religious life, therefore, Korean Christians build upon a rich religio-cultural heritage of "both-and."

In its Christian usage the basic meaning of contemplation is that it has to do with "awareness" of the presence of God apprehended not so much by thought as by love. Awareness, which is central to contemplation, is a very different experience from thinking. This means that in contemplation we put off our false selves and find our true selves in God. Thus, contemplation sees everything in unity. In the New Testament John speaks most strikingly of the oneness with God: "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (Jn. 14:10, 11). Jesus not only does what the Father does, but he is what the Father is. Moreover, his prayer is that his disciples may be one and that they may be in God, as the Father is in him and he in the Father.

We have noted in Chapter One two approaches to Christian spirituality: "apophatic and cataphatic ways." These ways come to be known as ways of understanding contemplation: the

---

cataphatic way of affirmation and the apophatic way of negation or denial. Yet both lead to a deeper awareness and union with God. The cataphatic stresses the affirmation of God's presence in all of creation, the fullness of awareness and perception which is typified in finding God in all things. Called the via positiva, it has an incarnational basis, and at times today may take the form of a "creation-centred spirituality." The apophatic is an experience of negation, or at times the apparent absence of God. It is characterized by darkness, nothingness, detachment, and unknowing. Called via negativa, it is described in the teaching of Pseudo-Dionysius, the Cloud of Unknowing, and in the writings of John of the Cross, who speaks of the two dark nights, of the spirit and of the soul. That is, no ideas, thoughts, words or symbols can reach God.

Through both of these ways, contemplation is seen as the normal development of a life of prayer. The movement in prayer, from thoughts, words, symbols, or images that mediate God's presence into a quieter mode of prayer and awareness of being with God, is a response to God's invitation and attraction. It is God's desire for intimacy with us, expressed in numerous ways in Scripture. In this sense, contemplative prayer involves an openness to the mystery of God. It demands an active listening, a listening heart. It is a way of being, not something we possess. An American Trappist, Thomas Keating understands contemplative prayer as "the development of one's relationship with Christ to the point of communing beyond words, thoughts, feelings, and the multiplication of particular acts; a process moving from the simplified activity of waiting

---

upon God to the ever-increasing predominance of the Gifts of the Spirit as the source of one's prayer." So a vital attitude of contemplation is an openness to receive, which flows from the awareness of one's own emptiness. That is to say, contemplative prayer is more a matter of the heart than of the head. It involves the inner movement, awareness of feelings and affectivity. In this regard, the effects of contemplation involve a transformation of the praying, loving person: the "inner eye" is opened. It reveals one's solidarity with all others and issues a call to a universal love. Here Corita Clarke outlines the process of this contemplative prayer as follows:

1. Quieting of body, mind, faculties (memory, imagination, understanding less active).
2. Development of heart - lowered mental activity allows for increased psychic energy at deeper levels. Greater awareness, intensity, expansion of consciousness; affective, loving, simple response.
3. Focused awareness - attention, open waiting, active stretching out to God, passive resting in God, quiet alertness.
4. Wordless communication - faculty of the will is active in faith and love.
5. Letting go - surrender, emptying, kenosis; poverty of spirit; letting God mold, as a potter forms clay. Darkness, purification, stripping; acceptance of the darkness.
6. Transformation - communion with God. Willingness to be changed by this relationship beyond that which occurs in all significant relationships. Re-created through encounter with God, with the Risen Jesus, with the Spirit.

This form of contemplative prayer maintains its monastic traditions in today's "Centering Prayer." As Keating points out, "the practice of Centering Prayer is not contemplation in the

---


23 About "Centering Prayer" see, Basil Pennington, *Centering Prayer* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1980); Thomas Keating; *Open Mind, Open Heart: The Contemplative* (continued...)
strict sense of the term but a preparation for it. In the broader sense of the term, it might be called the first step on the ladder of contemplative prayer.\textsuperscript{24}

In general, however, this contemplative attitude toward Christian life may support merely our ongoing personal conversion, and expand only our self-knowledge and acceptance of ourselves, of our weakness, sinfulness and limitation. If contemplation is an important component of a real, loving relationship with God, a true contemplative attitude should be opened to all dimensions of reality, because a holistic spirituality implies an overall, comprehensive attitude. Thus, as Gustavo Gutierrez points out, "A spirituality is not restricted to the so-called religious aspects of life: prayer and worship. It is not limited to one sector but is all-embracing, because the whole of human life, personal and communal, is involved in the journey. A spirituality is a manner of life that gives a profound unity to our prayer, thought, and action.\textsuperscript{25}

In this regard, Corita Clarke says, "Real human action is contemplative action and responsive action, freely chosen in awareness. Thus, all action is contemplative to the degree that it is genuine human action. All contemplation is a form of action provided and to the degree it is truly

\textsuperscript{23}(...continued)


\textsuperscript{24} Thomas Keating, \textit{Intimacy with God}, 55.

\textsuperscript{25} Gustavo Gutierrez, \textit{We Drink from Our Own Wells}, 88.
contemplative."\(^{26}\)

Needless to say, in the context of the Third World, all action is in service to the struggle for justice for the oppressed people. Jon Sobrino explains,

Action for justice, therefore, seems to us to be the type of action which is required not only for those who already have come to Christian faith but it is also an indispensable element for coming to Christian faith as such. "The roads to faith and justice are inseparable." For this reason action for justice seems to us to be the favoured place for contemplation, since it specifies the place in which contemplation can be contemplation of the Christian God, and thus the place for also contemplating the reality of the world and history in the light of God.\(^{27}\)

Indeed, an essential component of Christian life is the concern for social justice, and therefore an authentic Christian spirituality summons us to hear especially "the cry of the poor" and to commit ourselves and our resources in some way to a compassionate response. Thomas E. Clarke outlines the variety of possible responses: "We are called to act for the poor and to preach the good news to the poor; some are called to walk with the poor, others to live and work as the poor, and in some places we are experiencing the Church of the poor where the gospel goes forth from the poor to evangelize the Church itself."\(^{28}\)

Therefore, active involvement in the contemporary struggle for justice is both an expression of real human action and the fruit of contemplative prayer through which we are enabled to hear the cry of the poor in our hearts.

But there is an intimate connection between compassion and contemplation. This means that

\(^{26}\) Corita Clarke, 39.


contemporary awareness embraces the action that is truly compassionate. A contemporary
spiritual writer, Henri Nouwen speaks of this connection:

Compassion is the fruit of solitude and the basis of all ministry. The purification and
transformation that take place in solitude manifest themselves in compassion.... It is in
solitude that we realize that nothing human is alien to us... In solitude our heart of stone
can be turned into a heart of flesh, ... a closed heart into a heart that can open itself to all
suffering people in a gesture of solidarity.29

Accordingly, contemplation results in greater openness to God and to others. That is to say,
union with God deepens our awareness of identification with all people (especially, the
oppressed and the poor). This solidarity is the basis of compassion. Thus William Johnston says.
"...Christian compassion is the discovery of Christ in the suffering people in the world. This
union or solidarity with the poor and oppressed is of the very essence of Christian mysticism."30
Thomas Merton also points out. "No man who ignores the rights and needs of others can hope to
walk in the light of contemplation because his way has turned aside from truth, from compassion.
and therefore from God."31

Christian spirituality, then, refers to the whole way of Christian life in the world. From this
perspective, Christian spirituality is integrated, unified, comprehensive, and holistic. An holistic
Christian spirituality, because it is reacting against a limited and reductionist view of the spiritual
life, holds "contemplation in action" as a way of union with God. In Roger Haight's words, it is

"contemplation both within the context of Christian activity, stemming from it and leading back to it, and within activity itself."\(^{32}\) Accordingly, an holistic Christian spirituality cannot separate contemplation from action, because both are the distinct poles of a totality that stand in mutual relationship. Jon Sobrino puts it,

> Contemplation and action are not moments having distinct objects, as if contemplation were directed toward God and action were directed toward the world. It is God who must be contemplated and practiced; and it is in virtue of the unicity of this divine object that both moments find their profound unification. At the same time, the world, too, becomes the object both of action and of contemplation. The contemplation of God is simultaneously a contemplation of the world with God's eyes; and the practice of God is the implementation of God's word according to God's will. Thus the moments of contemplation and action are not "diversified," as if the one were referred to God and the other to the world. God and world alike are the object both of contemplation and action.\(^{33}\)

Finally, a holistic Korean Christian spirituality should emerge and arise out of the concrete context and situation of Korean Christian life. That is, it will take specific form in response to particular social and economic circumstances and the particular religio-cultural context of Korea. It cannot be lived without reference to the reality of poverty and social injustice in Korea, and must take account of and respect the other existing Korean religious traditions. So, the faith of Christians is not the same as simply believing in doctrines or a theological system. It is the sum and total coherence of their lives as they stand before God in this particular part of the world, now and toward the future. Since their faith includes their concrete decisions and actions, however, their faith in God intrinsically demands a loving attitude toward all human beings. And thus, reciprocally, the way Korean Christians actually respond to God is constituted by the way


\(^{33}\) Jon Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation*, 68.
they respond to other people and circumstances through daily contemplative and active life. This balance of "both-and" is the task of a holistic Korean Christian spirituality, which makes for human wholeness.

3. Between the Personal and the Social

The final existential tension for Korean Christians is that between the personal (preference of evangelical/conservative groups) and the social (preference of progressive/radical groups).

There is no doubt that the ground of Christian spirituality is fundamentally personal experience in faith. But an exclusive emphasis on personal experience reduces the spiritual life of Christians to that of an individual's piety. In other words, the domain of spirituality is constricted so that it includes only the direct relationship between the self and God. It excludes concern for Christians' socially constituted relations to other human beings and the general responsibility with which Christians direct their lives in the world. Again, it would be false to suggest that either of these dimensions is entirely absent from any of the Christian groups. Even the conservative/evangelical groups emphasize personal moral and loving relations with other individuals. However, generally, it is the progressive/radical groups that attend to the systemic and structural dimensions of social injustice.

In this regard, Korean Christian spirituality must reject this individualism of the spiritual life by stressing the social constitution of the person and the social dimension of human life. This embodiment of the social respects and incorporates the historical experience of Korean Christians, as well as the ecclesial and communal dimension of an integral spirituality.
Conversely, by emphasizing the social aspect Korean Christians must guard against becoming merely activist without personal piety or conversion.

