An Application of Ignatian Discernment To the Korean Presbyterian Church Based on the *Spiritual Exercises*

by

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of Regis College and the Pastoral Department of the Toronto School of Theology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Theology awarded by Regis College and the University of Toronto

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Master of Theology
Regis College of the University of Toronto
2013

ABSTRACT

In this thesis, the necessity of an application of the three key elements of Ignatian discernment – election, obedience, and contemplation – to the Presbyterian doctrine of sanctification contained in Chapter XIII of the Westminster Confession of Faith, a fundamental doctrine of faith in the Korean Presbyterian Church, will be reviewed in a critical and creative manner, with special attention given to influential cultural aspects.

This thesis demonstrates the necessity of learning how to apply Ignatian discernment concretely to the Korean Presbyterian Church and to individual Christians in order to enhance their ability to choose and to act through motives of love. A genuinely intimate, loving relationship with God may enable the Korean Presbyterian Church and Christians to recognize their ecclesial duties and roles as a true vocation and self-surrender to God in praise and service.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express deep appreciation to my thesis director, Prof. Scott M. Lewis, SJ. His inestimable patience, sincere encouragement, critical questions, and gentle guidance and prayer have supported me greatly, allowing me to finish my study. Without his teaching and guidance, I could not come to this moment. I am also very grateful to my two thesis readers, Prof. Michael Stoeber and Prof. Anne Anderson, CSJ. They have read my thesis without hesitation from a critical point of view.

There are many people to whom I owe a debt of love, support, and prayer. Sr. Bernadette Ward, FMM, has helped me not only to proofread my papers and thesis, but also with her constant prayer, loving support, and encouragement, she has accompanied me in my study and my spiritual journey. I also want to express my deep appreciation to Ms. Nada Conic who read my thesis and gave me some final suggestions. I am inclined to state my inmost appreciation to Rev. Hyung Jun Kim and Rev. Yo Whan Lee. Their supports has encouraged me to resume my study. I am in debt of prayers to many people: Prof. Monty Williams, SJ, my friends, Sr. Ann McGill, FCJ and Kyongmi Yoo, and my spiritual directors, Fr. Richard Soo, SJ and Sr. Anne Harvey, SC. Their constant prayers and loving support enabled me to finish my thesis.

My deepest gratitude goes to my family. I have received inexpressible support from my husband, Ho Gi, and my beloved son, David. Their sincere prayers, loving care, gentle support, and exceptional understanding toward me have greatly encouraged me to finish my study. I also want to share my deep gratitude to my sister, Eun Ju. As she prays for me, she has supported me by sending many articles and books from Korea for my thesis and spirituality. I dedicate my thesis to my mother who is in heaven. Her love, joy, and faith in God, her endless search for the truth, and her habitual self-examination have nourished my life here.

Most of all, I am very grateful to God. Without God’s guidance and love, without God’s abundant grace, and if God had not given me strength and health, I could not finish my thesis. I give all glory, honor and praise to God!
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Introduction

1 An Application of Ignatian Discernment to the Korean Presbyterian Church based on the *Spiritual Exercises*

As Christians we inevitably encounter great or trivial struggles as we experience many grace-filled or joyous moments in our lives. So we may stop, at least once in a while, to think about what might be God’s desire in our concrete life situations. George A. Aschenbrenner affirms that many Christians yearn for a deeper relationship with God:

> Holiness, in and of itself, does not seem to be a serious daily concern for most people…[However] when the glow has faded from life and something is clearly missing, this search for something more is really a desire for fullness, for beauty, for God, even though we do not know it and cannot articulate it as such.¹

This longing for holiness or desire for God may be the most fundamental desire of a Christian. However, even if we know the will of God, and craving for a loving relationship with God, following that God’s will is another matter. For this reason, discernment is regarded as a difficult and troublesome task to accomplish.

*The Spiritual Exercises* of the St. Ignatius of Loyola are well known as a tool for discernment. However, *the Exercises* are not intended for scholarly attainment but as exercises of prayer. The *Exercises* introduces within a four-week period different methods of vocal and mental prayer, examination of conscience, meditation and contemplation. During the Exercises, souls seek to be free of disordered affections or attachments and, after their release, to seek freely and to find the will of God in the disposition of their lives for the salvation of their souls.²

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Ignatian discernment through prayer is vital, in order to be able to receive the strength to serve
and love God. From this perspective, discernment is a matter of “being,” not of “skills.”
Discernment is a question of who we are and who we will become in relation to God.
Through discernment, we may find the will of God and our deepest desire in God. Therefore,
learning the art of discernment is an indispensable practice for Christians who seek to become
true disciples of Christ. Thus, our prayer, discernment, and action together form a unified
process.

However, discernment needs to be practiced not only by individual Christians but also by the
communal church. Michael Buckley explains that, in St. Ignatius’ view, the church is a “principal
agent” in “a radical struggle between the divine influence upon human choice and that of the
enemy of our human nature.”3 Yet the church cannot be a principal agent unless it practices self-
examination or discernment at all times. Both the communal church and individual Christians
must scrutinize and discern the best choice in God. To reflect seriously on the source of our
intentions with respect to our choices and actions is very important, in order to know whether
these are from God or from our inordinate attachments. Unless we discern appropriately, we will
neither find the will of God, nor follow in the footsteps of Christ, nor praise, reverence, and serve
God, nor properly seek for the salvation of our souls. In the absence of effective discernment, we
will easily be self-deceived or be deceived by the enemy of our human nature.

The Korean Protestant Church has been criticized for the inconsistency of its faith and action.
Won Gue Lee describes the Korean Protestant Church at present as an unconcerned spectator to
moral collapses and communal crisis in Korean society.4 The Korean Presbyterian Church and

4 Won Gue Lee, Han’gukgyohoe mooukshik moonjaeimga? [What is it all about the Korean Church?] (Seoul, Korea:
Methodist Theological Seminary, 1998), 165-201; Won Gue Lee, Han’guk gyohoe uhdiro gago inmeunga? [Where is
other Protestant Church leaders and theologians have become aware of and alarmed at the current phenomenon of the wide gulf between faith and life in the church and among Christians. They appeal for reform of the church through self-examination and fundamental life change toward God.5 For example, one doctrinal theologian, Hong Suk Choi, urges the Korean Presbyterian Church to return to the fundamental Biblical principles of the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), which is the doctrine at the basis of the Korean Presbyterian Church Constitution.6 One of its key principles is the doctrine of sanctification.

However, “sanctification” in the Westminster Confession of Faith sharply reveals the lack of concrete method and guidance in Christian discernment to attain Christian sanctification. Chapter XIII of the WCF, on sanctification, makes it clear that Christians are engaged in spiritual warfare. Section I declares that anyone who is effectually called and regenerated is further sanctified, really and personally. Section II states that sanctification will be accomplished throughout the whole life of the person; yet it is imperfect in this life. For this reason, it makes clear that continual and irreconcilable war between the flesh and the Spirit ensues. Section III concludes that the remaining corruption may prevail for a time, yet saints grow in grace and attain perfecting holiness through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ.7 As we read the texts, sanctification appears to be realized by God and human beings.
effortlessly. The trust-filled conclusions on sanctification may misguide Christians into assuming that sanctification from sin and subsequent holiness flow from a guaranteed and automatic process.

However, Archibald Alexander Hodge, a theologian and commentator on the WCF, argues that Christian sanctification involves not only God’s inward grace but also our response to that grace as our outward duty. It means that we have to practice spiritual renovation and develop spiritual habits of resisting evil in our action. George Stuart Hendry asserts that we must be active in the process of holiness. Hendry clarifies that the grace of God calls us into “responsible decision” and “responsible obedience” through devotion and dedication to the new life of holiness, to which the Christian is called. These commentators and theologians further develop this concept of Christian sanctification; however, they still leave us with insufficient detail regarding how:

How might we face spiritual warfare in order to practice spiritual renovation? How might we resist evil through responsible choices and responsible obedience? And how might we respond to God’s grace to grow in holiness as we serve and love God?

This limitation of practical guidance in Chapter XIII might be overcome through the application of Ignatian discernment to Korean Presbyterian spirituality, which will guide us in prayer, discernment and action. Since I cannot discuss all aspects of Ignatian discernment in this paper, I will focus my thesis on three key elements: Ignatian discernment in the Election, Ignatian teaching on obedience, and the Contemplation to Attain God’s Love (contemplatio). Learning and practicing these three key elements of Ignatian discernment would prove very helpful to the Korean Presbyterian Church. Otherwise, discernment could be confused with a lack of faith;

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8 Ibid., 195-7.
forced obedience might induce blind obedience or a rebellious reaction, which makes
discernment difficult; and coerced obedience might impel Korean Christians towards a distorted
image of God, which would hinder them from contemplation of God’s love and grace.

Although obedience has been a fundamental factor in Ignatian discernment,\textsuperscript{10} it is a very
sensitive topic in the Korean Presbyterian Church and among Christians. On the one hand, as
Korean Confucian culture demands very strict obedience, many Korean Christians are not free to
build a loving relationship with their own fathers and with God. For this reason, Korean
Christians have a fearful, strict father image of God.\textsuperscript{11} Furthermore, an absolute, forced
obedience to authority has resulted in an elevation of spiritual leaders as god-figures, and some
Korean Christians have submitted to authority out of fear.\textsuperscript{12} On the other hand, as Korea has
been industrialized and exposed to Western influences, Korean Christians have begun to question
traditional authority figures. Korean Christians no longer regard submission as something given
or a virtue. In fact, they have an antipathy towards the language of obedience because they
regard themselves as a higher authority in a church, because it is they who hired a minister or
elected elders as managers for their local church and congregation.\textsuperscript{13} For this reason, I will
present the Ignatian understanding of obedience in order to apply it to the situation in the Korean
Presbyterian Church, in light of a reflection on the obedience of Christ (\textit{kenosis}) as a
fundamental model for all Christians.

John Sheets affirms that Christians need to experience God’s love and grace in order to serve

\textsuperscript{10} St. Ignatius of Loyola, \textit{Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola}, selected & trans., William J. Young, S.J. (Chicago, IL:
Loyola University Press, 1959), 288.
Nouwen and Our Search for God}, ed. Jonathan Bengtson and Gabrielle Earnshaw (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books,
2007), 23.
\textsuperscript{12} W. G. Lee, \textit{About the Korean Church}, 155-64.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 247.
God as Christ served him. For this reason, I will examine the contemplation to attain God’s love, since the relationship with God deeply affects personal discernment. In my experience of spiritual direction with many Koreans, I have found two major obstacles on their spiritual journey: a distorted image of God, and suppression of inner movements by Korean Christians, both of which hinder their growth in relationship with God. To restore the true image of God, without fearing to express their inner movements, many Korean Christians need to experience God’s love and grace more tangibly.

Experience of God’s love through contemplation (contemplatio) is a powerful source of Christian discernment, guiding a person to choose and act freely in the way of Christ, without leaning toward any one specific choice or way of life. Nevertheless, the experience of God’s grace and love is a pure gift on the part of God. Theologians, spiritual directors, and ministers who work in the field agree that human beings cannot manipulate grace in order to experience a “divine milieu.” Such an experience, in any case, would not represent a definitive spiritual achievement but only one step in a development process. Thus it is important to remember that humility is essential in Christian discernment.

This paper may help the Korean Presbyterian Church and individual Christians to grasp the importance of the practice of Ignatian discernment and prayer in their daily lives in order to make good choices that are in harmony with the true self in concrete life situations. In this way, the Korean Presbyterian Church and individual Christians may seek to follow the will of God

16 Ivens, Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, 170.
and move towards union with God for the service and praise of God, and the salvation of their soul.\textsuperscript{17}

2 Thesis Statement

In this thesis, the necessity of an application of the three key elements of Ignatian discernment – election, obedience, and contemplation – to the Presbyterian doctrine of sanctification will be reviewed in a critical and creative manner, with special attention given to influential cultural aspects. This study aims at assisting the Korean Presbyterian Church and individual Christians to love and serve God and God’s people from the experience of God’s love.

3 Methodology

The primary literature for this thesis will be the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius and some of his letters. I will refer to books and articles which relate to Ignatian discernment and prayer. Other primary literature will include Chapter XIII of the Westminster Confession of Faith, which is a fundamental doctrine of faith in the Korean Presbyterian Church, and commentaries on it. Since Western missionaries introduced Christianity into Korea, I refer not only to Korean books and articles but also to English books and articles which relate to the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Firstly, I will analyze chapter XIII of the WCF on sanctification: analyzing its structure by referring to texts and commentaries, by comparatively analyzing and criticizing the Presbyterian notion of sanctification from the point of view of other religious denominations, and finally by critically exploring related phenomena within the church. This analysis will point to the possible effectiveness of introducing Ignatian discernment into Korean Presbyterian spirituality, as a

\textsuperscript{17} Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, 169.
means to enable the movement to become a sanctified instrument of God.

Secondly, I will research some fundamental lessons in *The Spiritual Exercises* for the practical exercise of discernment. I will explicate three key points of discernment in Ignatian spirituality that apply practically to the Korean Presbyterian Church: Election, obedience and contemplation. I will focus on how Ignatian discernment can be applied to the Korean Presbyterian Church from a critical and creative point of view, especially with respect to cultural aspects that exercise a strong influence.

4 Procedure of the Thesis

In Chapter 1, I will analyze the Presbyterian understanding of sanctification based on the Westminster Confession of Faith. I will illustrate the absence of discernment within the process of sanctification as envisaged in the Korean Presbyterian Church, and how this lacuna reveals the need to adapt and incorporate Ignatian discernment into this spiritual dynamic, in order to deepen the movement toward the fullness of sanctification.

In Chapter 2, I will examine the First Principle and Foundation in order to introduce Ignatian election and clarify the purpose of the creation of human beings. I will explore the meaning of “indifference” in *The Spiritual Exercises*; and will also elucidate the rules for the discernment of the spirits, the three times of election, and the two methods of election in the third time in this process. I will illustrate how Christians might observe how their election has been made during and after the procedure, and how Christians might be able to acknowledge their blind spots and inordinate attachments. This process helps Christians acquire better self-knowledge.

In Chapter 3, I will explore the value of an Ignatian spirituality of obedience, where “blind obedience” is praised as a “glorious simplicity.” I intend in this chapter to focus on some
obstacles as well as possibilities with respect to obedience. I will discuss the *kenosis* of Christ as a model of Christian obedience and self-surrender to God. This will lead to a final examination in Chapter 4 of “*Contemplatio*”, as a fundamental source of loving service. I will investigate the process of contemplation in attaining to God’s love, and how contemplation affects personal spiritual life, together with a discussion of several obstacles to understanding and achieving it, rooted in the habitual suppression of inner movements in Korean culture. I will explore the meaning of surrender and union with God through a reflection on the prayer, “*Take, Lord and Receive*.” I will then emphasize how humility is important in Ignatian discernment.

In the conclusion, I will discuss how Ignatian discernment may be integrated into Korean Presbyterian spirituality. This discernment method should prove instrumental in clarifying the doctrine of sanctification. I will indicate how election might assist Christians in discerning the will of God. Such recourse to this process will support them in their movement to attain sanctification from sin and reach holiness. Moreover, I will discuss how the Ignatian teaching on obedience facilitates the movement toward self-surrender to God. The implementation of the Ignatian approach to obedience will permit the Christian to choose and to follow the will of God out of love, not fear. Finally, I will show how contemplation crowns the entire process, enabling Christians to grow in love and in grace, thus attaining holiness and loving union with God.

### 5 Implication of the Thesis

This thesis implies the necessity of learning how to apply Ignatian discernment concretely to the Korean Presbyterian Church and to individual Christians in order to enhance their ability to choose and to act through motives of love, according to the way of Christ and of the sanctifying Spirit. This thesis intends to assist Korean Presbyterian Christians to become more focused on the purpose of creation, namely the praise, reverence, and service of God and neighbour, and the
salvation of their souls. Fulfillment of this purpose may demand of the Korean Presbyterian Church and of Korean Christians that they confront many challenges and difficulties in life in this world to the point of accepting actual poverty, shame and death. However, a genuinely intimate, loving relationship with God will enable Korean Presbyterian Christians to recognize their ecclesial duties and roles as a true vocation and self-surrender to God in praise and service.
Chapter 1
Sanctification in the Korean Presbyterian Church

The Korean Protestant Church and Korean Christians in general have been subjected to a great deal of criticism because of the discrepancy between their lives and their confession of faith. Won Gue Lee, a scholar in the sociology of religion, describes the Korean Protestant Church at present as “an unconcerned spectator to moral collapse and communal crisis in Korean society.” Jung Suk Rhee argues that the Korean Protestant Church is neither fit to safeguard her own sanctity, nor to stem the tide of secularization. As the Presbyterian Church plays an important role in the Protestant Church, Presbyterians are not above these same criticisms.