Among evangelical/conservative Christians, piety has tended to be highly individualistic. For them, prayer means private prayer; salvation means being saved as an individual; being in Christ means having a personal relationship with Jesus; the empowerment of the Spirit means being capable as an individual to act. Also, sin means personal transgression; conversion means personal repentance; and grace refers to the transformation of persons. So they assert that true Christianity is a matter of personal commitment. Expressing this attitude, the evangelical theologian, Daniel Stevick notes, "The Christian pilgrimage is made alone. God's salvation is individually directed. His help is in an individual companionship. The way is the lonely route of personal sanctification, personally attained. And the goal is a mission built for one." 34

This individual-oriented emphasis, while flawed in itself, has some validity, and carries a crucial implication for Christian spirituality. It means that no one can be brought into right relation with God by other people; no one can claim to be a Christian by appeal to the faith of others. Consequently, for evangelical/conservative Christians, the church as the community of faith is to some degree the product of the coming together of saved individuals, who join together in part for the purpose of fostering personal growth. Some evangelicals do sometimes express the importance of the social dimension of Christian life. For example, Stanley J. Grenz writes,

While adamantly upholding the importance of personal piety, evangelical spirituality balances the priority of the individual with a turn in the opposite direction, to a corresponding emphasis on the corporate dimension of the Christian life. Although

34 Daniel B. Stevick, Beyond Fundamentalism (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1964), 127.
primarily the task of the individual spirituality is nevertheless a corporate project. No one can hope to live the Christian life or grow in Christlikeness in isolation; rather, each believer needs the resources of the group in order to gain spiritual maturity. Christians who separate themselves from the community of faith run the risk of losing their spiritual fervour and growing cold.\footnote{Stanley J. Grenz, \textit{Revisioning Evangelical Theology: A Fresh Agenda for the 21st Century} (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 53.}

This shift of views means that some evangelicals understand spirituality in terms of the balanced life; that is, the full Christian life is the product of a balance between the inward and the outward and between the individual and the corporate.

A Canadian Catholic theologian, Gregory Baum, finds this shift a significant change of mind and heart in "a critical theology,"\footnote{Gregory Baum, \textit{Religion and Alienation} (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 194-224.} which is the critical application of the various theories of alienation to the self-understanding in faith of the Christian church. Above all, he views a major distortion of the traditional Christian religion as the 'privatization' of the gospel, namely, the excessively individualistic interpretation of the Christian message. For him, therefore, the task of critical theology is "to deprivatize the inherited religion."\footnote{Ibid., 196.} In the Bible the preaching of Jesus Christ had to do with repentance and the coming of God's kingdom, and it had both personal and social meaning. At this point, the Christian message is always addressed to persons as well as society, and the gospel has meaning for personal life and social history. From this...
point of view, Baum writes, "To reduce the Christian message to a truth about personal salvation is to suppress a basic dimension of this message.... Critical theology counters the privatizing of the gospel with an effort to regain its double dimension of personal-and-social."³⁸

Baum, following Johannes B. Metz who argued that "the deprivatizing of theology is the primary critical task of political theology,"³⁹ also seeks this "deprivatizing" of the recent Christian tradition in "political theology."⁴⁰ It is to overcome the individualism implicit in so much Christian life and thought. According to Metz, this deprivatizing is in a way as important as the program of demythologizing: "At least it should have a place with a legitimate demythologizing. Otherwise there is a danger of relating God and salvation to the existential problem of the person, of reducing them to the scale of the person, and so of downgrading the eschatological kerygma to a symbolic paraphrase of the metaphysical questionableness of man and his personal private decisions."⁴¹ Yet, as Baum points out, after the negation of individualism and the recovery of the social, the issue of subjectivity remains.

People still ask questions about the meaning of personal life, people still have to cope psychologically with their existence, people still yearn for inwardness and prayer. Political theology must, therefore, enter into a second phase, the negation of the negation, that is to say, the politically responsible retrieval of subjectivity. This intellectual

³⁸ Ibid., 197.


⁴¹ J. B. Metz, 110.
endeavour is of interest to the secular left as well.⁴²

Therefore, Baum concludes that "the first phase of political theology is to recover the social dimension of the Christian message and explore the social implications of personal experience, religious and secular. The second phase is to retrieve the meaning and power of subjectivity, beyond individualism, in a politically responsible way."⁴³

In recent decades, these tasks of political theology are sought in a spirituality of liberation, which recovers the social dimension of sin, conversion, and grace. That is, sin includes the social structures of oppression; conversion includes the raising of consciousness in regard to these oppressive conditions; and grace includes the Spirit-guided and Spirit-empowered struggle for a more just social order. For liberation theologians, liberation is a movement produced by the struggling people, sparked and sustained by divine grace. Liberation does not exhaust the meaning of salvation, and at the same time salvation cannot be defined without reference to people's liberation from oppression. From this point of view, in the Christian understanding it becomes imperative to deprivatize and despiritualize the notion of salvation, which is the important theological theme between the personal and the social.

A new life of holiness, accordingly, refers to the transforming power of God in history that changes people's hearts and leads them to structural changes. In the Lord's prayer, for example, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" does not simply refer to personal holiness, nor simply to the total deliverance of people at the horizon of history, but to

---


⁴³ Ibid., 267.
the ongoing personal and social salvation by which God's victorious power is anticipated in a sinful world. As Baum indicates, therefore, "the salvation of Jesus Christ has a bi-polar, personal-and-social meaning, and any attempt to leave out one pole distorts the original message." Andrew Sung Park uses the term, "a participatory dialectic," a method that analyses and synthesizes dualities in conflict and contradiction between the personal and the social. He comments:

This dialectical salvation is the relational, dynamic, and affective interaction between sinners and victims.... In this salvation scheme, the oppressors dialectically participate in the well-being of the oppressed. Both are interpenetrated in an individual dialectical destiny. The oppressors (sinners) cannot be saved unless the oppressed (victims) are saved or made whole, and vice versa. In other words, no one is fully saved until all are saved. Salvation is wholeness, and no one can actualize wholeness by him or herself.

Consequently, this "participatory dialectic" is the engagement in divine life. That is, the content of salvation is the dynamic and loving relationship of a person in solidarity with others, and society in God. In other words, where God is, there is salvation. As Park insists, "salvation is not a type of state, but the quality of the intensity of divine presence" in relationship between the personal and the social. Needless to say, this relationship is based on faith, because for Christians it is primarily a way of life.

As we have mentioned earlier, most Korean Christians have seen their faith and spirituality in a one-sided way. Evangelicals/conservatives tend to be mainly concerned with personal lives; progressives/radicals tend to focus on economic, political and social dimensions. As the former

44 Gregory Baum, Religion and Alienation, 211.


46 Ibid., 102.
group emphasizes, the ultimate basis of every spirituality is, of course, a fundamentally personal experience. In reaction, the latter group rejects this privatization and individualism by stressing the social dimension of life, and focuses on liberation from the bondage of oppression and a prophetic responsibility to society. But its problem is that it sometimes ignores the Christian's personal, transcendent, and contemplative relation to God, and devalues the Christian's spiritual activities such as prayer, witness, evangelization, and worship.

This polarity of faith positions is surely a reduction of the life and message, death and resurrection of Jesus as norm of Christian spirituality. An authentic Christian spirituality integrates, synthesizes, and balances these tensions of Christian life. To be more truly authentic, therefore, Korean Christian spirituality must be a holistic spirituality that holds together in unity these tensions that govern all Christian spirituality. It must, at the same time, consist in the traditional imitation of Christ, and an affirmation of the Korean "both-and" heritage. In this sense, a holistic Korean Christian spirituality will be both a "Christ-centred spirituality" and authentically "Korean," enabling Korean Christians to become holy and whole.

II. An Integration of Spiritualities for a Holistic Spirituality

The Korean people have a rich spiritual ethos in their ancient religio-cultural traditions. Korean spirituality in the syncretic context has already been in a various degrees "holistic." Korean Christian spirituality must integrate elements of these religions that are so deeply engrained in the cultural fabric. In fact, Korean Christians have, sometimes unwritttingly, drawn
upon elements derived from the ancient religious traditions. I refer, for example, to the healing work of Shamanism, the meditation characteristic of Buddhism, and *Hyo* (filial piety) of Confucianism. As we have discussed in Chapter Two, in fact, some Korean Protestant churches have offered spiritual direction to their members through such syncretic elements of Korean spirituality. For example, the healing ministry of *Kido-won* (a mountain retreat house) or *Buhung-hoe* (the revival meeting), the meditation in *Saebuck-Kido* (prayer meeting in the early morning) or *Chulya-Kido* (the mid-night prayer meeting), and filial piety in *Ch'udo-Yebae* (the memorial worship services) are such elements.

Strictly speaking, however, their purpose or goal has often not been union with God, or encounter with God, but rather healing itself, meditation itself, and devotion itself, or a concern to increase membership of the church. Genuine Christian spirituality seeks union with God through Christian faith. Andrew Sung Park seeks the essence of the traditional spiritual ethos in terms of the following Korean concepts: "*Hahn, Jung, and Mut (or Mot)."* He expresses these concepts as "Koreanness."\(^47\) A deeper appreciation of these concepts may help us to relate meaningfully to the soul of the Korean people.

1. *Hahn, Jung, and Mut as the Ground of Koreans' Spiritual Life*

As I briefly mentioned in Chapters Two and Four, the Korean term, *Hahn* denotes divine supremacy, referring to heaven or the sky. Most Koreans, whether Confucianists, Buddhists,

Shamanists or Christians, call the Supreme Being *Hahnynim*. *Hahn* especially characterizes the attribute of the divine, pointing to greatness, sublimity, immensity, brightness, honor, ultimacy, infinity, majesty, and magnificance. It not only signifies Oneness, but also symbolizes paradoxical inclusiveness, pointing to an indeterminate boundary. It embraces one and many, and whole and part, simultaneously. Park thus explains that "the radical openness of *Hahn* emphasizes tolerance, acceptance, and creativity in spite of difference and lack of accord. *Tolerance* is passive inclusion, *acceptance* is active embracing and *creativity* is the dynamic interaction between yin and yang."48 Park also adds that "The *Hahn* mind does not separate things, but embraces them. It is the heart of inclusiveness, oneness, tolerance, and sublimity."49 In Korean history we have sought this *Hahn* mind with the help of several sources, especially the *Shilla* Buddhist monk *Wonhyo* (617-698) and the Neo-Confucianist *Yulgok* (1536-1584).

*Jung*. Park explains. "is the feeling of endearment; it is the warmth of human-heartedness; it is compassionate attachment; it is an intense longing for somebody or something."50 Thus, the mind of *Hahn* is expressed in *Jung*. When *Hahn* comes to an interpersonal level, it turns into the mode of *Jung*. While *Hahn* is more or less vertical, *Jung* is horizontal, connecting people in affection and fondness. When *Jung* cannot be exchanged in the heart of people, it turns into *Han*. Also, according to Park, *Mut* (or *Mot*) is roughly translatable as the "beauty of natural harmony," "splendor of asymmetry," or "grace of gentleness." That is, *Mut* comes out of zestfulness balanced with rhythmic movements; it is not only an equilibrium of symmetric factors but also

---

48 Ibid., 108.

49 Ibid., 109.

50 Ibid., 110-111.
that of asymmetric elements; it is the beauty of action; it implies the beauty of inner creativity; it
is the creative struggle of life." In this sense, Hahn, Jung, and Mut are the creative strength of
"Koreanness" (what we referred to earlier as Pungryudo). Here Park summarizes and concludes,

Hahn is the mind of the divine Oneness; Jung is the concrete incarnation of Hahn. When
the transcendental dimension of Hahn enters human life, Jung arises. When the congruity
between the transcendental Hahn and the immanent Jung is achieved, Mut emerges from
it. Mut is the stylish beauty of balance. When we pursue a Hahn vision, the warmth of
Jung takes place and the elegance of Mut flow out from them. Mut originates in the
ecstasy of union with the divine and the human. When Hahn and Jung are united, the
harmony of harmonies, a cosmic art of peace, emanates from it as Mut.52

Korean Christians can also embody the vision of Hahn, the heart of Jung, and the integration of
Mut. This is Koreans' own spiritual ethos. Therefore, spiritual direction for Korean Christians
should proceed on the basis of this reality. From the Christian perspective, Park writes,

God's purpose for Koreans is to make them true Koreans in the image of God.
Christianity is not meant to supplant the purpose of God's creation but to restore the
original goal of the creation. Christianity is a medium to bring forth their Koreanness. To
become genuinely Korean is thus inseparable from their Christian calling.... Before they
became Christians, they were Korean. They were born Korean, not Christian. Without
becoming Korean they cannot be Christian. Their call to be Christians is not the call to be
religious people, but the call to become authentically Korean people who fulfill the
dreams of hahn, jung, and mut.53

Of course, we cannot forget the negative dimension of the Korean spiritual ethos. It is
called "Han," as we have seen in Chapter Two and Four, which Korean minjung theologians
rediscovered in their analysis of the socio-political, economic, and cultural context. In fact,
however, these meanings of the term Han have been carried beyond Korea. It has existed in

51 Ibid., 113.
52 Ibid., 114.
53 Ibid., 114-115.
other Asian countries, too: for example, Chinese *Hen*, Japanese *Kon*, and Vietnamese *Han*.

Hence, Taiwanese-American theologian, C. S. Song clarifies the meaning of *Han* as "the rhythm of passion welling up out of restless souls in the world of the dead, the wrongs done to them unrequited. *Han* is the rhythm of passion crying from the hearts of those who have fallen victim to social and political injustices." In Asian cultures, as Song says, "... such an experience of *Han* is particularly evident. It appears in folktale, folk songs, folk music, and folk plays, which express and release people's sorrow, frustration, and anger."

However, we must recognize here that the resolution of the victim's *Han* should not be the final goal. Rather, victims must initiate the process of true reconciliation to achieve this goal, since the oppressors rarely come to repentance by themselves. Without the assistance of victims, therefore, perpetrators are unlikely to see the pain caused by their evil work. Only victims can open the offenders' eyes to see what they have done. Robert Schreiter speaks of the grace that leads to repentance from the perspective of reconciliation: "Reconciliation is something that comes upon the victim, something that the victim discovers, rather than a well-managed therapy or process. It is more a spirituality than a strategy."

Harold Wells also agrees with Schreiter: "People cannot be merely exhorted or manipulated into a truly heart-felt reconciliation. It most often has to be initiated from the side of the victim, since the perpetrators are often unable to

---


55 Ibid., 71.

forgive themselves or even to recognize honestly the enormity of what they have done."

The crux of this action is a common vision and task which both groups share together, for which they can cooperate, and toward which they move together. In this sense, Han can lead us to the divine mind (Hahn), the unshakable compassion of the divine spirit (Jung) and the graceful serenity of the divine soul (Mut) in our community and society. On these spiritual bases, Hahn, Jung, and Mut, we may learn and accept spiritual truth and insights from other religions. This cannot now become a thesis about the great East Asian religions; nevertheless, let us glimpse briefly some of the important contributions that these religions can offer to a Christian spirituality in Korea; e.g., the spirituality of healing in Shamanism, of contemplation and meditation in Buddhism, and of the Hyo (filial piety) in Confucianism.

2. A Spirituality of "Healing" in Shamanism

From the pastoral perspective, the ministry of healing is an important part of the church's ministry. The continuation of healing in the church's ministry can best be understood in its integral relation to the other fundamental ideas of Christianity. Thus many Christians, whether conservative or liberal, come to the conclusion that Christian healing is an integral part of Christian practice. Their understanding of healing is usually based on Jesus' healing in the New

Testament.  

It is noted that the ministry of healing among Korean Christians is very similar to that of the traditional religion, Shamanism, which remains today a significant force in Korean life. Over the centuries, as we have seen in Chapter Two, Shamanism played an important role for healing within the lives of the Korean people, especially the lower class people. Consequently, it has formed a key element in understanding the religious mentality of the Korean people, even though "the origin of Korean Shamanism is uncertain" or "it is difficult to determine the origin of Korean Sahamanism." Tong-Shik Ryu seeks the role of Shamanism in the process of indigenization of the Korean Church: "........The third phase of indigenization was led by the Korean Church. It developed an indigenous Christianity that had its roots in Shamanism, and provided a religious view of life unique to Korea."

Kyoung Jae Kim believes that "Korean Christianity has reached a theologically mature stage in reevaluating Shamanism from the perspective of the theology of religions." Jung-

---

58 According to Morton Kelsey, forty-one distinct instances of physical and mental healing are recorded in the four gospels (there are seventy-two accounts in all, including duplications), but this by no means represents the total. Many of these references summarize the healing of large numbers of people. [See, Morton Kelsey, Healing and Christianity: A Classic Study, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1995), 43-45.]


60 Mircea Eliade, Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy, 462.


62 Kyoung Jae Kim, Christianity and the Encounter of Asian Religions, 184.
Young Lee describes the relationship between Shamanism and Christianity in Korea from a broad historical perspective, concluding that the relationship in the future should be one of "mutual transformation":

Shamanism will be important for the thorough contextualisation of Christianity, just as Christianity will be an agent for the transformation of Shamanism. In this mutual transformation Christianity will become a Korean Christianity without Shamanism, just as Shamanism will change to a new form of Korean Shamanism without becoming Christianity. Through this mutual transformation we hope to see an age of harmony and mutual co-existence in which all religions work together for the peace, happiness and goodness of all people in divine care and love.

The shaman (Chinese character, 巫) in Shamanism has several functions: priestly, healing, prophetic, cursing, and judging. For them, these functions are to bring down the spirits


According to Lee, the relationship between Shamanism and Christianity in Korea can be divided into four stages of historical development: "The initial stage begins with the early Protestant missionary movement in the late nineteenth century.... In this period the missionary strategies of Western churches as well as the political and social situations of the Korean people played important roles in promoting a hostile attitude between Christianity and Shamanism. The second stage began with the liberation of Korea from Japanese rule. The religious freedom and the consciousness of national identity helped Korean people promote the resurgence of various religions, including both Christianity and Shamanism.... In this period the hostility between Christianity and Shamanism continued but they began to accept their respective places in the history of religions in Korea. The third stage, from the 1970s to the present time, can be understood as the period of mutual respect and dialogue for a better understanding. The fourth and final stage will be a period of mutual transformation; the Shamanistic transformation of Christianity and the Christian transformation of Shamanism in Korea. This transformation is the future vision of Christian-Shaman relationship that I hope to draw in light of historical developments." (Ibid., 334.)

64 The form of this Chinese character is bounded by two parallel lines. Kyoung Jae Kim interprets it as follows: "the line above stands for the transcendental world, the sky, the spiritual world of the dead or ancestral souls. And the line below stands for the empirical world, the earth, the world of living human beings. A vertical line connecting these two horizontal lines signifies a channel connecting the heavenly and earthly worlds, the spiritual and the human world." (Kyoung Jae Kim, 68.)
of the spiritual world into the human world, and to take the supplications of human beings into
the spiritual world. The shaman passes on the words of the spirits to the people, and brings up the
requests of people to the spirits. Kyoung Jae Kim draws these functions as follows:

First, a shaman can function as a priest. Here, as a priest she/he can conduct religious
rites, oversee the shrine, run the place, serve the spirits, and council the people. Second, a
shaman can have a healing function, She/He can heal sick people through the means of
religious ritual.... Shamanism believes the evil spirit takes possession of a person to
cause irregular harmony in a body. So with the help of a higher spirit, the shaman expels
the evil spirits in order to restore harmony and peace in the body and mind. Third, a
shaman can tell or predict weal or woe. Fourth, a shaman has a function in perpetuating
the dance, song, costumes, art, and so on through the religious rites. Thus, they maintain
the national art culture. Fifth, a shaman can function as a judge in a dispute in a small
village. This function is completely lost in modern society.65

Healing among these functions is the most important one of the shaman who is a mediator
between the spiritual world and the human world. In general, a shaman brings the problems of
the human world (especially, suffering and sickness) to the transcendental world of deity by
singing and dancing, and then receives a transcendental power, wisdom, and message so as to
solve the problems. Korean shamans conduct these functions through the religious ritual, Kut.
For example, as we have shown in the previous chapter, the minjung, who participate in Kut,
release their Han and leave this world completely with peaceful hearts by crying, laughing,
dancing, and singing with the shaman. In this respect, Hyun Kyung Chung has insisted that
"shaman priests are the spiritual centre of the [minjung] community."66 Nevertheless, in the
traditional Korean society shamans have not been treated as honourably as were Buddhist monks,

65 Kyoung Jae Kim, 69.

Concilium 199 (August 1988), 103.
Confucianist scholars, and Christian ministers. Shamans, publicly or socially, have been powerless, even though, privately or spiritually, they have been very powerful in their functions.