Young Shin Park, a prominent theologian, attributes the above mentioned failings to an absence of holiness in the Korean Church. He points that the inability to recognize the will of God has led to a loss of sanctification. Park indicates that the Church is enthralled by a growth policy: she focuses on the number of members, the scale of their offerings, and the size of church buildings, etc., and less on the pursuit of holiness. For this reason, he makes an incisive criticism, saying that the Korean Protestant Church must examine herself to identify whether she represents sanctity or not. Thus the Church needs to ask herself whether she is willing to truly discern the will of God and to change her way of life. A historical theologian, Dong Min Jang, urges ministers to preach the doctrine of sanctification because the reign of God must be realized in all Christians’ lives. These observations of Park, Lee and Jang, make it obvious that the Korean

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21 Dong Min Jang, *Daehwaro purru boneun Han’guk gyohoesa* II (Storytelling of the Korean Church history 2)
Protestant Church needs to examine herself without further pretext and without postponing the work of restoration of her sanctification. Loss of sanctity in the Protestant Church would certainly precipitate a spiritual crisis. That is why many Protestant theologians, church leaders and ministers, alarmed at the current grievous phenomena, appeal for the reformation of the church through self-examination, repentance and a fundamental life change toward God.22

With regard to the Korean Presbyterian Church in particular, Hong Suk Choi, a doctrinal theologian, has made a most pertinent recommendation: to return to the fundamental Biblical principles of the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), which is the doctrine at the basis of the Korean Presbyterian Church Constitution.23 Since the Bible confirms that sanctification is the will of God,24 one of its key principles is the doctrine of sanctification. Since the main criticism of the Korean Protestant Church is loss of enthusiasm in the pursuit of holiness, an examination of how the Presbyterian Church understands sanctification and how sanctification, once lost, can be restored, is crucial. For this reason, I will first investigate the doctrine of sanctification in the Westminster Confession of Faith and how it is understood by the Presbyterian Church, with some critiques from other Protestant denominations; secondly, I will look at the current state of the Korean Presbyterian Church through a survey of some works of criticism and statistics with respect to sanctification; and thirdly, I will explore the possibility of

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22 D. W. Kim, “Secularization in the Korean Church,” http://www.chtoday.co.kr/view.htm?code=CG&id=163416; J. K. Ryoo, “Deliver the Bible only a half;” http://ny.christianitydaily.com/view.htm?code=CG&id=184461; W. G. Lee, About the Korean Church, 95; Dong Min Jang, Daehwaro purru boneun Han’guk gyohoea I (Storytelling of the Korean Church history 1), (Seoul, Korea: Booheung’gwa Gaehyuksa, 2009), 30-41; D. M. Jang, Storytelling of the Korean Church 2, 229-37, 311-94; Seyoon Kim, “Han’guk gyohoeui saerowoon gaehyukeul weehayeo (For the reformation of the Korean Church),” Kidokgyo Sasang, 52, no. 12 (Dec. 2008): 48-55; Ki Hyun Kim, Han’guk gyohoeui yebaewa saenghwal (Worship and life of Korean Church), (Seoul, Korea: Yangseogak, 1984), 80-190; Seung Yon Kim, Sŏgu kyohoe ŭi mollak kwa Han’guk kyohoe ŭi mirae: Sŏgu kyohoe ŭi hyŏnsil ŭl chindan hayŏ 21-segi Han’guk kyohoe ŭl chunbi handa (The fall of the Western Church and the future of the Korean Church) (Seoul, Korea: Saengmyŏng ŭl Malsŭmsa), 1997; and Joel Park, Han’guk kyohoe irŏke tallajŏya handa (Korean Church must be changed like this), (Seoul, Korea: Parks books, 2008), 6-198.


24 “For this is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thess. 4:3); “You shall be holy, for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16). Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1989), 960, 983.
integrating Ignatian discernment into the life of the Korean Presbyterian Church as a means of clarifying the true meaning of sanctification and the very purpose of this Christian assembly.

1 A Critical Understanding of Sanctification in the Westminster Confession of Faith

The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), a fundamental doctrine of the Korean Presbyterian Church, forms the opening section of its Constitution. It consists of thirty-three chapters, which cover all aspects of Christian faith and life. Sanctification, one of its key doctrines, is found in three sections of Chapter XIII:

Section I They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection, by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened, in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Section II This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abide still some remnants of corruption in every part; whence arise a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

Section III In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.25

The WCF, as Jae Yong Joo points out, was a by-product of the political strife between the Puritan movements and the Church of England. Joo comments that the form of the WCF gives a space neither for reflection nor for skepticism. In style it tends toward excessively legalistic, definitional and obvious statements.26 Peter Toon, moreover, states that the Reformed theologians who gathered in the Westminster Abbey drove a wedge between justification and

sanctification as they “went in for precise logical distinctions and definitions… [because they] sought to provide coherent theological systems and defend them against attack.”27 In addition, the theology of WCF is affected by John Calvin’s epistemology of “Total Depravity or Total Inability of Human Beings.”28 Thus if we scrutinize the texts in Chapter XIII, sanctification appears to be realized by God and human beings effortlessly. The trust-filled conclusions, moreover, may mislead Christians rather than reinforce previous teaching. For this reason, I intend to examine Chapter XIII to find the original meaning it gave to sanctification in the light of the texts themselves and other commentaries. I will take a renowned theologian and commentator on the WCF, Archibald Alexander Hodge’s *The Confession of Faith: A handbook of Christian Doctrine Expounding the Westminster Confession* as a main reference.

Section I declares that anyone who is “effectually”29 called and regenerated is further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection, and by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them. Thus anyone who is effectually called has a new dimension, a spiritual nature created within her/him and s/he has already entered into a process of sanctification. According to Hodge, God implants not only a new spiritual nature in the subject of his grace, but God also always keep fostering and developing the subject, by the indwelling of his Word and Spirit, until the person attains the fullness of perfection. Hodge interprets the words “to sanctify” in two different senses: to consecrate, or set apart from a common to a sacred use; and to render

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29 Chapter X, on Effectual Calling, explains ‘effectual call’ as God’s free and special grace alone. By the renewal of the Holy Spirit, the person is called to answer to this call and embrace the grace: “All those whom God hath predestined unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his accounted and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ: enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.” Hendry, *Westminster Confession for Today*, 129.
morally pure and holy. Given this understanding, Hodge distinguishes regeneration and sanctification in a linear process as a gracious work of God and the eminent work of the Holy Spirit:30 “Regeneration is the commencement of sanctification and sanctification is the completion of the work commenced in regeneration.”31 To Hodge, sanctification is a definite process of effectual regeneration.

On the other hand, Peter Toon affirms that justification and sanctification are aspects of one and the same process. He explains that justification is a passing from sin to righteousness and justice, while sanctification is “a deepening participation in the divine life through the presence of infused grace in the soul.”32 Jan Rohls also understands that justification and sanctification are bound together. Moreover, he emphasizes that although sanctification is the divine gift of grace; yet an enduring conversion process is required in person’s entire life:

Justification and sanctification are necessarily bound together. Sanctification is the result of justification. Sanctification is this result, not of meritorious achievement, but of a divine gift of grace. Sanctification is that process by which Christ, through the Spirit, renews the justified sinner into Christ’s image (S 338)...Sanctification consists in repentance on the part of human beings: that is, their conversion...This conversion is not a one-time act, but an enduring process that can be described as “the dying of the old man, and the quickening of the new” (S 339).33

Rohls comprehends that sanctification is the divine gift of grace and that, at the same time, it requires personal repentance and ongoing conversion.

Section I also teaches that all saving graces from God can bring life to the soul and strengthen it, while at the same time weakening and mortifying lust within the soul. Hodge clearly comments that the “work of sanctification involves both the gradual destruction of the old body of sin, and

31 Ibid.
32 Toon, Justification and Sanctification, 41-42, 52-53.
the quickening and strengthening of all the graces of the new man, and the inward purification of
the heart and mind, as well as all those holy actions which proceed from them.”34 Hodge
emphasizes the inward means of sanctification through faith, which is a vital instrument
permitting one to experience union with Christ and fellowship with the Holy Spirit. He
elucidates the outward means of sanctification, the truth, which is revealed in the inspired
Scriptures, the Sacraments, prayer, and the gracious discipline of God’s Providence. He
underscores the passivity of the human person as crucial when God reveals the truth in the
Divine Providence of grace; yet after that point, the person’s co-operation with the Holy Spirit is
required.35 For this reason, Hodge claims sanctification is both a grace and a duty:

Thus, while sanctification is a grace, it is also a duty; and the soul is both bound and
encouraged to use with diligence, in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, all the means for
its spiritual renovation, and to form those habits of resisting evil and of right action in
which sanctification so largely consists. The fruits of sanctification are good works. An
action to be good must have its origin in a holy principle in the heart, and must be
conformed to the law of God.36

Hodge does not overlook the importance of placing inward and spiritual things first; for then,
outward and practical actions will follow as the soul devotes itself to a profound disposition and
affection of the heart for Christ.37

Section II clearly states that sanctification will be accomplished throughout the whole person, yet
imperfectly in this life. Hodge interprets “the whole person” as “the entire person” whose
intellect, affections, will, soul and body will be sanctified: Sanctification requires spiritual
illumination and enlightenment of the soul by the truth, so that our naturally sinful condition,
blindness of mind, and hardness or perverseness of heart will be sanctified.38 Yet, as section II

34 Hodge, Confession of Faith, 194.
36 Ibid., 196.
37 Ibid., 197.
38 Ibid.
declares, sanctification will not be accomplished in this life because of the presence of spiritual warfare between the flesh and the Spirit: some remnants of corruption still abide in every part of the person; thus continual and irreconcilable war between the flesh and the Spirit ensues. Accordingly, all Christians must be engaged in this unavoidable spiritual warfare.

Hodge illustrates two extreme sets of adherents to Perfectionism, who maintain different understandings of sanctification in the WCF: Pelagian Perfectionists assert that God’s law can be followed because the human being is fully able of conducting her/his own will. Thus they consider that the human person can be perfect whenever s/he pleases; and Arminian Perfectionists claim that humans can do nothing morally upright without God’s grace. They consider that even when God’s grace is provided, no human is capable of maintaining absolutely sinless perfection. Thus they insist that God has graciously lowered the demand of absolute perfection into faith and evangelical obedience.39

Hodge, however, criticizes both the Pelagian and Arminian Perfectionists because of their inconsistencies regarding free will, the nature of sin and concupiscence in human beings. He clearly understands that sin does not consist simply of wrong thoughts, words, feelings or actions. Sin brings its power to bear on a level far below all exercise of volition. Sin is deadness to divine things: on their own, humans are unable to change their blindness, hardness of heart and aversion to God, because they are corrupted in nature. Hodge specifically pinpoints concupiscence as a spontaneous and persistent tendency toward evil in the heart of Christians that must be an occasion for self-abhorrence and confession.40 For this reason, Hodge observes that even the true believer will carry the burdens of sin until the hour of death. He reviews the word “perfect” with reference to the biographies and testimonies of David, Noah, and Job in the Scriptures. He

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39 Ibid., 198.
40 Ibid., 199.
sees that “perfection” in these instances describes, not a sinless person, but one characterized by comparative excellence or genuine sincerity in his profession and service of God.41

Section III concludes that the corruption that remains may prevail for a time, yet saints grow in grace and are strengthened and advance in the perfection of holiness, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, until they are rendered perfect at death. Hodge keenly observes that Christian “sanctification is a work of God’s free grace in execution of his eternal purposes of salvation.”42 He argues, however, that Christian sanctification involves not only God’s inward grace but also the Christian’s response to that grace: thus sanctification will reach fulfillment through the Christian’s outward duty of devotion, the practice of spiritual renewal and the development of spiritual habits of resisting evil in concrete action.43

George Stuart Hendry also clarifies the meaning of “holy” in terms of belonging to God by the transforming power of the relationship itself. His opinion is close to that of Hodge; Hendry asserts that we are not in a state of pure passivity in this process. Rather, the grace of God calls us into “responsible decision” and “responsible obedience.”44 He stresses that sanctification “consists in the gradual transformation of the sinner into a saint through progressive emancipation from subjection to the sinful impulses of human nature and through growing devotion and dedication to the new life to which the Christian is called.”45 A call to holiness, that is, to doing the will of God, is clearly revealed in the Bible. Thus a devotion to holiness is an inevitable duty for all Christians. More practical exercises of responsible choice and obedience to God will lead us to attain Christian sanctification.

41 Ibid., 200.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid., 195-97.
45 Ibid., 144.
Some criticism of the Presbyterian understanding of sanctification has been made. In *Christian Spirituality*, each of the five scholars offers an individual perspective on sanctification and is then criticized by all four others from their different Christian standpoints.\(^46\) Thus it is valuable to review how a Reformed scholar, Sinclair B. Ferguson, maintains his understanding on sanctification and how the other scholars debate his opinion. Ferguson attributes two central features to sanctification: Jesus Christ himself is our sanctification and union with Christ is its accomplishment. He affirms that sanctification is realized by the ministry of God’s Spirit and the exercise of the believer’s faith through death to sin and life in God. He acknowledges that the Christian life is a progressive pilgrimage on which the Christians must be aware of the presence of an inevitable Holy War.\(^47\) As Ferguson emphasizes that the Biblical teaching on sanctification appears in both the indicative and the imperative moods, his perception is identical with that of Hodge: sanctification is God’s grace and, at the same time, a human duty:

> It should now be clear that in Reformed theology sanctification is by no means a mystical experience in which holiness is ours effortlessly. God gives increase in holiness by engaging our minds, will, emotions and action. We are involved in the process. That is why Biblical teaching on sanctification appears in both the indicative (“I the Lord sanctify you”) and the imperative (“sanctify yourselves this day”)…Christ’s work and our response of faith; God’s grace and our duty."\(^48\)

Ferguson also claims that the Word, God’s Providence, fellowship in the Church and the Sacraments are working together to accomplish our sanctification.\(^49\)

However, Gerhard O. Forde, a Lutheran theologian, criticizes Reformed theology because of the lacuna that exists between accurate description and actual fostering of sanctification within it. He argues that the Reformed theology has an inadequate understanding of how to effect such things


\(^{47}\) Ferguson, “Reformed View,” 48-63.

\(^{48}\) Ibid., 67-68.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., 68-74.
evangelically. For this reason, Forde points out that the early Reformers, particularly Luther, were not simply naïve. He claims that Lutherans are spiritually aware of human foibles and failings; accordingly, they recognize an absolute necessity of a continuing application of the law in their lives.  

A Wesleyan, Laurence W. Wood, explains that Wesley saw sanctification as perfect love for God: God’s holy love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Wood considers that the primary ethical-relational dimension of sanctification starts from the decisive intention of the heart toward external performance and behavior. A Pentecostal, Russell P. Spittler, comments to Ferguson that all believers would recover their true holiness, and thus change their lifestyle, if they considered that their sanctification begins from the heart.

A certain contemplative tradition agrees with the Reformed that the heart of sanctification is God’s grace. Contemplatives are also very conscious of the presence of “holy war” in the Christian pilgrimage. E. Glenn Hinson observes that prayer involves attentive listening to God through Scriptures, experiences, communion with others and the Sacraments. Hinson, however, passes judgment on the optimism of the Reformed view of sanctification, inasmuch as it leaves out of account the fallenness of humanity. Hinson understands that the full attainment of holiness requires an inmost personal desire and willingness to surrender oneself fully to God. He asserts that contemplation, being drawn closer to God, is essential to attain Christian holiness. He explains contemplation as personal “loving attentiveness to God,” and a response to God’s grace. Ferguson and his critics provide a more developed understanding of sanctification as God’s grace working through our loving response in faith.

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52 Spittler, “Pentecostal Response,” 89-91.
54 Ibid., 172-74.
According to Thomas Aquinas, it is impossible for any creature to cause divine grace. Aquinas distinguishes God’s sanctifying grace as operative and cooperative grace: God is the sole mover to will what is good in operative grace, and in cooperative grace God helps us to act upon that good will. Thus sanctification, transformation of inward will and outward action must be understood in relation to God’s grace. In reviewing the doctrine of sanctification in the WCF, we also found that sanctification is God’s grace and, at the same time, the duty of each individual. The word, “duty” here does not mean meritorious human action, but the ability or willingness to respond to God’s grace.