In fact, however, there is considerable similarity between the healing of shamans in Kut and that of some ministers in the Korean churches. Part of the shaman's function has been conducted by conservative evangelicals and Pentecostals; part by progressive/radicals in the Protestant churches. In particular, as we have seen in Chapter Four, the function of healing has become a key element of Pentecostal spirituality in the Protestant churches. Relating to Pentecostal theology, the religious characteristic of healing in Shamanism may be correlated with the Holy Spirit theology of Christianity. It may provide a new vigorous dynamism to the Christian church. Thus Kyoung Jae Kim points out that "the 'descending of the spirit' experience in Shamanism can supply a paradigm of the coming down of the Holy Spirit and the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit working on Christians, which is similar to that of the present Christian paradigm." David Kwang-sun Suh also says that "the signs of receiving the Holy Spirit are similar to the signs of the possessed mudangs who cure the sick and exorcise evil spirits."

In the relationship between Shamanism and Christianity, however, there are both positive and negative sides. For example, positively, we can say here that Korean Shamanism has been providing to the Korean Church a spiritual vitality to pursue a paradigm change in the spiritual community which lives within the power of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, as Suh argues, "Korean Protestantism has almost been reduced to a Christianized mudang religion.... Korean

67 Kyoung Jae Kim, 185.

Christianity has become almost completely shamanized."69 I suggest that this is an over-
statement. There is some truth in this with regard to Korean Pentecostalism, but not Protestant
Christians as a whole. Nevertheless, some aspects of Korean Pentecostalism have roots in
Shamanism and the Pentecostal churches have been growing in members through the ministry of
healing. The reason is, clearly, that Korean Christianity has been accepted by many (especially,
conservative/evangelicals) within the mind-set of Korean Shamanism, and Korean Christianity
has already been substantially syncretized with Shamanism. In the pastoral dimension of healing,
therefore, it is unacceptable that much of Korean Christianity, especially of the "conservative"
Calvinists today, still reject or exclude Shamanism, just as it did in the initial stage of Christian
historical development. As Jung Young Lee explains.

The exclusiveness of Christianity was, first of all, expressed in the mentality of early
Christian missionaries. They shared the prevailing notion of the Church's ideology that
Christianity was the only valid religion and all other religions were invalid. Moreover,
they regarded Shamanism as the lowest form of religion, identifying it with animism, the
religion of spirits. Because of the primitive appearance of its religious practices,
Shamanism became the subject of mockery of early missionaries and was accused of
being an evil religion.70

In fact, even Pentecostal Christians in Korea and some conservative/evangelical
Christians as well, whose practices so much resemble Shamanism, will not usually acknowledge
their own Shamanistic religio-cultural heritage, or the spiritual reality which is at work in
Shamanism. In the future, thus, we must move toward a renewed application of Shamanistic
practice by Christians, and find a way to reappropriate the Shamanistic spirituality in the life of

69 Ibid., 116.

70 Jung Young Lee, "Relationship Between Christianity and Shamanism in Korea: A
Historical Perspective," 335.
the Church. In so doing, we must suggest "mutual transformation" between Christianity and Shamanism, as Lee did, because "this transformation means growth for Christians not only within their own tradition but also a change into a new mode of existence." The actual transformation of Christianity through Shamanism would not mean the loss of Christian faith, or the absorption of Christianity into Shamanism. Rather, it would require a dual process; that is, "the shamanisation of Christianity is accompanied by the Christianisation of Shamanism at the same time." Nor would Shamanism be absorbed into Christianity. The process of openness, dialogue and enrichment would take the form of "mutual transformation"

3. A Spirituality of "Meditation" in Buddhism

Buddhism is a vast spiritual tradition which I cannot begin to analyze here in depth. I shall focus only upon the practice of meditation in Korean "Sŏn" Buddhism, and consider how it may enrich the practice of Christian meditative prayer.

"Meditation" is a spiritual way known and practiced as an aspect of Christian prayer. It is also basic to Buddhism. Korean Buddhism is mainly "Zen," a common English usage of the Japanese pronunciation. The Korean pronunciation is Sŏn; the Chinese pronunciation Ch'an; the Vietnamese pronunciation Thie'n. Korean Sŏn Buddhism is a form of Mahayana Buddhism,
one of the major living elements of the Korean syncretic situation. Though it may employ
different systems and be explained in different terms, for Christians or non-Christians, the
ordinary experience of meditation as a practice in all religions is essentially similar. Meditation,
like all aspects of prayer, is not only a means but also, when practiced as a discipline, the end. As
John Dykstra Eusden points out, however, "There are uniqueness and contrasts in religions, as
seen in their practices, beliefs, and perspectives, but at the bottom they are joined because of
common declarations and assumptions." Therefore, "the tap root of all religions offers the
possibility of dialogue and mutual understanding." That is, meditation in Christianity and
Buddhism is a common ground for dialogue or openness of each to the other. Edward Conze has
said, thus, "Buddhism is not only an Eastern form of spirituality but also a part of our [Western]
common heritage, by which one can succeed in overcoming this world, in gaining a non-attached

73(...continued)

five years, and is a Buddhist ordained monk, professor and director of the Centre for Korean
Studies at the University of California, "Zen is not coextensive with any one school... There have
actually been many independent strands of what has come to be called Zen, the sorting out of
which has occupied scholars of Buddhism for the last few decades. These sectarian divisions are
further complicated by the fact that there are Zen traditions in all four East Asian countries -
China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam - each of which has its own independent history, doctrine, and
more of practice. While each of these traditions has developed independently, all have been
heavily influenced by the Chinese schools of Ch'an.... To ignore these national differences would
be to oversimplify the complicated sectarian scene that is East Asian Zen; but to overemphasize
them would be to ignore the multiple layers of symbiosis between Zen's various national
branches." [See, The Zen Monastic Experience: Buddhist Practice in Contemporary Korea

74 John Dykstra Eusden, Zen and Christian: The Journey Between (New York: Crossroad,
1981), 133-134.

75 Ibid., 134.
freedom, and achieve a deadless life."  

A Christian theologian who integrated East and West as spiritual practice is Thomas Merton, influenced by Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (1870-1966), the Japanese Buddhist master. Merton sees Buddhist Zen as comparable to a particular type of Christian meditation. He asserts that "Zen is neither a method of meditation nor a brand of spirituality.... It is a way and an experience, a life, but the way is paradoxically not a way." From a Christian perspective, he proposes a basis for a theology of Christian contemplation that incorporates Zen insights, although he does not claim that Christian contemplation and Zen are the same. He writes,

Zen is not Kerygma but realization, not revelation but consciousness, not news from the Father who sent His Son into this world, but awareness of the ontological ground of our own being here and now.... The supernatural Kerygma and the intuition of the ground of being are far from being incompatible... Zen is perfectly compatible with Christian belief and indeed with Christian mysticism (if we understand Zen in its pure state, as metaphysical intuition).

Indeed, he understands Zen as an authentic way for Christian contemplative prayer. Here he firmly stands, as we examined earlier, in the apophatic tradition which is the way of negation and denial in Christian contemplation. The way to union with God, for him, is the way of darkness, night, and emptiness, just as "the mirror in Zen is the provocative symbol for the Buddhist


doctrine of *sunnata*, voidness or emptiness." Robert Faricy comments that "He [Merton] tried to express what he understood about Zen in *Contemplative Prayer* in a Christian framework and as part of a Christian understanding of contemplative prayer."

We mentioned in Chapter Two that prayer in Korean Christianity sometimes resembles that of Buddhism. *Saehyuck-Kido* (prayer in the early morning) and *Chulya-Kido* (prayer in the mid-night) derive in part from Buddhist practice. Contemporary western spiritual contemplatives, mostly Catholics, tend to focus on and emphasize "listening to" much more than "speaking to" in prayer life. They emphasize "Centering Prayer," which resembles Buddhist meditation. But it must be said that Christian prayer, however wordless and meditative it may be, however *apophatic* in its attitude, must also value "speaking to." That is, words of praise and thanksgiving, confession and petition, which may not be part of Buddhist meditation, will always be part of Christian prayer. Accordingly, the *apophatic* must be balanced by the *cataphatic*.

The exclusivity of Buddhist meditation and Christian prayer has been asserted by Korean conservative/evangelical Christians, who see Buddhism as an idol-worshipping religion. The result of such exclusivism has been minds and hearts closed to Korea's own traditional spiritualities. They have not been able to acknowledge God's salvific providence in other faiths, and so have sadly limited the freedom and universality of the Spirit of God. Progressive/radicals, on the other hand, suggest that dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity in Korea is essential

---

80 John Dykstra Eusden, 47.

if Korean Christianity is to become an authentic Korean faith in the twenty-first century. Kyoung
Jae Kim calls for a positive typological comparison between these religions, for the sake of their
mutual transformation.

First of all, there can be a typological comparison between the Trikaya faith of Buddhism
and the Trinity of Christianity, the eternal presence of Nirvana and the kingdom of God,
Faith in the grace of Amita Buddha and Faith in the Holy Spirit as the living God, the
bodhisattva’s mercy and Christian agape, belief in Maitreya and belief in the
eschatological Messiah, and Buddhist spiritual discipline and Christian spiritual
discipline. The mature encounter of Korean Mahayana Buddhism and Korean
Christianity could yield a creative transformation on both sides overcoming the present
status quo.82

Finally, Korean Christians need the ongoing spiritual "journey between,"83 for the sake of
integration in the hope of attaining insight and understanding. In fact, two elements of the
spiritual journey in Korea - Buddhist meditation and Christian contemplative prayer - are rooted
in very different cultures and histories. Nevertheless, each has its authenticity, and each should
be respected. Our life is many-splendored, and multiple sources are available in the quest for
wisdom and understanding. Each source remains distinctive and separate. Christianity is not
made into Zen; Zen cannot be Christianized. But each is capable of enriching the other.

Korean Buddhist scholars state in the preface to a recent book the characteristics of
Korean Buddhism as follows:

82 Kyoung Jae Kim, 186.

83 This word, "the journey between," was used by John Dykstra Eusden. He speaks of his
spiritual journey to Zen as a Christian, and of his ongoing "journey between." He also describes
the attractions of Zen for a Christian and then goes on to explore relationships of similarity and
difference. [See Zen and Christian: The Journey Between]
The main thrust of Korean Buddhism is harmony. The masters were careful to continually harmonize Buddhism with Korean culture so that the imported seed slowly sprouted and produced a unique tree. Not only did they arrange the various teachings and ideas of Buddhism systematically, but they tried to understand other philosophies and religious ideas from a broad-minded standpoint. Thereby they established a unique brand of Buddhism. Based on reconciliation, Korean Buddhism has "harmony and syncretism" as its keystone...." ^84

This statement clearly shows that Korean Buddhists are open to the ongoing spiritual "journey between" in the Korean traditional culture and society. Christians may learn openness and tolerance from them. They emphasize not only harmony and reconciliation but also syncretism in a positive sense. Pastorally speaking, meditation as a spiritual path and discipline offers to Christians an important way toward the integration of whole persons. Korean Christianity can be deepened and broadened by paying heed to what the Buddhists can teach us.