Holmes Rolston, a contemporary theologian of the WCF, declares, the “power of choosing is but the power to answer to the call of grace” and, he emphasizes that the power of choosing comes from “not a power in himself, but a power in God.” On our road to sanctification, awareness of the limitations in human nature and the presence of spiritual warfare are crucial. Moreover, radical ongoing conversion and total surrender to God are vital factors for Christian sanctification. For this reason, I would like to examine the current state of the Korean Presbyterian Church and how it perceives the role of sanctification in the life of the Church in order to ascertain where it requires an ongoing conversion and surrender to God.

2 The Current State of the Korean Presbyterian Church

Sanctification is to be considered the hallmark of Christian identity. The Korean church, however, is putting an unbalanced emphasis on justification by faith, compared to sanctification. Emphasis on “justification” tends to lead Christians to perceive their salvation as coming solely from God; meritorious human efforts or works are therefore irrelevant. Sung Duk Lee criticizes

56 Holmes Rolston, III, John Calvin versus the Westminster Confession (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1972), 94.
the Church’s failure to promote sanctification. Lee perceives sanctification a consequence of justification, which must be expressed in loving deeds and the obedience of faith.57

Moreover, unbalanced teaching on justification and sanctification has produced many erroneous beliefs regarding sanctification. Jung Suk Rhee, a systematic theologian, enumerates three fallacies surrounding sanctification within various traditional religious approaches in the Korean Protestant Church: disciplinary sanctification, fatalistic sanctification, and mystical sanctification.58 Disciplinary sanctification repudiates sanctification without human cooperation. It accepts the Triune God as the Sanctifier but rejects any notion that God plays the sole role, much in the manner of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. J. S. Rhee explains that Koreans are very familiar with self-disciplinary teachings because of the long history of traditional Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Thus adherence to disciplinary sanctification makes Christians pursue an enthusiastic commitment to external disciplines as a demonstration of their sanctification: regular attendance at church worship services, Scripture reading, Bible study, prayer and fasting, practice of good deeds and generous offerings, etc.59 These Christians consider sanctification will be attained as they eagerly discipline themselves.

Fatalistic sanctification has been developed by the dogmatic Presbyterians, the majority of the Christians in the Korean Church. Presbyterians strongly emphasize Calvinistic predestination. Since their election and justification have been predestined, they consider that God has also predetermined their sanctification. Furthermore, they presume that their sanctification will not affect their salvation. This concept has a close relation to “karma” in Buddhism and “fate” in

59 Ibid., 129-33.
shamanism. In the name of faith and the will of God, these Christians shift their responsibility and duty regarding sanctification onto God. This belief hinders Christians from devoting themselves to a life of holiness.

Mystical sanctification reckons that salvation is given through faith but will come to fulfillment by a second grace, “baptism of fire.” Pentecostals believe that sinful human nature will be consumed by the baptism of the Spirit, and that without it, Christian sanctification will never be realized. Human free will or effort is irrelevant to sanctification in their view. For them, the most important obligation is to maintain an openness to receive the “baptism of fire” through ardent prayer and longing. They presume that sanctification is equivalent to an ecstasy. Yet, pursuing the baptism of the Spirit without discretion might mislead Christians into blind devotion and over-reliance on charismatic movement groups or leadership.

These three fallacies hinder Christians from finding the true essence of sanctification and may lead them to chaotic confusion. In fact, however, these fallacies appear to be common to all Protestant Churches. For this reason, J. S. Rhee calls on all Protestant Christians to reflect seriously on sanctification. He concludes that an embodiment of true sanctification is an impossible task without eliminating these fallacies. Thus it is necessary to examine the current state of the Korean Protestant Church with a brief observation of the history of the Korean Presbyterian Church in order to explore whether change is necessary.

Protestant Christianity in Korea began at the end of nineteenth century with the arrival of missionaries. Dong Min Jang reports that the Korean Protestant Church experienced remarkable growth after Independence in 1945 until the 1980s. He states that the church grew every year by

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60 Ibid., 133-4.
61 Ibid., 134-6.
62 Ibid., 137.
fifty percent between the 1960s and 1970s.\textsuperscript{63} Prior to this noteworthy church growth, Yong Kyu Park, a historical theologian, states that there were spiritual awakenings in Wonsan City (1903-1906) and the great revival in Pyungyang City (1907). He reports that as the Christians repented, their way of life changed radically. During the time when these spiritual revivals were taking place in many cities, the national sovereignty of Korea was completely violated by the coerced Japan-Korea Protectorate Treaty in 1905. Koreans underwent political, economic, social and spiritual devastation. In the midst of that predicament, nevertheless, in 1910, two major denominations of the Protestant Church, the Presbyterians and the Methodists united and together they proclaimed the Gospel, moved by utmost ardor: “A million souls for Jesus.”\textsuperscript{64}

Y. K. Park affirms that spiritual revivalism influenced social changes: hospitals, seminaries, mission schools, and Christian service organizations were founded. Park states that these early Christians’ standard of values had been transformed by thorough Bible studies, prayer and repentance; they eagerly searched for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to practice their understanding of the Word into action.\textsuperscript{65} D. M. Jang also asserts that the early Christians were actively involved in securing the independence of Korea and they endeavored to equalize social classes.\textsuperscript{66} Under the many convulsions of social conditions in Korea, such as Japan’s colonial rule (1910-1945), the Liberation of Korea (1945), and the Korean War (1950 to 1953), etc., many Christians were persecuted, imprisoned, and even martyred.

Despite those challenges and difficulties, the Korean Presbyterian Church experienced tremendous growth until the 1970s. Behind this remarkable growth, however, the “Korean

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{63} D. M. Jang, \textit{Storytelling of the Korean Church} 2, 342.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 541-655, 662.
\item \textsuperscript{66} D. M. Jang, \textit{Storytelling of the Korean Church} 1, 167-226.
\end{itemize}
Presbyterian Church” had a shameful history of schism. Under Japanese imperialist rule, the Korean Presbyterian Church and its members were faced with a difficult decision: should they worship at the Japanese Shinto shrine against their Christian faith, or else suffer imprisonment or death for refusing to do so? The Church was sharply divided on the issue: many of its leaders and members submitted to pressure and worshiped at the shrine, while others strove to keep their faith.67

According to Young Jae Kim, the Korean Presbyterian Church started to divide from 1952. After the restoration of Korean independence, the Koryo group, which had exercised its veto against Japanese worship, urged the other church leaders and Christians to confess and repent of their grave sin of idolatry. The other groups who had vested rights, however, denied and excused their sin. They, moreover, excluded the Koryo group from the main Presbyterian Church. Inevitably the “Koryo group” chose to set up an independent Presbyterian denomination in 1952. In the following year, 1953, the “Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea” separated from the “Korean Presbyterian Church” on theological issues. In 1959, the “Korean Presbyterian Church” was also divided into “Tong-hap (unity)” and “Hap-dong (union)” on the ecumenical issue of joining the WCC (World Council of Churches). After this point, the Presbyterian Church has experienced countless, consecutive break-ups.68

The Presbyterian Church is one of the main denominations in Korea. According to the Christian Council of Korea, among the sixty-six registered religious denominations, there are fifty-four Presbyterian groups divided from the main Korean Presbyterian Church as a result of various controversies: conservative, constitutional, reformed, radical unified, union, united, or united...
conservatives, etc. Currently, as Nak Heong Yang deplores, the number of the Presbyterian denominations has reached an extreme, exceeding one hundred and ten groupings.

Y. J. Kim observes that the root of schism within the Korean Presbyterian Church is her disregard of its sin of idolatry and its omission of repentance. Kim is keenly aware that this refusal of repentance makes it insensitive to its guilt and to ethical consciousness. D. M. Jang maintains that “the different world” in which Christians lived caused an extreme schism in the Korean Presbyterian Church. Jang reproaches the Church leaders’ lust for power to keep their vested rights which lures them away from repentance of their sin. If a person clings to a worldly value more than to a spiritual value, it prevents that individual from seeing her/his weak points and vulnerable areas, thus hindering repentance. In Christian lives, repentance is very important because without it we cannot experience God’s love and grace in depth.

W. G. Lee reports that the Korean Protestant Church fell into a state of stagnation from the middle of the 1980s. Lee’s reproach is that the Church’s displacement of its goals is a source of dysfunction. The desire for church growth justifies any and every means: Gospel proclamation is turned into a product of merchandise to attract people; by emphasizing vertical faith in God, the Church has neglected holiness and love for neighbor; excessive individualism within the Church generates collective selfishness; a twisted sense of material values has inclined the church to overlook qualitative growth; indiscriminate expansion of the church has accelerated the break-up of the Church into numerous denominations; and focusing on church growth and evangelization


70 Nak-Heong Yang, “1960 Nyundae hyundae jangrogyo ‘Seungdong cheuk’ gwa ‘Koshin cheuk’ui ‘Hapdong’ee jaebonriei cereun gwajeong (The process of the separation of “Hap-dong” which is the union between Presbyterian “Seungdong side” and “Koshin side” in 1960’s),” Han’guk gidokgyowa yeoksa, no. 27 (Sep. 2007): 141.

71 Y. J. Kim, “Korean Church’s confession of conscience,” 227-30.

72 D. M. Jang, Storytelling of the Korean church 2, 149-247.
makes it avert its eyes from serving its social community. These criticisms and an unfavorable attitude toward the Protestant Church have been revealed on surveys and statistics.

In a non-religious survey, the Protestant Church was marked lowest (12.3%) in terms of a friendly image, while the other religions, such as Buddhism (37.4%) and Catholicism (17%) were relatively high. W. G. Lee indicates that this unfavorable impression of the Protestant Church not only slowed down growth, but also led to a loss of public confidence in it. The negative image toward the Church was also expressed in a decline in the number of Protestants. Statistics Korea reveals that the total population of 2005 has increased by 5.6% (from 44,554,000 to 47,041,000) and religious adherents by 10.05% (from 22,598,000 to 24,971,000) in comparison with 1995. Despite that general increase, however, the number of Protestant Christians decreased by 1.06% (8,616,000 from 8,760,000), while the number of Catholic Christians increased incredibly by as much as 74.04% (from 2,951,000 to 5,146,000).

The Catholic Central Council of Korea, however, announced that the total number of Catholic Christians increased 35.23% (from 3,451,266 to 4,667,283) between 1995 and 2005. Young Ho Bae, a director of Han’guk samok yeonguso [Catholic research centre for pastoral ministry], observes that this gap occurs because Statistics Korea listed self-identified Catholics, whereas the Catholic Central Council of Korea specified baptized Catholics. We cannot simply judge

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73 W. G. Lee, Reality and Prospect, 190-95.
75 W. G. Lee, Reality and Prospect, 196-97.
77 Kyong Hwan Oh, “Catholic shinjaui gwalmokhalmanhan jeungkawa geu yoin (Remarkable growth of Catholic Christians and its cause),” in Cho, Sung Don and Jae Young Jeong, 30, 40.
78 Young Ho Bae, “2005 nyun Han’guk cheonjoo gyohoe tongguye reul balpho hamyoy (Having an announcement the
the current state of our churches by statistics alone, yet it is necessary to find reasons for the decline of the Protestant Church while all the other religions have increased.

W. G. Lee pinpoints an absence of qualitative maturity in the Protestant Church as one reason. Hong Kwan Kim censures the serious individualistic trend in the Church, which leads her to spend the most of her budget for management and maintenance. He also criticizes how much the excessively traditional Confucian culture has influenced the development of a patriarchal leadership structure and the church’s attachment to material and economic growth accelerates an institutionalization of the church, thus alienating the church from the society.

In a word, D. M. Jang admonishes the disgraceful behavior of the church over the course of history: the omission of repentance on the issue of worshiping at the Japanese Shrine; the deep-seated disease of schism; the honeymoon relationship with the military dictatorship; and the loss of vision with respect to the glory of the Cross and the Resurrection. Seyoon Kim, a theologian at Fuller Theological Seminary, frames his condemnation in terms of certain typical slogans in the Protestant church: “Scripture alone” (Sola Scriptura), “Christ alone” (Solus Christus), “by grace alone” (Sola Gratia) and “by faith alone” (Sola Fide). He reproaches the current doctrinal absurdity and distortion of the Church both in Korea and the North America. S. Kim fervently recommends that the Korean Protestant Church seek a second Reformation through repentance, development of theology, proper education of ministers, proclamation of the Gospel, enhancement of a life-giving spirituality, and a summons to all Christians to live according to the.

79 W. G. Lee, Reality and Prospect, 197-98.
80 H. K. Kim, “Renewal of the Korean Church,” 263-7; and Y. J. Kim, “Korean Church’s confession of conscience,” 218.
81 D. M. Jang, Storytelling of the Korean church 2, 358-65, 388-94.
Gospel.\textsuperscript{82}

Despite these censures, however, the Protestant Church and Christians are apt to keep silence or remain apathetic toward criticism either because they are overwhelmed by the church managements or they are in despair regarding the present state of the Church. As Joel Park indicates, renewal of the Church means giving up our traditions, stereotyped ideas, or vested rights of managements in order to return to Biblical principles.\textsuperscript{83} Renouncing authority, fame, and wealth requires much courage because it will cause a great deal of trouble and pain; it will be experienced like a death. However hard it may be, reformation of the Presbyterian Church is an indispensable and urgent issue.

Furthermore, as we have reviewed, Confucian teachings and traditions, the principal ethos of Korean society, are deeply rooted not only in people’s values, symbols, laws, and institutions but also in the Church. J. S. Rhee also claims that Confucian teachings have greatly influenced the Christian understanding of sanctification, and of self-discipline.\textsuperscript{84} The teachings of Confucianism are noble and worthy of practice. However, when the essence and true meaning are overlooked, they also have an effect of repressing or restraining human feelings and desires.\textsuperscript{85} Among the systems of Confucianism, patriarchy is perhaps the most pervasive. It endows the father of the family with an authority that requires absolute obedience of all family members. Thus discernment is considered unnecessary because almost all decisions are made by the father. The only duty of his children is absolute: unquestioning obedience to the patriarch. Furthermore, children must observe certain proprieties towards their father; the result is a distant, strained

\textsuperscript{82} S. Kim, “Reformation of the Korean Church,” 48-55.
\textsuperscript{83} J. Park, \textit{Korean Church must be changed}, 8.
\textsuperscript{84} J. S. Rhee, “Understanding sanctification,” 129-33.
\textsuperscript{85} Dong Hee Lee, “Han’guk yoogyoui hyundaejeok kwaje (Contemporary task of the Korean Confucianism),” \textit{Yoogyo Sasang Yungoo} vol. 24 (May 2005): 168.
relationship. Kang-Hack Lee reveals that many Christians in Korea have a distorted image of
God: a fearful, strict Father rather than a love-filled image of God.

Traditionally, under the influence of Confucianism, most Korean fathers as the heads of
families have been very strict with their children. Korean psychologist Soo-Young
Kwon observes that family dynamics in a traditional Korean Confucian culture thwarted
the development of emotional relations between a father and his children …

Confucianism in the relationships of Koreans is so prevalent, this fearful relationship
with father has not disappeared in contemporary Korean society, including in Christian
communities. The God image as a strict father, influenced by Confucianism, tends to
hinder Korean Christians from having an intimate relationship with God.86

This distant relationship with God also has an influence on the relationship with self and others.

For this reason, many Christians experience difficulty in building a free and loving relationship
with God. Hence finding their true identity as beloved sons and daughters of God will prove to
be a most significant experience for Korean Christians. Taking into consideration these many
criticisms and suggested solutions, and in order to overcome the limitation of Confucianism, I
would like to research the possibility of an application of Ignatian discernment to the life of the
Korean Presbyterian Church as a way to enhance the doctrine of sanctification through loving
service of God.

I think that all Protestant Churches and all Christians need to remember that the seemingly
severe attacks or bitter criticisms against the church are not born of hatred, but out of deep
affection and love toward the Church. These critics have a deep yearning for a restoration of the
Church and individual Christians. The Protestant Church may neither attain Christian holiness
easily nor observe the result of proposed reforms quickly. Yet the Church needs to start changing
her present way of life to follow the way of Christ. For this reason, a continual reflection or
examination of the heart in discernment is essential to renew Christian holiness and restore a
genuine relationship with self, others, and God. Moreover, a long term practice of holiness must

follow on repentance if these benefits are to endure.

3 Ignatian Discernment: A Necessity in the Korean Presbyterian Church

We have seen that the WCF issues a call to the Korean Presbyterian Church to ardently pursue sanctification; however, examination of the present state of the Church reveals many lacunae that are an obstacle to the pursuit of this ideal. Wherein lies the path to renewal of the Korean Presbyterian Church? According to section II and III of the doctrine of sanctification, it is inevitable for all Christians to face continual and irreconcilable warfare between flesh and the Spirit. It declares that sanctification will not be accomplished in this life. Yet in the final pages it asserts that we will attain perfect holiness because of the continual supply of the sanctifying Spirit of Christ.

This whole chapter, however, neither explains how Christians are to conduct spiritual warfare nor how they can grow in grace and attain holiness. The commentators and theologians of the WCF further develop this concept of Christian sanctification; yet they still leave the Church and individual Christians with insufficient detail regarding how and why. How can we face spiritual warfare in order to practice spiritual renovation? How can we or why should we resist evil and follow the sanctifying Spirit of Christ through our responsible choices and responsible obedience? And how can we, or why do we respond to God’s grace to grow in holiness as we serve and love God and God’s people? To ask how and why is to call for discernment in spiritual life.

Ignatian discernment is a unique approach to discerning the will of God: not only in repentance, discernment of the spirits, or the task of decision making, but also in helping to discern our authentic vocation in God as an outpouring of grace and love inviting us toward union with God.
David Lonsdale indicates Christian discernment is choosing life over death and choosing God: to have a disciple’s ear; to let God reign over both personal and communal lives; and to allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit according to the Paschal mystery of Christ: Incarnation, life, death and Resurrection. Through the prayer of meditation and contemplation, Christians are able to listen to self, others and God more attentively. Ignatian discernment also allows Christians to confront their blind spots. From this encounter with their weaknesses and limitations, they can discern the movement of the Holy Spirit and, strengthened by it, to choose and follow Christ and union with God.

For this reason, I will examine Ignatian discernment to discover whether it is possible to apply it to life in the Korean Presbyterian Church and so assist Christians to respond more attentively to God’s grace and grow in holiness. Since I cannot discuss all aspects of Ignatian discernment in this paper, I will focus on three key elements of Ignatian discernment: election, obedience, and contemplation to attain God’s love (contemplatio). Learning and practicing these three key elements should prove very helpful to the Korean Presbyterian Church, where election could be confused with a lack of faith or virtue; where forced obedience might induce either blind obedience or a rebellious reaction; and where coercive obedience in family life may impel Korean Christians towards a distorted image of God, making it difficult for them to contemplate God’s immeasurable love and grace. Clear discernment could ease the way to reconciliation on many other issues that have divided the Church. Discernment could open the way to a richer and fuller spiritual life, growth in the holiness, which the WCF is seeking. Contemplation will crown this search for true holiness by permitting Christians to enter into an experience of God’s personal love for each one of them.

87 David Lonsdale, Listening to the Music of the Spirit (Norte Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1992), 49-58.
Chapter 2
Ignatian Discernment in the Korean Presbyterian Church

At times when Christians face major or even minor life decisions, a discernment must be made whether they are conscious of many aspects of discernment or not. Ignatian discernment guides Christians to focus on God’s will, on their authentic desire, on useful methods of discernment, and on the consequences of the decision-making through prayer, meditation and contemplation.

Karl Rahner defines “the Spiritual Exercises”88 as “nothing but an election or choice.”89 Bernard Lonergan characterizes the SpEx as “a practical manual on a method of cooperating with grace.”90 Christopher Spalatin reckons that the Ignatian spirituality in the SpEx disposes a person to accept God’s invitation freely and generously to be ready for a vocation of service toward the greater glory of God. He observes that the success of the Exercises wholly belongs to God’s grace and the person’s generous response to that grace.91 As Rahner, Lonergan and Spalatin observe, Ignatian discernment guides Christians to discern God’s will and their authentic desire in God. They attain holiness as they generously respond to God’s grace.

However, attaining holiness might be misconstrued as Christians take the initiative of that process. George A. Aschenbrenner clearly points out that the initiator of holiness is not human beings but God: God composes and tells “the story of holiness in the ongoing creation of our universe and of our human hearts. In Jesus, God also invites us to play a unique role in that story of holiness.”92 According to Aschenbrenner and Spalatin, God takes the initiative in Christian holiness. Therefore, in the presence of God’s invitation, human being’s ability to respond to

88 Hereafter the Spiritual Exercises will be cited as SpEx.
God’s call to holiness for the greater glory of God is crucial. In this chapter, I will examine the most important point in Christian discernment, which is to overcome many obstacles and difficulties in order to discern well. On these grounds, firstly, I will reflect on the meaning of the First Principle and Foundation, a brief description of the purpose of creation of human beings with a special concern for “indifference.” Secondly, I will introduce the procedure of Ignatian discernment: discernment of spirits, three times of election, two methods of election in the third time, and the importance of confirmation. I will therefore discuss different spiritual movements and their methods here. I will cite the fundamental reason for discernment and discuss how Christians might discern effectively.

1 The First Principle and Foundation

The SpEx guide Christians to choose and to follow the way of Christ through a series of vocal and mental prayers, meditation, examination, and contemplation. Contemplation on the life of Jesus, the incarnation, hidden life, the Passion, and resurrection is the major factor in the SpEx. In the process of contemplation, a person is more united with Christ and drawn to God as one discovers God’s will and one’s true self in God’s love, discerning one’s way toward the goals of God’s glory and salvation of one’s soul.

The First Principle and Foundation remains as a basic point of reference throughout the SpEx and its role has been valued. Michael Ivens appraises the PF as an expression of a “radical God-centeredness, a desire simply that God be God and that his purposes be realized” and he values it as “the groundwork of the whole moral and spiritual edifice of the Exercises.” Furthermore, Joseph A. Tetlow also says that the PF elicits and creates each person’s authentic desire. He

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93 Hereafter the First Principle and Foundation will be cited as PF.
94 Ivens, Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, 25, 29.
writes that it helps a person to apprehend the real meaning of “God’s will” and “divine providence” in a positive way.\textsuperscript{95} Jules Toner claims that the object of Ignatian discernment is to find God’s positive will for the greater glory of God in us and for our ultimate greater happiness.\textsuperscript{96}

The expression, “God’s will,” however, might give a false image of God to Korean Presbyterian Christians who have been formed in a Confucian culture. According to David Lonsdale, “God’s will” highlights the harsh masculine image of God and restricts a soul instead of liberating it. Thus he changes “God’s will” into “God’s desire”: God desires us to be free from the bondage of sin, blindness, fear, and desolation, which blocks communion between humans and God.\textsuperscript{97} Scott Lewis writes of “God’s project” and of the “continual outpouring of God’s love and personal concern for the individual.”\textsuperscript{98} In this respect, the will of God then signifies God’s outpouring love and concerns for the individual human being. From this basic understanding on “the will of God,” I will continue to examine the purpose of creation of human beings and to discuss the significance of indifference.

1.1 The Purpose of Creation of Human Beings

The PF states the purpose of creation of human beings is to praise, reverence, and serve God for the greater glory of God and salvation of her/his soul [23]. It defines who we are in relation to God. St. Ignatius clarifies that God is the creator and humans are God’s creatures. He also frequently repeats the purpose of creation of human beings in the PF and in the SpEx. The most

\textsuperscript{97} Lonsdale, \textit{Music of the Spirit}, 65, 75, 99.
important aspect of discernment for Ignatius is whether our decision and action are attuned with “the end” or not: Do I choose and act for the greater praise, glory, reverence, and service of God and for the salvation of my soul?

If one focuses on the purpose of creation of human beings, one’s spiritual stance must be examined. For example, do I prefer a distinctive life situation in a society or not, such as health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short life? The PF declares that “[our] one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created.”

Luigi Rulla claims that discernment helps to find our inordinate attachments. For this reason, he encourages us to focus more seriously on the unconscious mind because our lack of freedom creates an inconsistency between conscious and unconscious, which makes discernment difficult.

Through meditation on the PF, we may recognize our inordinate attachments, blind spots, and areas of enslavement, where healing and growth are needed. Those inordinate attachments hinder our discernment. Therefore, if we recognize our blind spots and areas in which we are enslaved to inordinate attachments, we will gain freedom to follow our deepest desire in God.

Rulla explains that objective sanctity corresponds to the degree of subjective sanctity of an individual. According to him, personal capacity to respond to God’s grace and psychological disposition may differ according to each individual’s inconsistency and fettered areas:

Subjective dispositions in living religiously (subjective sanctity) correspond to the extent to which, de facto, the individual makes use of the free capacities and possibilities received from God. Objective dispositions (objective sanctity) are constituted not only by the capacities of the individual, but also by those that are not free, yet that could be rendered free. Thus objective sanctity corresponds to the degree of sanctity an individual would have if all his capacities were free and fully used.

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99 Ibid.
influence the degree of freedom with which the individual is disposed to the action of grace. Therefore, objective sanctity depends in an “extrinsic” way on psychological dispositions.\(^\text{101}\)

From this description, discernment is understood as necessarily directive of a person not only to sense her/his blind spots, unfree areas, or inordinate attachments, but also to support this person in becoming increasingly ready to dispose her/himself to God’s grace and love without reservation.

For this reason, true self-knowledge is very important in discernment. Aschenbrenner reckons that each individual discovers one’s true self through a spontaneous and proper relationship with three dimensions of self: external behavior, inner spontaneity and the core of the soul. He claims that “when these three elements are properly integrated in faith, a hidden self grown strong is exposed, always aglow with God's greater glory.”\(^\text{102}\) Among these faculties, he treasures the core of the soul because it is “the utterly unique, deepest part of every human person” where “God’s creative love is breathing the gift of life into us moment by moment, now, and on into eternity.”\(^\text{103}\) Furthermore, Aschenbrenner observes that discernment is invitation to discover the core of our soul, our true selves, which are camouflaged and hidden under the various movements of external behavior and inner spontaneity.\(^\text{104}\) As he remarks, the purpose of discernment is finding our true selves as we become conscious of our blind spots, areas where our freedom is lacking and experience spiritual renewal and growth.

Timothy M. Gallagher also pinpoints the importance of personal awareness on one’s spiritual movements and patterns, through which one might gain true self-knowledge, which will be a guard against evil: “If faithful persons do discover such a pattern, they may well have identified

\(^{101}\) Ibid., 29.
\(^{102}\) Aschenbrenner, *Greater Glory*, 164.
\(^{103}\) Aschenbrenner, *Quickening the Fire*, 93.
\(^{104}\) Ibid., 85-94; Aschenbrenner, *Greater Glory*, 163.
their individual points of vulnerability to the enemy attack. In gaining this spiritual self-knowledge they are, in effect, using the enemy against [itself].”

As the PF helps us to be conscious of our blind spots and inordinate attachments, Robert L. Schmitt indicates that the awareness of areas where our freedom is lacking, even if they may dimly visible, will direct us to healing and spiritual growth: an “image or story, if it is truly authentic and from one’s depths, may point to areas where healing and growth are needed.”

From the awareness of our inordinate inclination, we can see the areas of restraint or fear, which are yearning to be free and healed. For this reason, I will review the meaning of indifference in Ignatian terms.

1.2 The Meaning of Indifference in Ignatian Spirituality

Indifference has been treated as the focal point of the PF and decision-making by many theologians. In Ignatian spirituality, indifference is not apathetic or cold-hearted. According to Michael Ivens, indifference consists in an attitude of equipoise, an affective space, and a positive desire for God and his will. To him, active indifference constitutes openness and readiness to seek and to do God’s will in appropriate moments: “The grace of indifference is a potential, to be activated when appropriate; and explicit indifference is appropriate in times when we are seeking the will of God.”

K. Rahner validates indifference as a sovereign freedom and a mystical immediacy towards God in making a concrete decision. H. Rahner understands that indifference as “a kind of removal or distance away from things that makes true vision possible and is required for a proper decision.”

Lewis looks upon indifference as a radical openness

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108 Ibid.
and willingness to imitate Jesus who is grounded in his special relationship with God.\textsuperscript{111} Yet, unless we understand that indifference, an immediate readiness and openness to God in self-disposition, is relational, we cannot understand its true meaning.

St. Ignatius believes that indifference is crucial in Christian life of discernment. As indifference comes out of a loving relationship with God, so does humility: “Humility is in fact nothing other than the love of God, but to call this love ‘humility’ is to pinpoint especially the quality of other-directedness in love, love as a handing oneself over in trust, letting God be Lord of one’s being.”\textsuperscript{112} Notably, K. Rahner distinguishes three kinds of humility with a comparison of the different degrees of indifference.\textsuperscript{113} He warns of the danger lurking in the first degree of humility and \textit{passive indifference} since the person can compromise despite having a firm resolution to keep away from mortal sin. However, K. Rahner claims that if the first degree of humility is genuine and constant, it must grow into the second degree of humility which attains a more perfect state: \textit{active indifference} that is honestly striving for “\textit{Tantum-quantum}.”\textsuperscript{114} The third degree of humility is the most perfect one. K. Rahner describes this audacious love for the Crucified Lord as a total surrender and an inviolable disposition of love for God that leads the person always to follow Christ unconditionally.

H. Rahner emphasizes that anyone who is in the states of both passive and active indifference needs to endeavor to move toward the third degree of humility from the very start: “Anyone entering upon the dangerous territory of [election] and discernment should be inclined from the

\textsuperscript{111} Lewis, “Spiritual Exercises,” FPF, 8.
\textsuperscript{112} Ivens, \textit{Understanding the Spiritual Exercises}, 123.
\textsuperscript{113} K. Rahner, \textit{Spiritual Exercises}, 197-99.
\textsuperscript{114} Its meaning is “so much as. The term in St. Ignatius’ First Principle and Foundation of the \textit{Spiritual Exercises} referring to the right use of creatures: ‘We are to use them in so far as [tantum quantum] they lead us to our last end, and be rid of them in so far as [tantum quantum] they hinder us in the pursuit of the end for which we were created.’” \textit{Catholic Culture: Catholic Dictionary}, s.v. “tantum quantum,” accessed Apr. 15, 2011, \url{http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/dictionary/index.cfm?id=36778}. 
very start towards the Third Degree of Humility – in other words, conformity with Christ despised.”¹¹⁵ In the third degree of humility, a person can choose and follow Christ as her or his authentic vocation. But how can we move forward from passive indifference to active indifference and, moreover, to the most perfect indifference in the third degree of humility? Karl Rahner confirms that we can only prepare ourselves, with God’s grace, up to the second degree of humility, active indifference, to be ready to suffer and to die with Christ whenever God calls; yet no one can live out the third degree of humility unless called to it: “The life of the Christian is necessarily a mixture of the three degrees of humility. But in the last analysis, only God decides which degree must be practiced and when.”¹¹⁶

Michael Ivens asserts that the more our hearts are truly free, the more the Holy Spirit enters into our freedom.¹¹⁷ Lewis underlines the experience of the PF enhances our dignity and freedom, thus enabling us to live in accordance with the authentic desire of our heart and soul.¹¹⁸ Moreover, Edouard Pousset states that self-surrender governs all spiritual progress and Christ’s passion was possible with the total surrender of Christ’s freedom. He concludes that freedom is a power to become oneself by oneself or the capacity to respond to God’s invitation to become the new person whom God desires us to be:¹¹⁹ Pousset states that “the more profound the subjection of my freedom is, the more God’s love will descend from above in order to unite me intimately with his Freedom.”¹²⁰

According to Pousset, the presence of Christ re-creates in us a real possibility of choosing well, but only to the degree our freedom allows. Discernment, says Pousset, is crucial because only in

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¹¹⁵ Hugo Rahner, Ignatius the Theologian, trans., Michael Barry (Great Britain: Herder and Herder, 1968), 142.
¹¹⁷ Ivens, Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, 118.
¹¹⁹ Pousset, Faith and Freedom, 9, 65, 149.
¹²⁰ Ibid., 132.
and through decisions and actions of human beings is Divine Freedom manifested in the world; and each person is guided by the direction of God’s will and becomes a new creation through the transition of the Passion.\textsuperscript{121} My decision...is an act of his freedom in me; Christ himself makes a choice in my choice, and he offers himself through my offering. His offering is the full objectivity, reality, and principle of my own. His offering has been presented \textit{once for all} in history, and it is presented \textit{anew every time} that a decision is taken in the direction of God’s will.\textsuperscript{122}

I have examined the purpose of creation of human beings and the meaning of indifference. Christians will recognize their inordinate attachments and blind spots through the meditation on the PF. They will also conscious about a necessity of repentance, healing or spiritual growth: As they apprehend their weaknesses, they perceive who they are in their relationship with God, and thus gain self-knowledge. Ignatian election guides us to discern well despite the presence of many hindrances and difficulties. Our inner fear, inordinate attachments, distraction or hesitation might hold us back from our most authentic desire to follow the will of God. In order to address these concerns, I will investigate the procedure of the Ignatian election as a spiritual growth in God.