4. A Spirituality of "Hyo" (*, Filial Piety) in Confucianism

We cannot discuss Confucian spirituality with any thoroughness here. It is a complex reality, and also includes elements of meditation and contemplation. ^85 However, here I shall focus only upon Hyo. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, practical life in Korean Confucianism, like Chinese Confucianism, lies in "five relationships": ruler and subject, parents and children, male and female, elder and younger, and teacher and student. These relationships are to emphasize

---

^84 The Korean Buddhist Research Institute, ed. The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea (Seoul: Dongkuk University Press, 1993), preface.

that human life is rightly ordered in loyalty, filial piety, attentiveness, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, respect, and sincerity. Although today these hierarchical relationships are rightly questioned, and need modification in light of the gospel, they have provided to society important positive elements of order and dignity. They have become the core of "Confucian dynamism" or "collectivism" which distinguishes East Asian social and cultural life from the "individualism" of Westerners.

Among those relationships, the key to an integrated spirituality is the second - "parents and children." In fact, in this relationship the children are expected to negate their own feelings of individuality in deference to the wishes and pleasure of their parents in filial piety. The parent-child relationship becomes the primal model of interpersonal relationship, and it is precisely in interpersonal relationships that human beings are humanized. In Conducianist thought, if this relationship is right, all other relationships will also fall into place. In a word, the most important impact of Confucian life is the moral and social values rooted in the family system. For example, one's name signifies one's identity. While Westerners put the individual name first and family name last, most people in the Confucian tradition put the family name first and the individual name last. The former stresses that the family exists for the individuals, while the latter stresses that individuals exists for the family. The surname or family name always provides a sense of belonging or bond. It also carries the expectation of success and excellence. As Taiwanese Lutheran theologian Chi-Ping Yu briefly outlines, there are five elements of the Confucian understanding of filial piety: "supporting and caring for parents, reverence and obedience, continuing the ancestral line, glorifying the family name, and mourning and ancestral
Like Chinese Confucians, most Korean Confucian families have ancestral shrines in which the names of parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents are lined up on higher and higher shelves for each generation. This family system carries the obligation of loyalty, respect, and filial devotion, and underlies the high regard for diligence and productivity for the honour and prosperity of one's family name. But in this family system a crucial factor is that women are dominated by men, who take responsibility for the children in their social role as heads of household. The children are to honour their living parents. Sons especially bring wives into the family and make them produce their sons, reflect glory on the patrilineage, and eventually assume their place as a venerated ancestor. The father's role is to acknowledge the sons, to give them names, and to recognize them as heirs.

Through this relationship of "Confucian dynamism," social bonds and kinships are strongly tied. Robert S. Ellwood, Jr. points out that "the father-son relationship is the most basic, inextricably interwined with the social as well as biological components of human culture, such as language (giving a name), moral responsibility, family as a legal entity, and the combination of privilege and repression..." But in Confucian teachings, as an American-Taiwanese scholar, Timothy Tian-min Lin points out, "one's moral conduct must begin with the family, but this is


not its end. Filial piety must be extended in loyalty to the rulers, and respect for the elders." Therefore, filial piety is the root of all virtue.

From this Confucian teaching, Korean parents teach the children the Hyo, the way of serving the parents, because they believe that the Hyo is the basic element and way of human spirit and life. This is a basis for spiritual practice, in that Korean people very closely connect the Hyo, serving parents, to serving the Heavenly God [Hahmyunim]. Korean people usually believe that "serving the Heavenly God without serving the parents is empty, and serving the parents without serving the Heavenly God is blind." In theological words, it is the relationship and distinction between worshipping God and honouring parents. Sung Bum Yun continues to say, "In case of serving the parents without serving the cosmic parents [Heavenly Father], serving the parents falls into an error of ritualization or formalization, but serving the cosmic parents without serving the parents, on the other hand, falls into an error of emptization and falsification." Yun thinks that Korean Confucianism came to be distorted as a formal empty ritual, and forgot its real meaning. This caused much social confusion. The reason that filial piety became formalized and fossilized was that "filial piety lost its religious ground." He proposes Christian Confucianism as an attempt at a Korean indigenous theology.

However, in the syncretic process, Korean Christianity [especially, as we have seen in

---


90 Ibid., 109.

91 Ibid., 110.
previous chapters, conservative/evangelicals] is concerned much more about serving the
Heavenly God than with serving the parents. In Christianity, as Yun observes, respecting the
parents has often become an empty formal virtue. He writes,

It is really the contemporary Korean spiritual situation that Christianity inclines one-
 sidedly to serving Heaven, and Confucianism, on the other hand, to serving the parents.
Thus, while Christianity, on the one hand, should find the ethical spirit of Confucianism
and should be supplemented with the spirit of filial piety, Confucianism, on the other
hand, should be stirred by the Christian truth of serving Heaven and regain its religious
vitalization.  

Yun's argument emphasizes that Christian and Confucian spirituality should be integrated in
Korean Hyo thought. It should promote dedication of the children to the service of the Heavenly
God and of the earthly parents. More broadly, it is also "the principle of spontaneity, the
principle of solidarity, the principle of mutuality and the principle of community." Speaking
from a Chinese Christian perspective, Chi-Pung Yu sees filial piety (Hyo) as a unique resource of
pastoral care, because "First, it is the principal source in which the Chinese find their identities.
Second, the bonds of kinship give the individual member of the Chinese family a sense of
belonging. Third, Chinese filial piety is characterized by the dedication of children to the
service of their parents." These characteristics of filial piety are very similar to those of
Korean Christians' lives in "Confucian dynamism." In this respect, there is no basic conflict
between Christianity and Confucianism.

---

92 Ibid., 110.

93 Chi-Pung Yu, 320-321.

94 Ibid., 319.
To be sure, in Korea the family is the starting point of Confucian life, but its proper end is to extend the love for the family to include the love for all. In Confucianism at its best, *Hyo* is the primary but not the final virtue. Christians believe that Jesus has already achieved the final goal of Confucian life, for he loved the mothers of others in the same manner as his own mother: "Who are my mother and my brothers? .... Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Mk. 3: 31-35). In this way it may be said that Jesus relativized family attachments, placing obedience to God above obedience to parents.

Further, from the standard of Confucian life, Jesus does not seem to be a filial son. For example, when he was a boy, he caused his parents trouble: "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Lk. 2:49). At the age of thirty, he left his parents and became a homeless man. He did not appear to take any responsibility for caring for his mother, nor did he marry and rear children to provide for the family continuity. The fourth commandment of Moses, "Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you" (Ex. 20:5), was not of paramount importance to him. He did reaffirm the Mosaic ordinance which teaches respect to earthly parents: "Honour your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mt. 15:4). He does not overlook the importance of the family, but calls for a wider view and for the acceptance of responsibilities far beyond the narrow limits of the family. Jesus even commands love of enemies, in imitation of God's gracious, unmerited love for sinners (Mt. 5:44). The difference between Christianity and Confucianism, as Lin sees it, is that "while the Confucianist expresses his great love for the human originator (earthly father), the Christian expresses his absolute love
for the ultimate Creator (Heavenly Father)."95

The integration of spirituality between Confucianism and Christianity bears fruit in the Che-sa (ancestor worship), a form of "worship" in the Korean tradition. Of course, Christians could never agree to "worship" (adore, trust and serve as ultimate) anyone other than God. But ancestor "worship" is really a deep veneration and respect. Worship of God is designated specifically by the Korean word Yae-bae. As Korean-American philosopher Young-Chan Ro defines it, "Ancestor worship not only manifests the religious consciousness and spirituality of the people who practice it, but also reflects their world view, life style, and value system."96 Therefore, the Che-sa is a ritualization of the moral significance of the Hyo. The moral and ritual dimensions of the Hyo are intrinsically related to each other. As Ro explains, "the relationship between morality and ritual is well expressed in the Confucian idea, "li" (propriety), which connects the union of the inner moral awareness and the outer form of expression.... And, in particular, filial piety also starts with li and ends with li."97 In this respect, Che-sa maintains the double standard; that is, it "was constructed not only with an attitude of utmost seriousness toward the departed spirits, but also with celebration as an important occasion for the reunion of families and relatives."98 Thus, Che-sa has played an important social role in maintaining family unity. In this respect, a Christian form of Che-sa is Chudo-Yaebae.

95 Timothy Tian-min Lin, 47.


97 Ibid., 13.

98 Ibid., 16-17.
Most Korean Protestants (conservative/evangelicals) have believed that *Che-sa* is incompatible with the Christian faith, and still strongly resist that practice. They believe that it is idolatrous, and so contrary to the first and second commandments of Moses: "You shall have no other gods before me... You shall not bow down to them or serve them" (Ex. 20:3, 4). This was influenced by early Western missionaries, who strongly objected to the act of bowing down before the ancestral tablet. For them, bowing down before a "graven image" is one of the clearest expressions of idolatry. However, as Jung Young Lee explains,

... from the perspective of the Korean culture, bowing down is an act of respect. Children bow down before their parents on special occasions, such as at birthday celebrations or at the new year festivities. They bow down to their living parents, and just so their parents bow down to the ancestral tablets. The act of bowing down can be seen as an expression of filial piety. In this respect it is not unique to ancestor worship.99 He further explains that "ancestor worship is neither a pure expression of filial piety nor a pure expression of religious devotion; it has both elements. It is, therefore, unfair to conclude that ancestor worship is purely ethical and cultural, and has nothing to do with idolatry. It is also unfair to say that it is pure idolatry, by dismissing its cultural and ethical dimensions."100 Christians are rightly conscious that respect for ancestors should not become idolatrous. For Korean Christians, therefore, ancestor worship should best be expressed as worship *with* ancestors rather than worship *of* ancestors. Christians should not discard this form of ancestor "worship," since it is an important part of Korean culture and tradition. Through a new Christian


100 Ibid., 87-88.
understanding of the spirituality of Hyo, Korean Christians have the opportunity to create a unique form of ancestor veneration, transformed into worship of God.

In this section I have discussed the integration of the spiritualities in the great religious traditions of Korea. Such integration is for the sake of a deeper and more holistic Korean Christian spirituality. I have found in the "healing" of Shamanism, "meditation" of Buddhism, and filial piety of Confucianism, syncretic elements that can well be integrated with Christian spirituality. As I mentioned earlier, a true and authentic spirituality is holistic. These spiritual elements in Korea's religio-cultural traditions are, I suggest, good models for wholeness. To build a mature, holistic spirituality, Christianity must not adopt an exclusivist attitude to these religions. Rather, we must open our hearts to others, and eagerly learn from them. Our task is to integrate the best elements in divided ways of life, in ways that are faithful to Christ, as well as to our ancient religious heritage.

III. Pastoral Implications for a Holistic Spirituality

Korean Christian spirituality has often focused the pastoral task upon the individual person becoming a Christian or a church member by personal preparation for baptism. Some radical/progressives have recently refocused spirituality toward solidarity with the poor and the oppressed. Both tendencies, valid in themselves, run the danger of reducing Christian spirituality to something rather poor and narrow. Particularly, the conservative/evangelical groups tend to limit themselves to as an ongoing process of life in the 'status quo.' The search for a more
balanced approach has pastoral implications for a holistic Christian spirituality which embraces
the personal, political, social, economic, and religious centers of persons within the particular
Korean syncretic context. For the purpose of this section, I shall here suggest "conversion" as an
ongoing process of life and "spiritual direction" as a paradigm of spiritual ministry for wholeness
in the Korean churches.


For those engaged in pastoral ministry, it is essential that they be clear about their
pastoral goals. The numerical growth of the Church is no doubt desirable, but this can have little
significance for God's Kingdom if people do not undergo genuine "conversion."

Conversion is an ongoing process of spiritual growth and development throughout
Christian life. The Christian life must be understood as a constant and continual turning from
and a turning toward God. Conversion is the transformation of the totality of human life and
depends entirely upon God's gift of grace. Some contemporary theologians place "conversion" at
the heart of the theological enterprise, and explore its dynamics.101 For them, conversion entails

101 See, Walter E. Conn, ed., Conversion: Perspectives on Personal and Social
Press, 1980); Hugh T. Kerr and John M. Mulder, eds., Conversion: The Christian Experience
(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); David K. O'Rourke, A Process Called Conversion (New York:
Doubleday, 1985); Stephen Happel and James J. Walter, Conversion and Discipleship: A
Christian Foundation for Ethics and Doctrine (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); Walter E.
Conn, Christian Conversion: A Developmental Interpretation of Autonomy and Surrender (New
York: Paulist Press, 1986); V. Bailey Gillespie, The Dynamics of Religious Conversion: Identity
a radical reorientation of one's desires, thought processes and actions, and penetrates many levels of one's being, namely, "intellectual, moral, and religious." It involves not only an entire personal transformation but also work for transformation of social structures. In this respect, conversion must be viewed as ongoing growth toward holiness and wholeness that can be assisted and sustained by others within a faith community. It is never once and for all. From this perspective, all conversion is the gradual, turning away from personal and social sin and selfishness, and turning towards God and neighbour. But the problem in Korean Protestantism is that conversion is understood frequently as a means for increasing membership in the Church.

The Christian understanding of conversion finds its roots in the Old Testament. The history of Israel is the story of a people repeatedly being called to conversion, called to turn back to its covenant with the God it has adulterously abandoned. For example, David is a model of how this call to conversion works in the individual sinner's life (2 Sam. 11-12). The key biblical words for conversion in the Old Testament suggest a radical turning or redirection of one's life. So, Walter Conn argues that "the biblical words for conversion imply a turning from sin and turning toward God." Both directions are implicit in a vocabulary of conversional change in the Old Testament.

The Hebrew word *Shub* is used to express both the transitive and intransitive moods. The word means "to return" in a general sense (Cf. Psalm 19:7, 51:13; Isaiah 1:27, 6:10). The word is

---


used in these passages in the active voice. It is frequently used with a second verb to give the sense of "again or back." Biblical scholars agree that this word in the Old Testament means such things as (1) "to return" (Gen. 18:33); (2) "to turn back" (Judges 3:19); (3) "to return from a foreign land" (Ruth 1:6); (4) "a turning around" (1 Kings 19:27); (5) "to turn in the course of action" (2 Kings 24:1); (6) "to turn from sin" (1 Kings 8:35); (7) "to be restored" (Exodus 4:7); (8) "to return to God" (Hosea 6:1). 104 Another word, Haphac is also translated "conversion" in the Old Testament. But this word occurs only once in Isaiah 60:5: "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee." Here the word simply means "turn." Thus, the Hebrew preserves the real nature of conversion as an actual turning around in one's way toward a new goal. It pertains especially to the nation and individuals. This twofold stress in the Hebrew is important in understanding its usage. For the Hebrew people, conversion is never just the experience of a change, but includes a goal of action on the part of the faithful where God's will is being fulfilled in turning around. It is a movement back to knowing and serving God.

The editors of Conversion: The Christian Experience, Hugh Kerr and John Mulder, summarize the basic elements of conversional change in almost every Old Testament conversion experience as follows: "First, there is a flashing vision of truth. Then some kind of conviction of one's worthlessness. Next, the joy of being forgiven with the purging of absolution. And finally,

---

some kind of consciousness of new vision, personal mission, or life of service." In Dom Marc-Francois Lacan's words, "the conversion to which God invites us is a grace; it is necessary to receive it as a grace and to become a witness to this grace." That is to say, conversion in the Old Testament signifies both the demand and promise of covenant relationships with God.

The Greek word, translated to conversion, is *Epistrephein* in the New Testament. The word means a personal "turning around"; namely, "to turn one's back upon someone" (Cf. Mt. 10:3, 12:44. 24:18; Mk. 5:30, 8:33, 13:16; Lk. 1:16, 17, 2:30, 8:55; 2 Peter 2:22; James 5:19, 20). But it is most frequently used to denote a mental or a spiritual turn: for example, in Acts 3:19, "Repent then and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out." This implies a turning from something, and a return to God. Thus William Barclay suggests that in this word more meanings for conversion are asserted: "To turn the attention of a person to someone or to something can be to warn him, to correct him, to cause him to repent, and hence to convert him; and to have the attention so turned is to heed, to repent, to take warning, and so to be converted." In a word, it is a turning of the mind so that a person's life is alerted from pride to humility.

Also, there is another closely related term to conversion: *Metanoia*. This term has several connotations of conversion including a change of mind after reflection, a going beyond the

---


107 William Barclay, 18-19.
present attitude, status, or outlook, and repentance. Some biblical references are Mt. 3:1-12, 8:8; Mk 1:1-8, 10:17-22, 46-52; Lk 3:1-20, 7:47-50, 19:1-10, 22:32; Acts 9:1-19, 22:3-16; 1 Cor. 9:1, 15:8; Gal. 1:13-17. It is an inclusive movement in which a person moves forward steadily to continually new things. Though these Greek words (Epistrephein and Metanoia) are virtually synonymous and can both be translations of the Hebrew Shub, there is one difference in emphasis. James J. Walter tells us.

Metanoia tends to stress more the processes of thinking and willing that lie behind an action, whereas Epistrephein emphasizes more the visible characteristics of an external act. In any case, both terms signify a radical turning around of the whole person and a return home. Thus, the call to conversion as it is used in both testaments always connotes an intense yearning for return to the Lord and divine relationship.108

He further notes three important facts about the divine-human relationship.

First, sinful humanity is alienated from God and is in need of reunion. Second, conversion is primarily God's work towards humanity, since it is God who first offers mercy and salvation.... Finally, conversion requires a response on the part of humanity - a confession of sinfulness, an openness to receive God's mercy and forgiveness in faith, and a joyful desire to love God and neighbour in word and action.109

The word "conversion" is expressed as "repentance," "born again," or "turning around" with frequency throughout the New Testament. In any case, what we recognize is that to be converted is like making a "U-turn." It implies a change from one lifestyle to another by abandoning an aimless and unsatisfying perspective in exchange for a new and more promising incentive to live a more meaningful life. But it is, as Lacan says, always a work of God's grace: "Conversion is a


109 Ibid., 233.
grace, a grace of the resurrection of the sinner (Lk. 15:24, 32) who becomes a child of God. This transformation, inaugurated by faith in Jesus, demands that man constantly follow Christ in the way of humility by seeking only God's glory, and in the way of love by being merciful to this brothers."  

Conversion as grace of God has a pastoral dimension. Henri Nouwen, an important "spiritual guide for today," understands that conversion as grace is an image of "open hands" before God, open to receive and to share, open to let others come in and to let go. For him, "to open our hands before God means to accept existence readily not as a possession to defend, but as a gift to receive." For Nouwen, conversion arises out of the experience of solitude and reflection, which he defined as "the furnace of transformation." For our society is not a community radiant with the love of Christ, but a dangerous network of domination and manipulation in which we can easily get entangled and lose our soul. Thus, "Solitude is the place of the great struggle and the great encounter - the struggle against the compulsions of the false self, and the encounter with the loving God who offers himself as the substance of the new self." Solitude is the place of purification and transformation; the place of our salvation. Nouwen comments, "Our primary task is not to pay undue attention to the many faces which

110 Dom Marc-Francois Lacan, 118.
111 See Annice Callahan, Spiritual Guides for Today (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 117-135. [In this book Callahan calls Nouwen "a prophet of conversion."]
112 Henri Nouwen, With Open Hands (Nortre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1972), 154.
114 Ibid., 26.
assail us, but to keep the eyes of our mind and heart on him who is our divine saviour.\textsuperscript{115} Moreover, solitude as the place of conversion is a way of our heart, offering spiritual guidance to rediscover the way of the heart in Christian life.

To foster true "conversion" in this sense is a basic task of Korean Protestantism and Korean ministry. It is "faith seeking healing"\textsuperscript{116} for all Christians, including both professional ministers and laity, whose spirituality must bear fruit in their real lives in the real world. What is required is a \textit{holistic ministry}. In Nouwen's words, "Ministry means the ongoing attempt to put one's own search for God, with all the moments of pain and joy, despair and hope, at the disposal of those who want to join this search but do not know how... It is the core of the Christian life."\textsuperscript{117} Consequently, "Christian ministry is the one that lies beyond professionalism."\textsuperscript{118} That is to say, it is the movement from professionalism to spirituality as an ongoing, holistic way of life. It fosters the conversion process by discerning God's presence in one's personal prayer and in the community where one's faith is shared.

Further, a \textit{holistic ministry} involves global implications for mission, which takes into account the social-political and the religio-cultural context of Korea. All Christians truthfully

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 30.

\textsuperscript{116} In my dissertation for the degree of "Doctor of Ministry," I explored a lay-centred ministry as faith seeking healing, not pastor-centred ministry, and its relationship with spirituality. There I suggested "a lay-centred church" as the community of faith in order to develop lay spirituality in the Korean Church. [See, In Sung Chi, "A Lay-Centred Church as the Community of Faith: Developing Spiritual Leadership of the Laity in the Korean Church," D. Min. diss., (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary, 1994).]