2 Procedure within Ignatian Election

Ignatian Election is guiding us how to follow the will of God without any reservations or inordinate attachments. Following the will of God requires choice and action, but most of all, prayers are the decisive factor in Ignatian discernment. Aschenbrenner writes that the basic meaning of discernment is “to sort out” and “to separate.”\textsuperscript{123} Discerners need not only to understand their spiritual movements but also to recognize and to sort out good movements from

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 20, 68, 139, 148.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 146.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Aschenbrenner, \textit{Greater Glory}, 163.
\end{itemize}
evil movements. In this process, a person becomes set apart or consecrated for the greater glory and service of God, and is readied to suffer with Christ. Therefore, a profound relationship exists between discernment and sanctification.

St. Ignatius emphasizes the act of the intellect in reasoning and the act of the will as a way of expressing our love for God in the entire process of the SpEx [3]. Moreover, he underscores the offering of our entire will and liberty to God with magnanimity and generosity toward the Creator [5]. In his meditations on sin, Ignatius applies the use of three powers of soul: memory, understanding, and will [45-52]. In the contemplation to attain God’s love, says Ignatius, we must offer our liberty, memory, understanding, and will, to God [234]. Memory, understanding, and will are important factors in Christian discernment: The memory of Christ may guide us to imitate Christ; understanding spiritual movements may help us to discern the movements of God, and the will may facilitate the use of many valuable spiritual tactics to follow the will of God. From this consideration, I will examine the rules for the discernment of the spirits, to distinguish the characteristics of good and evil spirits, and to follow the will of God in the process of Ignatian ways of election or decision making.

2.1 Understanding the Rules for the Discernment of the Spirits

St. Ignatius distinguishes consolation from desolation as an affective personal spiritual state. In spiritual consolation, one is inflamed by the love of God and can love creatures only in the Creator and for the Creator’s sake:

> It is likewise consolation when one sheds tears that move to the love of God…that is immediately directed to the praise and service of God. Finally,…every increase of faith, hope and love, and all interior joy that invites and attracts to what is heavenly and to the salvation of one’s soul by filling it with peace and quiet in its Creator and Lord.124

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124 Ibid. 316.
Spiritual desolation is described “as darkness of soul, turmoil of spirit, inclination to what is low and earthly, restlessness rising from many disturbances and temptations which lead to want of faith, want of hope, want of love. The soul is wholly slothful, tepid, sad, and separated, as it were, from its Creator and Lord.” Jules J. Toner explains spiritual desolation as spiritual darkness and apparent absence of God. Thus a person experiences turmoil, spiritual listlessness, and attraction to what grieves the Holy Spirit in a state of utter discouragement and lethargy. Since God is ever present, however, Toner’s description indicates the person’s feeling of the absence of God. Therefore, discernment of the spirits is the most essential step for all Christians who practice the Spiritual Exercises in their daily lives.

In the Ignatian tradition, the practice of discerning spirits was consistently presented as the soundest way to be attentive, receptive and faithful to God’s Spirit and God’s will. A careful and honest observation of inner spiritual movements helps Christians to respond more sensitively. Hugo Rahner, however, points out that when a soul is ready to listen to God, Satan also unceasingly tempts the soul to go astray from God. Or, at least, he makes the soul to choose the least of good options. Rahner explains this vulnerable state as a defenselessness in the face of the power of God or Satan. In this circumstance, according to Rahner, understanding the rules for the discernment of the spirits is the most crucial aspect of Christian discernment.

Discernment of spirits is the ability to discern inner spiritual movements. Aschenbrenner asserts that discernment of spirits is equivalent to the art of holiness. If we distinguish the spiritual movement toward evil from that toward good, and follow the Holy Spirit, it helps us to be guided

125 Ibid. 317.
128 H. Rahner, Ignatius the Theologian, 149-50.
129 Aschenbrenner, Greater Glory, 162.
by God. Discernment entails many aspects of knowledge of spiritual movements. Aschenbrenner states that the rules for discernment of spirits for the first week describe how to deal with desolation [318-27]. Aschenbrenner remarks that two tactics for consolation are related to dealing with desolation. However, rules for the second week require an even more sensitive look at spiritual consolation because the temptation comes under the appearance of good. In order to distinguish true from false consolation, we must discern our spiritual movements with sensitivity. For this reason, in the remainder of this chapter I will discuss the characteristics of good and evil spirits, consolation and desolation, and discernment in times of consolation and desolation and its tactics. I will also review the three times of election, with more focus on the third time.

2.1.1 The Characteristics of the Good and Evil Spirits

St. Ignatius presents the most important lesson in discernment of the spirits as threefold: perceiving, understanding good and evil spirits, and use of tactics of receiving good motions but rejecting bad motions [313-27]. He emphasizes that this lesson is always to be applied in discernment. Hugo Rahner states clearly that a wicked spirit is appointed by Satan and a good spirit is appointed by Christ. Michael J. Buckley further explains that the good spirit cooperates with conscience and the judgment of reason, which leads to remorse and consolation, while the evil spirit conspires with imagination, which draws one to sensual pleasure and sin.

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130 “When one enjoys consolation, let [one] consider how [one] will conduct [oneself] during the time of ensuing desolation, and store up a supply of strength as defense against that day [323.10]. [One] who enjoys consolation should take care to humble [oneself] and lower [oneself] as much as possible. Let [one] recall how little [s/he] is able to do in time of desolation, when [one] is left without such grace or consolation. On the other hand, one who suffers desolation should remember that by making use of the sufficient grace offered [her/him], [one] can do much to withstand all [one’s] enemies. Let [one] find [one’s] strength in [one’s] Creator and Lord: Ignatius, Spiritual Exercises, no. 324.11.

131 Aschenbrenner, Greater Glory, 176-99.

132 Ibid., 127.

St. Ignatius writes that the second set of rules for the discernment of the spirits, from SpEx 328 to 336, requires more insights and holy sensitivity.\textsuperscript{134}

Before examining consolation and desolation, it is important to know the different characteristics of good and evil spirits. As we live in the twenty-first century, where human sciences have made rapid progress unthinkable in the time of Ignatius of Loyola, psychology helps to explain many facets of spirituality. For this reason, spiritual movements might be understood as inner psychological movements in our times. Thus, when I follow the texts of Ignatian terms on good and evil spirits, they might be understood in part as effects of inner psychological movements.

Good spirits make use of the light of reasoning and the sting of conscience to incite one to remorse [314]. The good spirits give inner movements of courage, strength, consolation, tears, inspiration and peace; they facilitate one’s spiritual journey and remove obstacles. With the help of good spirits, the soul goes forward in doing good [315]. The good spirit is mild, modest, gentle, and peaceful. The good spirit’s appearances and fruits are humble, free from distress and all vain appetite for this world, and marked by sanctity, frugality, cheerfulness, calmness, joy, spiritual confidence, rejoicing in and desire for divine things. The person experiencing spiritual consolation is filled with gladness, spiritual joy, gentleness, sweetness, cheerful readiness of heart. This person is roused to heavenly and eternal things, and such a person’s soul is a place of rest and of peace.\textsuperscript{135}

The evil spirits, on the contrary, harass a person with inner psychological movements of anxiety, afflict one with sadness, and raise obstacles backed by fallacious reasoning that disturbs the soul [315]. The evil spirit is irascible, bitter, and irrational. The evil spirit’s appearances are

\textsuperscript{134} Aschenbrenner, \textit{Greater Glory}, 189.
\textsuperscript{135} H. Rahner, \textit{Ignatius the Theologian}, 167-76.
depressing, diabolical, confusing, enfeebling and distressing to the mind, noisy, clamorous, causing trembling, anxiety, and dullness of heart together with an appetite for what is evil. The fruits of the evil spirits are disturbance in the soul, specious reasoning, sophisms, and fallacies, subtleties, continual deception, unreasonable sadness, aridity, aversion to ascetic life, and attraction to what is low and of the earth [329].136

2.1.2 Discernment in Times of Consolation and Its Tactics

St. Ignatius defines “spiritual consolation” as an interior movement in the soul, which is inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord alone:

It is likewise consolation when one sheds tears that move to the love of God, whether it be because of sorrow for sins, or because of the sufferings of Christ our Lord, or for any other reason that is immediately directed to the praise and service of God. Finally, I call consolation every increase of faith, hope, and love and all interior joy that invites and attracts to what is heavenly and to the salvation of her/his soul by filling it with peace and quiet in its Creator and Lord [316].

These fruits evoke a person’s deepest being, which lead her/him toward the Trinitarian atmosphere of the divine love. In times of consolation, a person may be drawn toward and surrendered to God:

These important consolations given to the exercitant by the Holy Spirit affect him in his deepest interiority, increase his creative self-presence, allow [the exercitant] to discover and taste the true depths of the Christocentric meditations and plunge [such a person] into the Father’s Mystery and the Holy Spirit’s love.137

Besides this understanding on consolation, Bartholomew M. Kiely speaks of “basic consolation” or “cold consolation,” which is distinct from desolation.138 He insists that this consolation can be found among many good religious people, such as monks or nuns. Though strongly felt consolations are lacking, the soul is growing rapidly in holiness, that is, in faith, hope and charity,

136 Ibid.
137 Egan, Ignatian Mystical Horizon, 122-23.
and in the sense of the importance of God; the soul is surrendering solely to God.

Although a theological question on the consolation without previous cause might be raised, St. Ignatius declares that only God can give us the consolation without deception in it [330]. Gordon Rixon expounds on consolation, referring thus to Karl Rahner and to Bernard Lonergan:

“Consolation without a cause is the inner frame of mind that does not follow from a determinate object. Consolation without a cause is the radical, unrestricted love of God which cannot be properly conceptualized.”¹³⁹ Human beings experience God’s gift of love as being in love with God. After the actual time of consolation, however, St. Ignatius warns that the soul can be formed with various reasoning, resolutions and plans, which may come from concepts and judgments, or from good or evil spirits. For this reason, he strongly urges the careful examination of movements of reasoning, resolutions, and plans before they are given full approval and put into execution [336].

In the consolation with a previous cause, both good and evil spirits can bring about consolation with different purposes: the good spirit consoles for the progress, advance, and greater perfection of the soul, while the evil spirit tempts the person to turn away from God and tries to draw the soul toward his own perverse intentions and toward wickedness [331]. Therefore, we must be aware and observe the whole course of thoughts. The evil spirit may disguise itself as an angel of light to misguide the soul, leading a person little by little away from holy and pious thoughts into hidden snares and evil designs [332]. Consequently, we must also be ready with a full tactical preparation against the attacks of the devil, because Satan always changes his tactics according to the spiritual condition of a soul. For instance, in committed souls, the devil does not work so

much by desolation as by making frequent use of false consolation.\textsuperscript{140} The devil knows the exact time and point at which to attack each soul.

Therefore, although a person is experiencing consolation, it is important to be aware of the possibility of being entrapped by different inner psychological movements. For this reason, Ignatius warns that even in the case of the consolation without any previous cause, after the actual time has ended, one must watch the whole course of consolation from the beginning, through the middle phase, and right to the very end, to verify and recognize which spirit stirs in us. One must be guard against the deceits and future attacks of the evil spirit [333-34]. St. Ignatius urges us to discern the movement of the spirits more carefully in the second week [328-36]. Discernment of the various spiritual movements is crucial in our spiritual journey. Hugo Rahner explains this with a metaphor of the “shrewd money changers”:

Because the angel of Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, and because he gives out false money as good, one must proceed here with great delicacy of feeling (siento) and thorough testing…this means that we must investigate the origin, course and outcome of the inward movement, so that one may recognize [to] which author it is to be ascribed.\textsuperscript{141}

St. Ignatius describes this through use of a metaphor: The movements of the good spirit are gentle and delightful, like a drop of water penetrating a sponge, and the movements of the evil spirit are violent and disturbing like a drop of water falling against a stone [335]. Thus we must be prudent in discerning the movement of spirits, as St. John teaches: “Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God” (1 John 4:1).

2.1.3 Discernment in Times of Desolation and Its Tactics

In spiritual desolation, the soul experiences darkness of soul, turmoil of spirit, an inclination


\textsuperscript{141} H. Rahner, \textit{Ignatius the Theologian}, 179.
towards what is low and earthly, a restlessness, all arising from many disturbances and
temptations: “The soul is wholly slothful, tepid, sad, and separated... from its Creator and Lord”
[317]. The devil uses desolation as his favorite weapon to delude the soul. Thomas H. Green
states that desolation never comes from God but from the devil.142 As we experience consolation,
we also may experience spiritual desolation.

God allows desolation for our spiritual renewal. Knowing the dynamics of desolation will be to
our spiritual profit. St. Ignatius indicates the three principal reasons for desolation: First,
tepidness, sloth, or negligence in our exercises of piety are our own fault; second, God wishes us
to see how much we will advance in God’s service and praise without the rewards of consolation
and spiritual favours; and third, God also wishes to give us true self-knowledge and true
understanding that spiritual consolation is a gift and grace of God. Therefore, without falling into
vainglory or pride, we devote ourselves more to God our Lord [322].

David Lonsdale explains the reasons for desolation, and guides us as we are not sufficiently
expert to discern the cause.143 He states that sometimes we must endure the desolation as long as
God allows it. According to Lonsdale, fatigue, burnout, stress, fear, anxiety, guilt, illness, lack of
inner freedom, weariness in well-doing, imbalance among work, prayer and leisure times,
negligence in our relationship with God, a poor self-image, and a distorted image of God are also
capable of causing desolation. Moreover, if we are unable to discover the causes of desolation,
Lonsdale advises us to trust God and believe that desolation is somehow necessary for our
spiritual growth in faith and discipleship. For this reason, he urges us to examine the patterns of
consolations and desolations, which helps us to be alert for future attacks in the early stage of
desolation.

142 Ibid., 105.
143 Lonsdale, Music of the Spirit, 90, 92.
Lonsdale summarizes some useful tactics of Ignatian teachings to deal with the destructive effects of desolation.\textsuperscript{144} Firstly, to contend with the destructive effects of desolation requires a belief that, although painful, the experience of desolation can produce good; secondly, Lonsdale suggests maintaining objectivity and clarity because the processes of desolation are often subtle and attack our most vulnerable areas, and desolation is frequently a lonely experience. Therefore, to tell a friend or a competent spiritual director about the affliction is helpful \textsuperscript{[326]}; thirdly, recognize and remember the fact that desolation is temporary and consolation will return in God’s good time \textsuperscript{[321]}; fourthly, make sure not to make any important decisions or to change any previous resolution which was made in times of consolation \textsuperscript{[318]}. To try to “persevere in patience,” intensify prayer, contemplation, reflection and penance is important, since the effects of desolation are damaging \textsuperscript{[319-21]}. Fasting, in the right circumstances and conditions, is an effective antidote to serious desolation; fifthly, be aware that desolation lures one into a downward spiral of self-deception, false rationalization, self-absorbed feelings of guilt or remorse, or into debates within ourselves which lead nowhere. Try to step back from the experience to become aware of the operation of desolation; then cling to God in faith and trust and do not be drawn into the tangled web of anxiety, argument and counter-argument \textsuperscript{[324]}. Confront desolation boldly, and focus with confidence on the love and power of God \textsuperscript{[325]}. Jules J. Toner also recommends insisting more on prayer in times of desolation until the enemy’s place is taken by holy thoughts and inspirations.\textsuperscript{145} St. Ignatius urges us to remember that although “the abundance of fervor and overflowing love and the intensity of His favors” have been taken away from us, we have God’s “sufficient grace for eternal salvation” \textsuperscript{[320]}. Therefore, in order to act against the vexations that have overtaken us, it is essential to trust the goodness of God,

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 90-92.
\textsuperscript{145} Toner, Discernment of Spirits, 163-64.
persevere in patience and hope that consolation will soon return.\textsuperscript{146}

Toner describes three practical steps in desolation. According to him, the foremost step is reflective, accurate and clear recognition of spiritual desolation: “Such recognition itself begins to deprive desolation of its power to dominate thought and action, and begins to mitigate its intensity…by reflecting on the desolation, I expand my consciousness beyond it and escape full submergence in it.”\textsuperscript{147} The second step is to keep in mind that the time of desolation “is no time at all to change purposes and decisions with which one was content the day before such desolation or the decision with which one was content during the previous consolation [Rule #5].”\textsuperscript{148}

Toner focuses most on the third step: change oneself intentionally in ways contrary to spiritual desolation. Toner comments on two underlying principles: \textit{trust-and-act} and \textit{counterattack} (\textit{agree contra}=acting against): “Trust in God and pray as if everything depended on him alone [with your actions counting for nothing]; and act as if everything depended only on your own efforts” to cooperate with divine grace and union with God, thus becoming an instrument of God; and counterattack: take initiative with God to turn around the situation of desolation by not merely resisting but by using the period of desolation as an occasion for spiritual growth for the greater praise and service of God.\textsuperscript{149} To conquer spiritual desolation, an intense and insistent prayer of petition is required:

\begin{quote}
If we are to be faithful and conquer spiritual desolation…then we must have God’s help and open ourselves to receive it by intense, insistent, persevering, trusting, pleading with [God]. Such prayer may be with or without words. Essentially this prayer is simply a desire springing from faith in God’s power, love, and wisdom, a yearning before God for
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{146} Maureen Conroy, R.S.M., \textit{The Discerning Heart: Discovering a Personal God} (Chicago, IL: Loyola University Press, 1993), 29.
\textsuperscript{147} Toner, \textit{Discernment of Spirits}, 151.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 152.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 156-61.
him to rescue us.\textsuperscript{150}

Toner also stresses the importance of examination to perceive self-knowledge. For it enables us to find the sources of desolation and to be ready to counterattack the desolation:

We need to understand what are the sources of this desolation, why we feel sad, disturbed, and discouraged, how the evil spirit is deceiving us through false premises or bad reasoning or through feelings that generate untrue thoughts. Such self-knowledge enables us to bring our present selves to the word of God to be lovingly judged by it, enlightened and healed, to be strengthened and encouraged by it in just the way we need. It enables us to know how best to counterattack the desolation.\textsuperscript{151}

Since the evil spirits deceive us, discretion is required to choose the way of Christ. Moreover, we need to examine our intentions. Thus, we can purify and direct our motivation from self-seeking to the purpose of creation of human beings. Despite our efforts to conquer desolation, it is momentous to remember that, as Toner comments, the cure of desolation comes only from God, not because of our insistence on spiritual things: “The darkness of desolation will lift when God wills…as ‘a gift and grace’ of God.”\textsuperscript{152} Therefore, whether we are in desolation or in consolation, we can always humble ourselves.