\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., xviii.
belong together in God. This is the spiritual basis for solidarity in the world. Here too all Christians find the ground of all Christian action. This insight shows us a global dimension of intimacy with God, namely, the renewed sense of mission, and provides us the image of "walking with Jesus." However, the initiative for the encounter with Christ comes from Jesus himself. Discipleship is first and foremost the response to this invitation. This insight is essential for an understanding of a renewed sense of mission as a fruit of conversion. At the same time, the "spirituality" of engagement in mission requires the nurturing of a Christ-centred spirituality of prayer.

There is much to build upon in the Korean pastoral context: many new and "young" Christians with fresh enthusiasm for their faith; also a genuinely spiritual people whose cultural influence has prepared them well for a spirituality of inwardness and solitude, love and service.

2. Spiritual Direction: A Paradigm of Spiritual Ministry for Wholeness

The term "spiritual direction" has not been well known to Protestant Christianity, either in Korea or in the West. This does not mean that its reality has been absent from Protestant traditions, where it can be said to have taken many different forms, either through the pastoral care of ordained ministers or through small group fellowship. This is especially part of the Wesleyan Methodist tradition. But the specific form known as "spiritual direction" has developed in Roman Catholicism, especially among Jesuits, and it has often been linked to sacramental confession since the 1970s. It has become one of the specialized ministries. Korean Protestants, I believe, have much to learn from this Catholic tradition.
As in every other Christian ministry, spiritual direction is rooted in God's call first and then our human response to that call. It is understood as a gift of the Holy Spirit in a special way to a particular person. That is to say, it takes place, for the most part, within the context which assumes the unity of spirituality and social action, of holiness and justice, and focuses on a practice of holiness and wholeness in Christian life. It seems appropriate to deal with spiritual direction as a pastoral task in the Korean church. Koreans, including Korean Protestants, are perhaps well situated to practice and receive this ministry. Koreans have, in their ancient spiritual traditions, a respect for Buddhist "masters," who instruct people in the ways of meditation. Koreans have, in their Confucian tradition, what is sometimes a healthy respect for authorities and elders, including teachers. They sometimes seek out shamans for spiritual counselling. Such a specialized ministry as "spiritual direction" will be more acceptable among Korean Protestants than Protestants elsewhere.

The term "spiritual direction" is usually applied to the "cure of souls" when it involves the specific needs of the individual. "Spiritual" means that the basic concern of the cure is not with external actions, but with the inner life, the "heart." "Direction" does suggest something more than problem-solving. It implies that the person who seeks direction is going somewhere, and wants to talk to someone on the way. In a Christian sense, it aims at fostering union with God and therefore has to do with the person's relationship with God. William A. Barry and William J. Connolly define Christian spiritual direction as "help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to
live out the consequence of the relationship."

Speaking more theologically, union with God is the central concern of spiritual direction, because, as we have shown earlier, spiritual life is the life of the whole person directed towards God. Anglican pastoral theologian Kenneth Leech defines this spiritual direction as "a seeking after the leading of the Holy Spirit in a given psychological and spiritual direction." Here Leech stresses seeking. Indeed, spiritual direction may be considered the core form from which all other forms of pastoral care radiate, since ultimately all forms of pastoral care and counselling aim, or should aim, at helping people to centre their lives in the mystery we call God. Hence, Gregory Carlson distinguishes spiritual direction from three other important pastoral ministries. According to him, "Spiritual direction is not the normal exchange of advice and feedback among friends.... Spiritual direction is not problem-solving or decision-making, which calls for advice from the person consulted and tends to fix on one area of a person's life and to occur at crisis periods. So, spiritual direction is not psychological counselling, which tends to fix on problem areas and to seek a solution in terms of understanding one's own history or modifying one's behaviour." He therefore argues that authentic spiritual direction is a "conversation in which, with the help of another, a person expresses his or her experience of faith and discerns its

---


character and movement.\textsuperscript{122}

In his book, \textit{Spirituality and Pastoral Care}, Leech also explains the difference between pastoral counselling and spiritual direction within the tradition of the Christian church as follows:

(i) Spiritual direction is essentially and centrally concerned with God, with the vision of God, with an understanding of the workings of God, and with helping human beings to attain union with God. Pastoral counselling, while it may take place within the framework of a Christian community, is not essentially concerned with theology or with belief. Nor can it become so without abandoning and betraying its function of counselling.

(ii) Spiritual direction is rooted in a Christian tradition which goes back to the monastic movement of the fourth century. While it must be flexible, and capable of adaptation to the needs of different ages, it can never abandon its rootedness in that historic faith tradition. Pastoral counselling is a relatively new discipline which draws from certain elements within Christian theology but which is less dependent on the Christian tradition as a whole.

(iii) Spiritual direction is not office-based but rooted in the life and practice of a sacramental community. Its locus is the church and sacraments. Pastoral counselling tends rather to be located in an office or clinic, and its links with the Christian community are less clear.

(iv) Spiritual direction is not primarily concerned with problem-solving or with life crises and states of emotional distress. It is not a ministry to the deeply troubled. Pastoral counselling tends to focus very much on problems rather than on long-term guidance within an ongoing and maturing spiritual life.\textsuperscript{123}

Leech clearly defines spiritual direction as "a relationship of friendship in Christ between two people by which one is enabled, through the personal encounter, to discern more clearly the will of God for one's life, and to grow in discipleship and in the life of grace."\textsuperscript{124} Here he suggests that there are several characteristics of such a relationship: "First, the spiritual director is freely chosen as a 'soul friend.' It is a charismatic, and not a sacramental or judicial, relationship...

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 73.


\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 48.
Secondly, it may involve a number of temporary, though important, relationships during the course of one's life... Thirdly, it is a relationship which is not authoritarian, but a mutual sharing in the Spirit, a mutual seeking after direction... Fourthly, it is concerned with the whole of life... Fifthly, it is a relationship involving help, support and teaching... Finally, it is a relationship which calls for holiness and inner purification...."

Here we need to consider especially the role of the spiritual director. who must also seek spiritual direction to submit his or her experience to scrutiny. The role of the director is not to teach, or advise, or judge, and or decide. Rather, as Carlson notes, it is "to ask those questions that will help the directee to clarify his or her own experience and discern its meaning, to suggest at times a possible interpretation for what is going on in the directee's life,..... and to encourage the directee." That is to say, it is seen to be more than problem-solving, and is concerned very much with spiritual growth and greater intimacy with God in prayer. In Alan Jones' words, it focuses upon "worship, adoration, waiting on God." Accordingly, the director needs balance, prudence, discretion and compassion, and should be able to help the directee to be aware of God's love. A spiritual director is, then, one who helps another to recognize and to follow the inspirations of grace in his or her life, in order to arrive at the end to which God is leading him or her.

---

125 Ibid., 48-49.
126 Gregory I. Carlson, 74.
Speaking appreciatively, but critically, I feel that this role of the director overemphasizes the personal realm of direction. If spiritual direction is related to the whole process of life, it must involve the social, prophetic dimensions as well as the personal dimension. We have already examined the needed integration between transcendence and immanence of God, between the personal and the social, and between contemplation and action. No support can be formed in the Bible for the separation between a religion of justice and a religion of holiness. It is the contemplative vision of the holy and just God which leads people to work for the liberation for the oppressed, the alienated, the marginalized, the orphan and the widow. Their zeal for justice was rooted in their vision of, and struggle for holiness.

From this biblical perspective, in fact, it is essential that spiritual direction in some way reflect the prophetic witness and vision. As Kenneth Leech sees it, "Non-prophetic spirituality, spirituality without struggle, spirituality without justice is notoriously popular in times of turmoil and upheaval." This social, prophetic dimension is related to, and should indeed be central to, the full exercise of a ministry of spiritual direction in today's church. If there is no such demand in spiritual direction, spirituality can become a form of illusion. Therefore, true spiritual direction should be deeply concerned to discriminate and to avoid false perceptions of the experience of God, to create a healthy path of life in the Spirit.

Nevertheless, spiritual direction should be concerned primarily with the relationship to God. Christian spiritual direction must necessarily be engaged not with a God of our own prejudices or of our own making, but the God of revelation. Traditionally, the relationship of

128 Kenneth Leech, *Spirituality and Pastoral Care*, 73
Christians to God is expressed in that special conversation or communication which we call "prayer." David Fleming says, "prayer, like direction itself, is not viewed as just one more human activity, common to anthropological studies and usually found as a part of all religions. Rather, prayer is seen as a specific gift of the Spirit, and so Christian prayer takes on a new depth of meaning and content from its very source in the Spirit."\(^{131}\) In Christian prayer, therefore, Christians are convinced that they are finite beings and that their lives are from God. Through Christian experience of prayer, they are aware of a process of discernment of ministerial gifts (whether for ordained or lay ministries). In that process, as Fleming notes, the following elements are identified: "(1) a person's growing sense of being gifted in a certain way; (2) one's being confirmed in this gift/charism by the experience of a special quality of interaction with others; (3) a person's deciding freely to exercise this gift for others; and (4) one's seeking out ways of training and refining the gift given."\(^{132}\)

In all Christian prayer, the focus is **appropriately** on the God of love, the One who acts and is concerned for us individually and socially. This way of prayer is taught by Jesus. If Christians take Jesus' way of prayer, as seen in the Gospels, they find a consistency in approach to God and to the content of prayer. Spiritual direction always encourages us to be authentic Christians by keeping us in contact with the way of praying as Jesus did. But not every method or way of praying is automatically adaptable to the kind of relationship which Christian prayer is meant to engender. Thus Henri Nouwen writes, "prayer is not a preparation for work or an


\(^{132}\) Ibid., 5.
indispensable condition for effective ministry. Prayer is life; prayer and ministry are the same and can never be divorced."

Christian theology has given a certain shape to our thinking about the integration and wholeness of human life in the light of the mystery of salvation in Christ. The mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus is central to Christian faith. The passion and resurrection of Jesus therefore occupy a central place in spiritual direction. Jesus is related to every Christian as the one who is their saviour. As Fleming notes, "whatever form the question may take from being a saviour from, to a saviour of, or to a saviour for." Therefore, Korean Christians need to pay greater attention to the fact that spiritual direction is a Christian ministry in a shared community of faith. Its focus is as wide as our whole life.