St. Ignatius further describes how the devil approaches like a woman, a false lover, or a military commander depending on the condition of the soul [325-27]: The devil comes close as a fierce, wicked woman to attack wildly the discouraged and tempted soul, yet, he draws near to the determined and fearless soul as a very feminine woman. As a false lover who seeks to hide his deceits and malicious designs as secret, the devil approaches to make the soul feel helpless and isolated from other spiritual resources and people, but once the soul exposes the devil’s deceitful suggestions and solicitations, the devil loses much of his power. The devil also assaults the soul like a military commander who investigates the weakest and the most deficient point in our

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 166.
\item \textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 168.
\item \textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 162-63.
\end{itemize}
virtues, whether theological, cardinal, or moral. In this regard, self-knowledge is important to reexamine our strength and giftedness as well as our weakness and vulnerability. This will help us to confront our inordinate attachments and find our deepest desire in God. For this reason, I will examine the Ignatian election, which is choosing a good way of life.

2.2 Ignatian Decision Making: Three Times of Election

St. Ignatius speaks of three times at which a correct and good choice of a way of life must be made. The first time is when God so moves and attracts the will of a devout soul. Then one follows the call of Christ without hesitation. Saints Paul and Matthew acted thus in following Christ [175]. Pousset describes the first time: “Such an Instant is mutual presence, and even contact, of God and the creature.” According to St. Ignatius, the second time is when “much light and understanding are derived through experience of desolations and consolations and discernment of diverse spirits” [176]. At this time, the soul is “letting itself be carried in God’s direction.”

The third time is “a time of tranquility, the eternal Instant is spread out in the delicate continuity of consciousness…What this union lacks is merely a determination: knowing what God wants for me now and deciding according to his will.” Regarding “a time of tranquility,” various interpretations have made. St. Ignatius indicates a ‘tranquil’ time as “a situation when the soul is not moved by various spirits and has the free and tranquil use of her natural powers [177]. Ivens interprets tranquility as an absence of any ‘spiritual movements’ and a freedom from all negative feelings, such as worry, anger, distress or restlessness. Yet Ivens states that tranquility needs not “imply the total absence of spiritual movements, either of ordinary or quiet consolation or slight

154 Ibid., 118.
155 Ibid., 119-20.
desolation, or of the emotional fluctuations normal in a difficult search.” Harvey Egan construes “the time of tranquility as a time of being moved by diverse spirits either to consolation or desolation but without high crests [and] without deep troughs.”

In the third time, two ways exist in which to make a good decision. The first way is to appeal to our reason [177]. Before all else, one should consider the purpose of one’s creation, that it might be more conducive to the praise, service, and greater glory of God and salvation of one’s soul. One must be in a state of indifference and balanced between alternatives, must be ready to act according to the purpose of the creation of human beings and beg God to make her/his choice more pleasing to God’s most holy will. St. Ignatius suggests the use of four columns to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of a decision and consider which alternatives are more reasonable [179-82]. According to Christina A. Astorga, “it is no longer the I that must choose; it is ‘reason’ that must ‘incline’ its will... Rational objectivity is here equivalent to the divine ‘motion’ of the other two times, and the sole concern of the I must be not to confuse it with any sensuous motion whatever.” Nevertheless, reason itself cannot guide us to discern well without having inordinate attachments. For this reason, divine confirmation is an essential process:

The most stringent cross-examining of reasons does not succeed, by itself alone...[The human being], in the best of hypotheses, is not pure reason coinciding with concrete reality; [humans remain] composed of reason (clear and universal, but always more or less abstract) and affectivity (blind and particular, but in touch with the concrete). Ultimately, certitude is there only because of an affectivity dragging along the weight of reasons. My affectivity always runs the risk of being deflected by a remnant of my inordinate desires, instead of being moved by God alone. This is why the choice.... [even] the most objective deliberation...must be extended in a prayer that offers the choice to God “that the Divine Majesty may deign to accept and confirm it” (sixth point, [183]).

158 Astorga, “Ignatian Discernment,” 123.
159 Ibid., 124-25.
Therefore, after a decision has been made, we must offer our choice to the Divine Majesty that God may deign to accept and confirm it, if it is for God’s greater service and praise [183].

The second way of decision-making in the third time is grounded in an affective perception.

“The love that moves and causes one to choose must descend from above, that is from the love of God” [184]. With great diligence in prayer, I imagine I am counseling others, and I then apply those rules to myself; one imagines one’s deathbed and the final judgment: one makes a choice after reflection and prayer, choosing what would fill one with happiness and joy on that day [185-7]. From these affective imaginations, a person can be aware of her/his deepest desire in this particular situation. Thus one might apply that counseling and prayer to her/himself.

St. Ignatius repeatedly emphasizes the necessary focus on the greater glory and service of God and salvation of our soul in the *Spiritual Exercises*. Ignatius’ firmness in that orientation is also applied in Christian discernment to becoming more holy and more like Christ. For this reason, Ignatian discernment is difficult because it is totally different from worldly standards. In order to follow the teaching, for the greater glory and service of God and salvation of our soul, Christians occasionally must choose shame, poverty, and short life instead of honor, riches, and long life. Yet if we focus and follow worldly expectations, Christians will miss the most important point. Without losing our Christian identity and keep following the Christ, we have to learn how to deal with our spiritual consolation and spiritual desolation. Moreover, between these spiritual movements, we may discern God’s will and save our soul as we listen and follow the most authentic voice in us.

When we pursue holiness, we may experience ongoing conversion at times. Paul V. Robb explains the three-fold path toward God in human conversion: Firstly, awareness of the truth of

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[160] Ibid. 185-87.
myself as sinner helps me to understand that I am longing for salvation in deep humility. Secondly, the knowledge and truth of others as they undergo personal misery give one a sense of relationship and compassion toward other human beings. Thirdly, by the experience of rapture, the soul is illumined with the truth of God. Thus, Robb writes, the completely purified soul is then made ready for union with God. For this reason, Robb encourages us to confront our sinfulness in order to discover the possibility of new life.\footnote{Paul V. Robb, S.J., “Conversion as a Human Experience,” \textit{Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits} 14, no. 3 (May, 1982): 19-20, 24.}

When we pursue holiness, we must clarify and understand why we desire to imitate the life of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, our longing for Christ will be degraded into a mere blind obedience without intimate relationship with God. St. Ignatius believes that everything is connected with God in right order. For this reason, he urges his companions not only to obey the teachings of Church but also their superiors. However, in the twenty-first century, obedience is a complicated topic in the Korean Presbyterian Church. This might be different from the understanding of obedience in the sixteenth century. Thus, in the next chapter, I will explore the meaning of Christian obedience with an emphasis on the obedience of Christ in order to learn its reason and value.
Chapter 3
The Ignatian Approach to Obedience

In the Old Testament, the fervent servants of God keep and follow the word of God with awe and fear. Currently, keeping the public laws is an inevitable duty for civilized human beings unless they want to face the costs of failing to observe them. Due to its consequences, obedience is required in specific circumstances or organizations, such as a military sector or an operating room. Obedience has been a fundamental factor both in Ignatian discernment and in Confucian culture in Korea.\(^\text{162}\) Within the Confucian culture, Korean Presbyterian Christians learned that children must obey their parents, a wife her husband, students their teachers, and subjects their sovereign.\(^\text{163}\) It seems that obedience is an automatic attitude in this structure. However, in the 21\(^{\text{st}}\) century, especially since the flood tide of individualism and egalitarianism in Korea constrain it, unconditional obedience has become strange and abnormal.\(^\text{164}\)

Although obedience is a controversial subject, St. Paul teaches that ordinary lay people are still bound to obey their authorities (Romans 13:1). According to John A. Hardon, the Letter on Obedience was written for the guidance and formation of Ignatius’ own companions who vowed religious obedience for life.\(^\text{165}\) On that account, Ignatian teaching on obedience may be inapplicable to the Korean Presbyterian Church and Christians. However, Meister Eckhart highly praises obedience as “the ‘virtue above all virtues’ and the one perfect work that gives all other

\(^{162}\) Ignatius, Letters of St. Ignatius, 288.


works their worth and fruitfulness.”  

Obviously, obedience may be viewed in different ways.

In Confucian culture, an individual renders absolute obedience to authority. This culture of strict obedience keeps numerous Korean Christians away from entering into a free and loving relationship with their own fathers and therefore with God. As we reviewed in chapter one, many Korean Christians who were bred in the traditional Korean Confucian culture, have a fearful, strict father image of God. On that ground, when an absolute or forced obedience was requested, Christians mistook spiritual leaders for “god-figures,” thus submitting to authority blindly out of fear.

Alongside this lofty concept of obedience, a new trend has been emerging rapidly as Korea has become more industrialized and exposed to Western influences. This trend has brought about radical changes not only in families and society but also in the church. Many Christians have begun to question traditional authority figures, including pastors and elders. Authorities expect absolute obedience from subordinates, while subordinates become rebellious to their coercive authority. They no longer regard submission as something given or a virtue. Congregations consider themselves stockholders in a church, who have hired a minister as a manager for their church. In addition to an antipathy towards the language of obedience, they favor equality and individual rights. In short, many Korean Christians have a questioning attitude toward obedience. Obedience out of fear or ignorance is not the obedience of Christ. I believe that the Korean Presbyterian Church and all Christians need to renew their vision and understanding of obedience in order to obtain their own sanctification for the greater service and glory of God.

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167 W. G. Lee, *About the Korean Church*, 155-64.
168 Ibid., 247.
For this reason, I will present the Ignatian understanding of obedience to find a possibility of application to the Korean Presbyterian Church, in light of a reflection on the obedience of Christ (kenosis) as a fundamental model for all Christians. First, I will discuss the Ignatian understanding of obedience. Secondly, I will examine the difficulties and possibilities relating to this Ignatian teaching on obedience. And thirdly, I will reflect on the kenosis of Christ, complete self-abandonment as a model of obedience that may be applied to the lives of Korean Presbyterian Christians.

1 Ignatian Understanding of Obedience

St. Ignatius firmly demands obedience of his companions for the greater glory and service of God. In his letter, Ignatius urges obedience not only as a way of keeping the general laws or the Word of God, but also as obedience to other human beings, especially to their superiors.169 Karl Rahner teaches that obedience is emphasized not to make merely passive subjects but paradoxically, to help Christians recognize “the creative power reserved to God alone, which He can delegate to no one.”170 According to Rahner, we have to ponder whether we are truly free to discern God’s will and whether His creative power is operative in us without being bound by any other situations or circumstances:

Are we sure that God’s grace was ever operative in us? Such an event should have been life-transforming. Yet was there ever a moment when we did not seek ourselves, when success was not the fruit of egotism, when our love of God was not anxiety, when patient prudence was not really faint-heartedness?...We act on our own but the last and most important deed will be effected in us by God Himself operating through the bitterness of life itself.171

To understand Ignatian teaching on obedience, it is helpful to look at Ignatius’ mystical

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171 Ibid., 373-74.
experience. Ignatius and his companions set out on a pilgrimage to Rome in 1537. They were filled with just one desire: “only to serve Christ: to have him as head and leader, to imitate him, poor and shamed and crucified.”\(^{172}\) Moreover, in the vision of La Storta, Ignatius experienced that he had been placed with the Divine Son and received a confirmation of this service of Christ both from the Father and the Son; God said to Jesus: “It is My will that You take this man for Your servant,” and Jesus added to Ignatius: “It is My will that you serve Us.”\(^{173}\) The final goal for Ignatius is the Father attained through the mediator, the crucified and poor Jesus. To Ignatius, “to follow Jesus in his suffering is the same as to enter into the glory of the Father.”\(^{174}\) His vision of obedience is that of a spontaneous, loving response of a servant who is fully devoted to Christ, his Lord and God.

For this reason, Ignatius expects the “glorious simplicity of blind obedience” or even the folly of obedience by his companions to their superior, as a fundamental factor in the service of God.\(^{175}\) Ignatius wants his companions to understand the full meaning of obedience: the obedience of a disposition of entire surrender, true resignation of their will and an abnegation of their judgment.\(^{176}\) Ignatius indicates that the fundamental motive for obedience is for the sake of Christ. Therefore, he emphasizes obedience not because the superior is prudent, good or qualified, but because the superior holds authority from God and represents God who has infallible wisdom and will supply what God requires of God’s minister. For this reason, he even urges a blind passion for obedience in everything except where sin is clearly involved.\(^{177}\)

\(^{174}\) Rahner, *Vision of St. Ignatius*, 100.
\(^{177}\) Ignatius, *St. Ignatius’ Own Story*, 120-121.
In his letter, “To the Province of Portugal,” which is called a letter on obedience, Ignatius presented the virtue of obedience as the most perfect spiritual gift and adornment, drawing upon proofs and examples from Scripture, the Church Fathers, and the great monastic legislators. St. Ignatius emphasizes an assertion on obedience of St. Gregory, one of the early Fathers of the Church: “Obedience is the only virtue which implants the other virtues in the heart, and preserves them after they have been so implanted.” Ignatius also characterizes obedience as a “holocaust,” a burnt offering, which is without the slightest reservation, since the soul has completely surrendered to God through the hands of superiors. He asserts that the fervent soul desires “to be possessed and governed by Divine Providence through his superiors.”

Ignatius solemnly invites a person who faces any kind of serious decision into prayer where the person is “standing before God and the whole heavenly court seeking grace to be unconditionally open to God’s will.” Moreover, Ignatius gives specific models of obedience to follow: the saving obedience of Jesus Christ, of Abraham, of the Fathers of the Church, of the Scripture traditions and of the great monastic legislators, etc. To designate our level of obedience, Ignatius describes three degrees of obedience with a consideration of the three degrees of humility in the *Spiritual Exercises*.

### 1.1 Three Degrees of Obedience

There are three series of meditations in the *SpEx*: Two Standards, Three Classes, and Three Kinds of Humility. According to Michael Ivens, the meditation on the Two Standards calls upon a soul to serve Christ rather than Satan. Ivens says that it helps the soul to choose the way of

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178 Ibid., 110.
179 Ibid., 111.
180 Ibid., 290-91.
182 Ignatius, *St Ignatius’ Own Story*, 110-122.
Christ in a ‘felt knowledge.’ Ivens states that the meditation on the Three Classes allows a soul to become aware of a personal resistance to grace and to move forward to effective indifference, towards actual poverty, towards real commitment to Christ’s way. Ivens describes that The Three Kinds of Humility challenges the soul to move into an affective degree of love which is a new level of intensity and gratuitousness, a loving commitment to Christ’s person. These three series of meditations challenge a person to move gradually from the first to the third state.

In relation to these meditations, Ignatius explains the three degrees of obedience in his letter of obedience: The first degree of obedience is just the execution of a command, which Ignatius actually does not consider worthy to be called obedience. The second degree consists in really executing the command with an interior conformity, by setting aside one’s own will and accepting the divine will as interpreted by the superior. In the third degree of obedience, which is the highest form, a person “must not only will, but think the same as the superior, submitting his own judgment to the superior.”