As we have seen earlier, there is no doubt that Korean Christians have a richness of resources in our religio-cultural heritage, and therefore can bring diverse forms to spiritual direction. Yet we need to make sure that these resources clearly provide those distinct theological elements which identify spiritual direction as a Christian ministry. For ultimately only if we build upon Christian theological foundations, can we find that this ministry will be productive for growth in holiness for Korean Christians. Finally, we must not forget that this ministry refers to the social, political, and cultural dimensions of life; that is, to the wholeness of life.

In conclusion, Korean Christians may learn much from other Christian spiritual traditions, and may also build upon their own ancient religio-cultural heritage, to find meaningful forms of

\footnote{133}{Henri Nouwen, Creative Ministry, xxiii.}

\footnote{134}{David Fleming, 8.}
conversion, prayer and spiritual direction. Our holistic propensity for "both-and" approaches needs to be honoured in a holistic spirituality of transcendence and immanence, of contemplation and action, and of the personal and the social. Thus, we may hope to build in Korea a unique Christian spirituality of balance and tolerance, of wholeness, and of holiness.
CONCLUSION

In my Proposal and Introduction to this thesis I proposed to argue that Korean Christians must find ways to integrate the polarized Christian spiritualities that exist among them, and in doing so, must acknowledge and value Korea's own ancient syncretic heritage, which has sustained Korean people for many centuries. Thus I have proposed a holistic Christian spirituality in and for the Korean syncretic context. The goal of the thesis has been to move toward a spirituality centered in Jesus Christ, which is at the same time deeply inculturated into Korean life. We wish to journey forward toward true wholeness and holiness.

Important conceptual tools toward this end have been "inculturation" and "syncretism." Of course, many Korean Christians, including theologians and church leaders, have rejected the use of the term "syncretism" since some forms of syncretism indeed diluted and threatened the integrity and distinctiveness of Christian faith. Thus they have been afraid of the loss of Christian identity, and regarded the term itself as a danger to Christian authenticity. In this respect, some of my friends asked me to avoid this term. However, I have intentionally maintained and defended the use of this term in this thesis. The first reason is that Koreans cannot deny that they have already syncretized the whole structure of their lives, both religiously and culturally. Secondly, I have argued, together with others who support "inculturation" and "Christ-centred syncretism," that Christian faith itself, and over whole experience of spiritual life, calls for loving, respectful openness to others.

For this purpose, in the first chapter I explored foundational notions for the basic understanding of spirituality. That is, I summarized the definitions of spirituality that have arisen
within widespread debate in academic circles, i.e., the general, Christian, and holistic Christian definitions. I also examined biblical understandings of spirituality, historic Christian usages, types according to theological views, and the differences between Catholic and Protestant spirituality, and further clarified biblical concepts of holiness as wholeness and their relationships to various Christian traditions.

In the second chapter I briefly examined the Korean syncretic spiritualities of the great religions, including Christianity, in history and in the present context. In so doing, I described how an identifiable Korean syncretic spirituality has developed in the ancient religious traditions, noting their coexistence and mutual influence. I also discussed how Korean Christian spirituality, both Catholic and Protestant, was inserted into this syncretic context. I pointed out that, in the process of suffering and growth of Korean Christianity, it developed and deepened its own spirituality in a syncretic way together with the other great religions.

In the third chapter I discussed theological questions of syncretism in search for inculturation as an ongoing process for the development of a deeper Korean Christian spirituality. The major point here was to maintain that syncretism is inevitable for a genuine inculturation. Thus, I reviewed the theological debate about syncretism in academic circles, proposed my own view for a new healthy syncretism, and then focused upon the necessity of inculturation for a Christian spirituality in the syncretic context. In particular, I considered three models for inculturation in the Korean syncretic context: "translation model," "praxis model," and "synthetic model." Among them, I suggested "synthetic model" as the most adequate for inculturation in Korea. A key aspect of this model is its basic attitude of "openness" to other religions; namely, the true universality of Christian faith in the syncretic context. The subject of
"interreligious or interfaith dialogue" is inevitably part of this discussion, but I did not engage thoroughly in a discussion of that concept for the sake of simplicity.

In the fourth chapter I reflected upon theological paradigms of Christian spirituality found in selected contemporary Korean Protestant churches (necessarily limiting the scope). These were variously characterized as "conservative" Calvinist spirituality, Pentecostal spirituality, and minjung spirituality, which have developed in the Protestant churches. I also classified those spiritualities as the "conservative/evangelical" group and the "progressive/radical" group. In accordance with relevant statistics of Korean Protestant church membership, I named those as "conservative Calvinist spirituality" as the evangelical majority, "Pentecostal spirituality" as a substantial minority, and "minjung spirituality" as a smaller radical minority.

In the final chapter I proposed an integration of the polarized spiritualities of Korean Protestant churches through a more balanced spirituality. In fact, this attempt is the major contribution and goal of the thesis. I called the integrated vision "a spirituality of wholeness" or "a holistic Christian spirituality." Its purpose was to synthesize the opposing approaches of three divided ways in Korean Christian life and faith; that is, a synthesis of "divine transcendence and immanence," "contemplation and action," and "the personal and the social." I further attempted to integrate elements of the traditional spiritualities of the great religions within Korea's own spiritual ethos. It showed that Korean spirituality in the syncretic context has already been in a various degrees "holistic." Therefore, I concluded that to build a mature, holistic spirituality, Korean Christianity must reject an exclusivist attitude to other religions, and must open itself to others and eagerly learn from them. Finally, I suggested that a more balanced approach has pastoral implications for a holistic Christian spirituality which embraces the personal, political,
social, and religious aspects within the particular Korean syncretic context. It is an understanding of conversion as an ongoing process of life, and of spiritual direction as a Christian ministry that must help Korean people to encounter God in their own specific context.

As the term "toward" in the sub-title indicates, however, this study can never be completed or finished. Rather, it is an ongoing process for the future of Korean Christianity. I believe that in this process Korean Christianity can meet the challenges that it will face in the twenty-first century. At the pastoral level, as I have indicated, there still remains an enormous task.
1. English Books and Articles


Hanson, Bradley C. "Spirituality and Spiritual Theology," *Dialog* 21:3 (Summer, 1982), 207-212


Hollinger, Dennis P. "Individualism and Social Ethic: An Evangelical Syncretism," *Church History* 54 (June 1985), 282-283.


------ "Jesus Christ with an Asian Face," Theological Studies 57:3 (September 1996), 399-430.


Schneiders, Sandra M. "Theology and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?" Horizons 13 (Fall 1986), 253-274.


2. Korean Books

간하배, 한국 장로교 신학사상 (Theological Thoughts of the Korean Presbyterian Church), 서울: 실로암, 1988.


김장태, 유교사상과 종교문화 (Confucian Thought and Religious Culture), 서울: 서울대학교 출판부, 1994.

기독교사상출판부 편, 한국의 신학사상 (The Theological Thought of Korea), 서울: 대학기독교사회, 1983.

----------------- 한국 역사와 기독교 (Korean History and Christianity), 서울: 대학기독교사회, 1983.

----------------- 한국교회와 이데올로기 (The Korean Church and Ideology), 서울: 대학기독교사회, 1983.

----------------- 한국의 정치신학 (Political Theology in Korea), 서울: 대학기독교사회, 1983.

----------------- 한국의 문화와 신학 (Korean Culture and Theology), 서울: 대학기독교사회, 1992.

김광식, 트로/licenses/2. Korean Books

김정재, 한국 문화신학 (A Theology of Culture in Korea), 서울: 한국신학연구소, 1980.


------ 해석학과 종교신학 (Hermeneutics and Theology of Religions), 서울: 한국신학연구소, 1994.

김상일, 한철학 (Han Philosophy), 서울: 전망사, 1983.
세계철학과 한 (World Philosophy and Han), 서울: 전망사, 1989.


김용복, 한국민중과 기독교 (Korean Minjung and Christianity), 서울: 형성사, 1981.


김하태, 동서철학의 만남 (The Encounter of Eastern and Western Philosophy), 서울: 종로서적, 1985.


류재성, 기독교와 불교의 비교연구 (A Comparative Study of Christianity and Buddhism), 서울: 대한기독교서회, 1980.


박근원, 기독교와 관중신생 (Christianity and Ancestor Worship), 서울: 전망사, 1993.


박형용, 교의신학 I (Dogmatic Theology I), 서울: 백합출판사, 1964.
심상태. 한국교회와 신학 (The Korean Church and Theology), 서울: 성바오로출판사, 1988.
안병무. 민중신학 이야기 (Stories of Minjung Theology), 서울: 한국신학연구소, 1990.
유동석. 한국종교와 기독교 (Korean Religions and Christianity), 서울: 기독교서회, 1965.
----- 한국 무교의 역사와 구조 (The History and Structure of Korean Shamanism), 서울: 연세대학교출판부, 1975.


----- 한국인의 삶과 종교 (Korean Life and Religion), 서울: 고려한림원, 1993.


----- 포스트 모더니즘과 기독교 (Postmodernism and Christianity), 서울: 다산출판, 1993.


정대위, 그리스도교와 동양인의 세계 (Christianity and World of East Asians: Confrontation and Accomodation), 서울: 한국신학연구소, 1986.

정진홍, 기독교와 다종교와의 대화 (Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue), 서울: 전망사, 1980.


조용기, 삼각자 구원 (Three Elements of Salvation), 서울: 서울서적, 1977.

----- 오품복음과 삼각자 축복 (Five Gospels and Three Blessings), 서울: 서울서적, 1990.

조홍윤, 한국의 무 (Korean Shamanism), 서울: 정용사, 1983.
부와 민족문화 (Shamanism and Folk Culture), 서울: 민족문화사, 1990.


최태욱, 한국문화와 기독교 (Korean Culture and Christianity), 서울: 한양대학교출판부, 1994.


최성현, 한국교회와 샤마니즘 (The Korean Church and Shamanism), 서울: 성광출판사, 1993.

크리스찬아카데미 편, 민중신학 연구 (An Exploration of Minjung Theology), 서울: 크리스찬 아카데미, 1983.

한국기독교문화연구소 편, 한국교회와 신학의 과제 (The Task of the Korean Church and Theology), 서울: 연세대학교출판부, 1985.


한국기독교학회 편, 한국교회와 열성 (The Korean Church and Spirituality), 서울: 하우기획출판, 1992.


한국신학대학출판부 편, 칼빈신학의 현대적 이해 (The New Understanding of John Calvin’s Thought), 서울: 한국신학대학출판부, 1978.


한신대학교신학부 편, 신학과 한국교회 (Theology and the Korean Church), 오산: 한신대학교출판부, 1995.

홍정수, 다중교와 기독교 (Pluralism and Christology), 서울: 조명출판사, 1990.