Regarding this third degree of obedience, Karl Rahner explains more clearly. Rahner considers religious obedience is a mere practice of willingness to obey the Person, God. He tells us that, as a religious is getting old, one not only focuses on following the will of God but also contemplates whether God’s grace is operative in one’s soul or not. Rahner believes that any order of a superior must come from the wisdom of the church since the religious constitution is approved by the church. For this reason, Rahner declares that anyone who is critical of that religious order is attacking the wisdom of the Church. However, Rahner does not maintain an authoritarian viewpoint here, rather he is centered on God. Rahner acknowledges that the focal

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183 Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 127.
185 K. Rahner, “Reflection on Obedience,” 373.
186 Ibid., 371.
point of religious obedience is neither the superior nor the subordinate but God. Thus Rahner boldly expounds that the ultimate obedience to superior is nothing but a rehearsal, a practical, loving anticipation of being absorbed in the great silence of God:

As for the ultimate obedience, which demands and silently takes everything. It will be exacted by God alone. It is the command to die the death which overshadows every minute of our life, and more and more detaches us from ourselves. This command, to move on and to leave all, to allow ourselves in faith to be absorbed in the great silence of God, no longer to resist the all-embracing, nameless destiny which rules over us – this command comes to all men…The whole of religious life grounded in obedience is nothing more than a rehearsal, a practical anticipation of this situation...Perhaps the truly obedient man is simply the lover, for whom the sacrifice of self surrender is sweet and a blessed delight.”

Our questions is how can we acquire the ultimate obedience, the obedience of love? Ignatius gives us some practical advice: First, “train yourselves to recognize Christ our Lord in any superior, and with all devotion, reverence and obey the Divine Majesty” in that person. Second, as St. Paul writes, “obey even temporal and pagan superiors as Christ, with fear and trembling, in the simplicity of your heart, as to Christ” (Ephesians 6:5). Third, “look upon the superior as the vicar of Christ our Lord.” Ignatius’ vision of holy obedience is of a holy union with Christ and other human beings. This union refers not only to subordinates and superiors but also to the heavenly bodies and their movement in perfect order in Christ towards the one Supreme Mover, God. For Ignatius, the core of perfect rectitude of intention, of walking straight before the Lord and seeking His will in all things, is conformity to God’s will through obedience to the will of superiors.

1.2 Obedience and Humility

Ignatius reckons that the degrees of humility and obedience are mutually related. St. Ignatius

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187 Ibid., 374.
188 Ibid., 122, 203.
189 Ignatius, Letters of St. Ignatius, 289.
suggests that the third kind of humility is the most perfect humility.\textsuperscript{190} For the praise and glory of God, the person desires and chooses to imitate Christ in order to be actually more like Him: “I want and choose poverty with Christ poor rather than wealth, and humiliation with Christ humiliated rather than fame, and I desire more to be thought worthless and a fool for Christ, who first was taken to be such, rather than to be esteemed as wise and prudent in this world [167].” The soul is totally open to God without self-affirmation or self-sufficiency, and experiences the upheaval of the supra-rationality of true love. Pousset describes the third degree of humility as follows:

\begin{quote}
The third degree of humility is already a sharing in Christ’s passion through love… Whatever decision is made, it will involve some degree of loving participation in Christ’s passion. That the most reasonable deliberation is carried out in light of such folly is fraught with significance: the paradox of the Christian mystery!\textsuperscript{191}
\end{quote}

The above theologians agree that a truly humble person is no longer concerned about obedience itself but, by loving and contemplating God, the person participates in Christ’s passion. For this reason, Ivens remarks that humility is another term for love: “Humility is in fact nothing other than the love of God, but to call this love ‘humility’ is to pinpoint especially the quality of other-directedness in love, love as a handing oneself over in trust, letting God be Lord of one’s being.”\textsuperscript{192}

Moreover, Ivens indicates that the characteristics of an authentic disposition towards the third kind of humility is to be found in the love of Jesus and desire to glorify God: “The third kind of humility is the love of Jesus, the wish to be identified with him, intensified to the point of folly…Its characteristic desires fall within the larger and absolutely fundamental desire that in all

\begin{footnotes}
\item[Iv\textsuperscript{190}] Ibid., 293.
\item[Pousset, Life in Faith and Freedom, 96.]
\item[191] Pousset, \textit{Life in Faith and Freedom}, 96.
\item[Ivens, \textit{Understanding the Spiritual Exercises}, 123-24.]
\end{footnotes}
things God be praised and glorified.”\textsuperscript{193} This humility arises in the soul from one’s personal deep, loving experience of Christ, and one’s simple choice of the cross. Karl Rahner describes this audacious love for the Crucified Lord as a total surrender and an inviolable disposition of love for God that leads the person always to follow Christ unconditionally.\textsuperscript{194}

2 Difficulties and Possibilities in Obedience

Ignatius does not forbid a subordinate to explain personal difficulties when a serious reason emerges for not performing the action requested by her/his superiors.\textsuperscript{195} Transparency is very important in discernment. However, most of all, Ignatius urges the person to consult the Lord in prayer to guard against the deception of self-love. Ignatius wants his companions to be completely indifferent, to be ready for whatever decision the superior makes and to consider it the best. Ignatius regards disobedience as a very dangerous temptation, even if a person is filled with apostolic fervor or stubbornness of will.\textsuperscript{196} Ignatius regards obedience as ranking first among all other pious and holy motivations of the person. Therefore, if the subordinate considers that her/his spiritual and holy motives far surpass those of the superiors, Ignatius reckons that the person is deceived and darkened, and the soul is in danger because self-love is leading the soul into perversion and delusion. For this reason, Ignatius sternly commanded that all things be done in the “house of obedience.”\textsuperscript{197}

According to St. Ignatius, the reason for disobedience to one’s spiritual fathers or superiors is pride and its consequence is vainglory.\textsuperscript{198} St. Ignatius stresses that when we fail to obey

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{193} Ibid., 126.
\item \textsuperscript{194} K. Rahner, \textit{Spiritual Exercises}, 197-199.
\item \textsuperscript{195} Ignatius, \textit{St. Ignatius’ Own Story}, 121.
\item \textsuperscript{197} Ignatius, \textit{Letters of St. Ignatius}, 289-90.
\item \textsuperscript{198} Ibid., 161, 209.
\end{itemize}
authorities, when we fail to obey willingly and lovingly, when we fail in zeal and punctuality, when we fail in the glorious simplicity of blind obedience, when we fail in humility, and when we fail in courage in difficult tasks, we fail in the perfection of obedience to God. Thus we have lost all the perfection and dignity of this virtue.199

Although the obedience today is less demanding than it used to be, many Christians in the Presbyterian Church feel a certain degree of resistance to the very word “obedience.” A mandatory “obedience” has been emphasized for children, and especially for women and the lower classes, without reasonable explanation, in the name of the prosperity of their family, of their tribe, and of their nation. On these grounds, many Korean Presbyterian Christians may not feel free to share their inner movements or thoughts. Moreover, the Korean Presbyterian Christians are unaccustomed to communicate when they have to confront some issues between authority and subordinate.

The first hindrance to obedience is fear. As I already stated, many good Korean Presbyterian Christians may have a distorted image of God. Some women experience more difficulties in having an intimate relationship with God because they have formed an image of God as one who controls human beings, like an angry father, coercive husband or tyrannical dictator. Katherine Dyckman points out that “culture and church so program women to see themselves as inferior or ‘not enough’ that they may not allow themselves the luxury of desires for fear of yet another disappointment.”200 When this cultural barrier makes Korean Presbyterian Christians think and act in stereotypical obedience because of fear, they should dare to ask themselves whether the fear really comes from God or not. An intimate relationship with God will help us to choose and

199 Ignatius, St. Ignatius’ Own Story, 117.
act according to the will of God, not out of fear.

Edouard Pousset remarks that utterly personal obedience comes about not by self-affirmation and self-sufficiency but by openness and consent to Another. Its motivation is not fear but love. In the absence of love, a dominating and subordinate relationship between superiors and subordinates might cause sacrifice and repression of one side, which is liable to engender resentment. For this reason, on the one hand, if the subordinate cannot freely accept the command of her/his superior, the subordinate must transparently present her/his thoughts and inner movements to the superior. On the other hand, the superior must listen to God and to the subordinate with patience, understanding and love.

The second difficulty for obedience is sin. As Ignatius points out, we are living in the history of sin: sin of the angels, sin of Adam and Eve, sins I have committed, and the sin of others [51-52]. Pousset states: “Sin belongs to the supernatural order, and hence [the human person] cannot liberate [her/himself] from it. If [the human person] is saved from sin, it is through God becoming present within the existence where sin has been actualized.” Pousset explains the deep-rooted presence of sin within me as a second nature, “two I’s in me.” However, Pousset asserts that where the supernatural order of sin abounds, the grace of God also abounds, which more than counterbalances the weight of sin (Romans 5:20). The grace of God enables us to choose the good by destroying the path of sin. Therefore, our sinful and painful paths become the path of God and the path of salvation by destroying our sins effectively.

The third set of obstacles is desolation. We cannot always stay in consolation or in the third

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202 Ibid., 66.
203 Ibid., 73.
204 Ibid., 67, 73, 115, 141.
degree of humility. When we are in the midst of desolation or turmoil, it is hard to be obedient or to persevere in seeing the indwelling grace and love of God as in times of consolation. When a person is in desolation, the person might experience a lack of faith, turn to self-centeredness, and become isolated from other spiritual resources. The person might neither see the Ignatian vision of the glorious simplicity of obedience nor experience the paradox of “life out of death” in times of desolation.

David Lonsdale claims deep trust in God, prudent watch over blocks and obstacles, and acknowledge and address them will help us to discern well in the midst of many emotional and psychological blocks and obstacles. To overcome the cultural barriers, the order of sin, the lack of faith and our spiritual desolation, the most basic attitude is to trust in God. “Guided and supported by grace, once the human spirit recognizes the nature of the obstacles with which it has to contend, it often finds ways of asserting its right to freedom, even in the face of the most daunting hindrances.”

When St. Ignatius went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he and his companions had to go to Padua to get a health certificate in order to take a ship to Venice because of the measures taken against the plague. They started out together, but Ignatius could not keep up to the pace of others. Thus he was left alone at nightfall in a large field near Choggia. While he was there, Christ appeared to Ignatius and strengthened him in a mystical experience. Ignatius “had a deep certainty in his soul that God must give him the means of getting to Jerusalem, and this gave him such confidence that no reasons or fears suggested by others were enough to make him doubt.” From Ignatius’ mystical experience of inner certitude and the presence of God, we may perceive that God’s

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206 Ibid., 158.
grace is greater than any obstacle for the one who totally surrenders oneself to God: “Let him desire and seek nothing except the greater praise and glory of God our Lord as the aim of all he does. For every one must keep in mind that in all that concerns the spiritual life his progress will be in proportion to his surrender of self-love and of his own will and interests” [189]. This surrender deepens and intensifies the love, changing and re-orientating the whole person.  

3 Obedience and Kenosis of Christ: Self-Abandonment

Obedience is deeply connected to a personal relationship to God. Balthasar focuses on the fact that “the source of [Christ’s] obedience is his unique relation to the Father.” Nicholas of Cusa also states the obedience of Christ to be “the most absolute proclamation to the world of God’s disposition of love.” Mark A. McIntosh remarks that “love is the only authentic core of obedience. It transforms every ‘obligation’ into a ‘choice’, and every (external) desire of the beloved becomes the (interior) desire of the lover.” According to Balthasar and Nicholas of Cusa, the loving relationship of Christ to the Father is the source of Christ’s obedience. The Kenosis of Christ, his emptying of self, holds tremendous wonders and wisdom (Phil 2.5-11). William C. Spohn stresses the cross and resurrection as the paradigm for Christian life. Spohn emphasizes that “the cross of Christ becomes theological shorthand for the whole life and ministry of Jesus; it is the succinct norm of Christian discipleship.” However, we may raise some questions: Why did Jesus Christ choose a path of kenosis, a way of the cross? What made Christ persevere in his passion and death? Was the exaltation a reward for his suffering? For this

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208 Ivens, Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, 75.
210 Ibid., 232.
212 Williams C. Spohn, Go and Do, Likewise as Jesus and Ethics (New York: Continuum, 1999), 142-145.
reason I will attempt to investigate the *kenosis* of Christ referred to as “self-abandonment (*Gelassenheit*)", by Hans Urs von Balthasar.\(^{213}\) From that understanding, I will search for the challenges and possibilities of *kenosis* in the sanctification of Korean Presbyterian Christians through imitation of the *kenosis* of Christ. First, I would like to explore the understanding of the *kenosis* of Christ within the Trinitarian context. Secondly, I will investigate self-abandonment (*Gelassenheit*) to understand a way of *kenosis*. Thirdly, I will consider the cultural aspects involved and the possibility of the way of *kenosis*.

### 3.1 Understanding the Trinitarian *Kenosis*

Balthasar never separates the *kenosis* of Christ (Phil 2:7) from the loving, self-giving and receiving relationship within the three divine Persons. For Balthasar, Trinitarian kenotic love possesses ultimate selflessness yet loses nothing; it is eternally self-giving and self-emptying in consubstantial communion.\(^{214}\) According to Balthasar, the mutual kenotic love of the Trinity is the fundamental factor in the *kenosis* of Christ: “the Father by sending out the Son and abandoning him on the cross; and the Spirit by uniting them now only in the expressive form of the separation [and absence]”; while the Son emptied himself from the ‘form of God’ and puts himself “into the expressive form of creaturely obedience to the Father.”\(^{215}\) Yet, as John Saward clearly construes, there is no oppressive and subservient obedience in the *kenosis* of Christ within the Trinity:

> The eternal decision that mankind be saved through the Incarnation and Cross is as much the Son’s decision, as God, as it is the Father’s and the Spirit’s…The inner life of the Blessed Trinity is coequal love, not domination and subservience. The archetype for obedience within the Trinity is the filial way (*tropos*) in which the Son possesses the one divine will.\(^{216}\)

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\(^{213}\) Balthasar, *Glory of the Lord* V, 216-17; and *Glory of the Lord* VII, 216-17.


\(^{216}\) Saward, *Mysteries of March*, 22-23.
Not only the mutual kenotic love but also humility is an important characteristic of the Trinitarian kenosis. St. Gregory of Nyssa claims the humiliation of the Trinity proves the grandeur of God’s nature:

All-powerful nature’s capacity to descend to the lowliness of the human condition is a far greater proof of power than the miracles of an imposing and supernatural kind…The humiliation of God shows the superabundance of his power, which is not in any way hindered in the midst of these conditions contrary to his nature… The grandeur is manifested in lowliness without being degraded by it.\(^\text{217}\)

Kallistos Ware, moreover, signifies “loving humility” as a terrible force and an immense power in Christ. He radically claims that the power of God has been maximized in the kenosis of Christ; out of love Christ ‘emptied himself’ (Phil 2:7).\(^\text{218}\) The loving humility of Christ enables him to take the most radical form of lowliness voluntarily for the salvation of human beings. Balthasar extols this loving humility of Christ as “a lover’s humility” which enables Christ to share God’s glory with human beings through the way of kenosis.\(^\text{219}\) According to St. Gregory of Nyssa, Ware, and Balthasar, obedience and loving humility are a proof of the superabundance of Christ’s power and constitute the fundamental factor of the kenosis of Christ.

### 3.2 Understanding the Kenosis of Christ (Gelassenheit)

Balthasar lauds “self-abandonment” (Gelassenheit) as the most beautiful, fruitful, and important art, both in life and in death for Christians.\(^\text{220}\) Balthasar deems Gelassenheit to be the necessary condition of a Christian transcendental aesthetic and the organ of universal receptivity: “All finite things are only truly known and received when they are accepted as the gift of the infinite Giver, who wants to give Himself in them; yet only the person who is serenely surrendered

\(^{217}\) Ibid., 34.
\(^{218}\) Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way*. Crestwood (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1998), 81-82.
Balthasar understands *Gelassenheit* not in the Stoic sense of “giving up” or “resignation” but rather it in the sense of “giving oneself over to something” or “losing oneself in a higher cause.” Therefore, self-abandonment is a much more relaxed state of trust and love.

Moreover, *Gelassenheit* is a habitual self-openness to the love of God in humility, hope, faith, and love even in the face of a potential ambiguity and an unstable path. Balthasar describes *Gelassenheit* as the patient perseverance with God and in God:

> Suffering man can rebel against it, but at a deeper level he knows that he must place himself at the disposal of the divine disposition he cannot escape. He must give himself up in abandonment (*Gelassenheit*), which is not a technique for avoiding pain (*apatheia*), but patient perseverance (*ύπομονή*)… with God and in God.  

Balthasar remarks the attitude of abandonment as a loving availability: “At the end of the prayer-agony, *disponibilité* in its fullness is re-conquered. ‘It is enough’ (*apechei*, Mk. 14.41). Now Jesus is free from every bond, whether exterior or interior.” Eckhart praises Christ’s freedom of why-less and absolute love: “The abandonment of Christ means that he freely lets God’s freedom be free in him” without self-sufficient reasoning.

Balthasar focuses on the incomparably strong bond of love between the Son and the Father, which makes *kenosis* possible: “Only one who has known the genuine intimacy of love, can be genuinely abandoned.” Karl Rahner indicates that the “cross” is the “peculiar pattern of power-in-weakness.” Rahner understands that Christ’s magnificent capacity to be put under the control of others and his immense courage to experience an actual self-abandonment manifest
the power of his extreme love.\textsuperscript{228} Christ was not moved by any motive to secure his own safety; rather he let his power and authority be controlled by human beings and God.

But how might a human person be sincere in living one’s vocation and totally abandoning oneself to God even when her/his faith is shaken from top to bottom? Tauler explains that Christians, who are grounded in the deepest self-abnegation, whose spirit has surrendered to God, can genuinely work for the Church and the world.\textsuperscript{229} Balthasar insists that Christ encountered “the darkness of an extreme love,” even when He was “in the non-vision and the naked faith of indifference through … self-abandonment.”\textsuperscript{230} Graham Ward sees Christ’s inward prayer of abandonment toward God as having been expressed in an outward movement to be a faithful suffering servant for his people: “whereas in his \textit{procession} he moves towards the Father in receptivity and gratitude, in his \textit{missio}…he moves away from Him and towards the world.”\textsuperscript{231} Christ holds the love of God in the form of obedience and, at the same time, the love of his people in self-abandonment and in humility.

St. John Ruysbroeck states that there is one constant inward and outward movement, which is a constant rest and constant activity in God through the Holy Spirit: “To go inwards in an unrestrained enjoyment, to go outwards with good works, and in both at all times to remain united with the spirit of God.”\textsuperscript{232} As Balthasar and Ruysbroeck explain, there is one constant inward and outward movement within Christ. However, there are two exterior sides of \textit{kenosis}: the crucifixion and the resurrection or exaltation. Graham Ward states that “giving and

\textsuperscript{228} Spohn, \textit{Go and Do}, 146.
\textsuperscript{229} Balthasar, \textit{Glory of the Lord V}, 58.
\textsuperscript{230} McIntosh, \textit{Christology From Within}, 64.
\textsuperscript{232} Ibid., 74.
responding are two sides of the same act of abandonment."^233

Pope John Paul II affirms that the resurrection of Christ is the Father’s response to Christ’s obedience.^234 Ward argues that the resurrection is not the result of the cross but rather the Trinitarian circulation of love swallows up death.^235 Balthasar clearly points out that exaltation has played a role in the total passivity of Christ’s death: Christ descended into the realm of the timeless and spaceless darkness of hell, but the power of God lifted him entirely into the resurrection and exaltation.^236 Spohn highlights how the descending of Christ turns into the ascending of Christ, the exaltation:

Crucifixion was the lowest form of execution, reserved for slaves and those without any rights...God responds by vindicating this one who placed himself radically in divine care. Emptying [kenosis] is met with exaltation...The goal of this entire descent-ascent is reconciling all creation with the sovereignty and glory of God.^237

Balthasar points out that death has always been a most frightening and fearul experience for human beings. However, every kenotic experience has a ‘point of death.’ Balthasar describes the death of Christ as the Son of God descending in the form of a dead man, to the lowest rung of the ‘ladder of obedience’ to conquer this last enemy.^238

The hymn at Phil 2.6-11 speaks of Jesus...The one who was ‘emptied out’ received a share in the (doxa) glory of God the Father, through the bestowal of the divine title ‘Kyrios’...the reason for his exaltation – his opening-up of the empty space through which the glory (doxa) can send its rays...[into] the space of complete poverty, indeed more than this, of full abandonment of self, which holds itself open for this new splendour and glory alone."^239

^233 Ibid., 66.
^236 Balthasar, Engagement with God, 44-45.
^237 Spohn, Go and Do, 148.
^238 Balthasar, Glory of the Lord VII, 229.
^239 Ibid., 146-47.
Balthasar deems that Christ, who was completely abandoned to God, is filled with God’s glory. It is God who poured God’s glory over Christ, who laid himself open in total receptivity and absolute self-surrender. Therefore, total abandonment of self is a prerequisite to experiencing the glory of God.

3.3 Kenosis: Choosing Christ in Our Vulnerability

When we experience a conflict between culture and our faith, it is hard to abjure what culture imposes on us. Furthermore, we might not be faithful to our vocation when the culture regards kenosis as a failure. However, we have to remember that God’s grace abides with us to transform our inner disorder especially in times of desolation. Cynthia S. W. Crysdale declares that God’s grace aids the transformation of the psyche disordered by repression into a spontaneous pattern. Crysdale states that religious conversion reorders a repressive psychic pattern and opens the gate between consciousness and unconscious operations. She further describes that God’s “grace is operative in its intervention through love, so grace is cooperative through human choice.”

Whether the grace is operative or cooperative, God’s grace is a total gift and a divine impetus, which transforms a person.

We have to remember that we are partaking of God’s incomprehensible kenotic love when we practice self-abandonment. As Karl Rahner stresses, “the imitation of Christ consists in a true entering of His life and in Him entering into the inner life of the God that has been given to us.” Without habitual imitation of Christ in self-surrendering prayer, holy intimacy with God is far beyond us. Balthasar claims that we are entering into the heart of the Triune God through the door of imitation of Christ since Christ’s absolute abandonment remains the model for every

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241 Spohn, *Go and Do*, 150.
authentic relationship with God.\textsuperscript{242}

To imitate Christ constantly, we have to return to a room of prayer in every situation because “prayer is an imperative for any real process of discernment. Only a praying heart will be sufficiently attuned to recognize the internal motions of the Holy Spirit within and be able to distinguish these from the counterfeit of the spirit that is not of God.”\textsuperscript{243} In our prayer, we will learn to renounce our own way and discern God’s will. In our prayer, we may find our deepest desire in our service to God.

Traditionally, contemplation has been associated with the deepening of a person’s personal life and the expansion of the capacity to understand and serve others. Far from being essentially opposed to each other, interior contemplation and external activity are two aspects of the same love of God.\textsuperscript{244}

A person of prayer may learn to lean on the guidance of the Spirit and respond to God’s grace even in an unpredictable way, which requires conversion. However, conversion is a hard process because we have to relinquish our own way, which may be distorted to some degree, and accept God’s way. Thomas Merton makes it clear that we must face painful and even frightening truths in our conversion: “To adjust to a new level of experience is at first painful and even frightening, and we must face the fact that the crisis of real growth in the contemplative life can bring one perilously close to mental breakdown.”\textsuperscript{245}

Robert Doran calls to our attention the fact that if inter-subjective spontaneity, which governs society’s way of life, becomes disintegrated, it may produce a distorted aesthetic consciousness, a perverted intelligence, and an uncritical rationality. Thus personal values and religious values

\textsuperscript{242} Balthasar, \emph{Glory of the Lord} V, 63.
\textsuperscript{243} Gill Goulding, IBVM, \emph{Creative Perseverance} (Toronto: Novalis, 2003), 130.
\textsuperscript{244} Ward, “Kenosis,” 220.
\textsuperscript{245} Thomas Merton, \emph{Contemplation in a World of Action} (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1971), 103-111.
are either explicitly denied and even forbidden or twisted in the public cultural domain.\textsuperscript{246} In this condition of distortedness of personal and religious values, it is axiomatic that the image of self, others, and God may also become distorted. Each time we confront our blindness, weakness, or inordinate attachment, we go through the process of conversion. However, conversion “involves us at various points in the reality of death, and that is why it is so hard.”\textsuperscript{247}

Nevertheless, according to Balthasar, as life emerges through the anguished experience of the contraction of the birth canal, so does an objective and expanded viewpoint through our confrontation of anxiety.\textsuperscript{248} Moreover, Balthasar describes this experience: suddenly “the doors are flung open onto an expanse of eternity which stretches endlessly in every direction (a difficult notion indeed to describe adequately).”\textsuperscript{249} For this reason, a true prayer may taste blissful even when the soul is experiencing severe affliction:

Thus the soul is blissful and afflicted: afflicted on account of the sins of its neighbor, blissful on account of the union and the affection of charity which it has inwardly received. These souls imitate the spotless Lamb, my Only-begotten son, who on the Cross was both blissful and afflicted.\textsuperscript{250}

Korean Presbyterian Christians also may experience some afflictions or difficulties in sharing their fear, vulnerability, disability, limitations, sorrow, anger, desperation, and weaknesses. Accordingly, openness, receptivity to God in total self-abandonment might be a challenge to some Korean Christians. David Lonsdale points out a negative attitude toward expressions of certain feelings in the Western religious culture which hinders the process of discernment:

A tendency to condemn unbridled – or even semi-bridled – expressions of feeling... the labeling of certain feelings as negative and the ban on the expressions of them: anger,  

\textsuperscript{249} Balthasar, \textit{Engagement with God}, 45.  
\textsuperscript{250} John Paul II, “Novo Millennio Ineunte,” no. 27.
aggression, resentment, jealousy, envy, greed, and so on... The feelings went underground, and though they covertly continued to influence people’s behavior, it was an unconscious influence. Many religious people, therefore, lost touch with their true feelings.\textsuperscript{251}

According to Lonsdale, forbidden or repressed feelings can go down into the unconscious and have a powerful influence on the person, thus making discernment more difficult. Therefore, if we note our feelings with regard to particular situations or decisions, we should give careful attention to those feelings in our prayer; then our truest and deepest feelings may come to the surface of our awareness.\textsuperscript{252} In our brokenness, “the Spirit draws us toward wholeness... by challenging us to face the dark and broken side of ourselves.”\textsuperscript{253}

Eckhart says that “being a Christian means simply, unresistingly, letting God be born, letting God happen” and saying “yes” to God: “pure \textit{fiat}, the \textit{passivum} which is the very heart of the glorification of God.”\textsuperscript{254} Balthasar also states that the perfection of the kingdom of God can be built up from the universal operation of God and the active co-operation of human beings’ “yes” to God in abandonment, surrender, and service.\textsuperscript{255} Considered in the light of this “yes”, \textit{kenosis} involves a pure readiness, an “indifference.” Indifference challenges us to a total detachment, readiness and loving availability (\textit{disponibilité}) “for the sake of immediate union with God… to fulfill a particular task without any mental reservations and from a disposition of transcendent universality, being basically ready for anything.”\textsuperscript{256}

4. Abiding in God’s Love

Lonergan states that the experience of being in love with God is crucial because depending on

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{251} Lonsdale, \textit{Music of the Spirit}, 144.
  \item \textsuperscript{252} Ibid., 71-72.
  \item \textsuperscript{253} Ibid., 146.
  \item \textsuperscript{254} Balthasar, \textit{Glory of the Lord} V, 32.
  \item \textsuperscript{255} Ibid., 66.
  \item \textsuperscript{256} Ibid., 103.
\end{itemize}
the fulfillment or absence of this experience, a person might walk in totally different directions:

Being in love with God…is the basic fulfillment of our conscious intentionality. That fulfillment brings a deep-set joy that can remain despite humiliation, failure, privation, pain, betrayal, desertion. That fulfillment brings a radical peace, the peace that the world cannot give. That fulfillment bears fruit in a love of one’s neighbor that strives mightily to bring about the kingdom of God on this earth (M: 105).  

Balthasar remarks that people who surrender in ‘loving abandonment’ give themselves as instruments of God’s overflowing love to transform the world. Balthasar emphasizes that Christ is in “constant activity” of service and “constant rest” in God in his self-abandonment. Christ constantly stayed with his vocation, as Christ constantly rested in God by renouncing his desire to control by choosing total self-surrender, self-emptying abandonment without any reservation of wrath, fear or anxiety.

From this loving self-abandonment, as Ruysbroeck declares, the soul is prepared for a nuptial encountering of the glory of God in all things. Balthasar explains this “ecstatic love” as being “enraptured,” that is, being caught up at once both to God and to oneself. It draws a soul to journey toward “the center of itself, toward its source” which is God and that experience unfolds the true depth of self and of a compassionate heart within. This ecstasy is “the ecstasy of service not of enthusiasm…And this fruitfulness is measured in Ignatian terms of service and obedience; this is the form which ecstatic love takes in its ever-yearning momentum.” As Balthasar explains, the mystical experience of God draws a person into the service of God. In loving obedience to God, Christ carries out his filial mission and from that, he discovers his most profound identity, in relation to the Father, as the eternal Son.

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257 Doran, “Suffering Servanthood,” 114.
258 McIntosh, Christology From Within, 66; and Balthasar, Glory of the Lord V, 75-76.
259 Ibid., 71-72.
260 Ibid., 117-19.
261 Ibid., 122.
We have reviewed the *kenosis* of Christ, the fundamental model for obedience. Obedience is a disposition of entire surrender and of true resignation of will, and an abnegation of our judgment out of love. The Ignatian vision of obedience is nothing but love in a soul fully devoted to Christ. It is a holy union with God where subordinates and superiors are made one in Christ. Thus true discernment becomes our response of love to God’s love. Yet we may not fully understand the mystical state of *kenosis* because we might be inclined toward possession and are attached to something or someone. In order to fully renounce our own way or will, we have to experience God’s love. Without having a felt knowledge of God’s love, we may never be at “constant rest” and “constant action” in our daily lives. For this reason, I will study the contemplation to attain divine love in chapter 4.
Chapter 4
An Approach to the “Contemplation to Attain God’s Love” in Our Daily Lives

To seek to deepen their relation with God, and to establish and reestablish a more loving relationship with God through prayer is an undeniable longing for Christians. Charles J. Healey describes prayer as a yearning for union with God: “Perhaps we can best consider prayer as the simple, natural, continual response of one who is convinced [of one’s belonging] to God, seeks to grow in union with Him, and the response of one who realizes [one’s possession] by a loving God.” However, one cannot experience an intimate relationship with God all the time. On the one hand, human relationships are distorted, estranged, divided, or sometimes even broken. Unhealthy relationships with self and with others affect our relationship with God. On the other hand, a distorted image of God makes people blind to the truth and goodness in their relationship with self and others. It obstructs their ability to face the reality of who they are.

David L. Fleming characterizes the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola as a guide toward a “movement forward as well as a movement in depth in a personal commitment to Jesus Christ.” A person who participates in the Spiritual Exercises can gradually be moved toward God and come to a better understanding of self in the light of a personal relationship with God. The contemplation of the fourth week aims at attaining interior knowledge of God’s love and loving surrender to God in return. However, not all people experience this grace even in a retreat setting. This evokes many questions: What is the focal point and significance of contemplation? How can we experience the contemplation to attain God’s love not only in a retreat but also in our daily lives?

For this reason, I would like to examine the Contemplation to Attain God’s Love in the *Spiritual Exercises* and how it affects personal spiritual life, together with some understanding of the hindrances and difficulties in achieving this goal. Firstly, I will reflect on the meaning of contemplation. Secondly, I will explore the significance of the Contemplation to Attain God’s Love in the *Spiritual Exercises*. Thirdly, I will indicate some hindrances and barriers, and some possibilities regarding contemplation.

1 **The Meaning of Contemplation**

As pointed out in chapter 2, indifference is a readiness and a self-disposition to follow Christ in harmony with the divine will for the glory of God and salvation of one’s soul [#23]. Scott M. Lewis looks upon indifference as a radical openness without fear in the relationship with God in imitation of Jesus: “It should be the source of our joy and strength, and we should be willing to go wherever that takes us, as Jesus was ready to go to the cross not for its own sake, but because that was where his special relationship with the Father took him.”264 The disposition of the heart in complete openness to God is the most important condition for contemplation.

Thomas Merton indicates the characteristics of contemplation.265 He observes that contemplation is essentially a listening in silence and in expectancy, with an open disposition. Merton appraises contemplation as the summit of the Christian life of prayer, which may lead the Christian to self-emptying and a perception of self-nothingness. According to Merton, the negation of self-nothingness brings us face to face with God. But at the same time, it may also bring us to face the devil as well. In this spiritual wilderness, Merton emphasizes that the only guarantee against meeting the devil in the dark is to hope in God, to trust in God’s voice, and to

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confide in God's mercy. Merton adds that transformation of our interior life can neither be accomplished by our own efforts nor by some psychological device, by clever use of spiritual techniques, nor by logic or methods. As Merton affirms, if we experience spiritual transformation, we must acknowledge that this experience is wholly the result of God's mercy and grace.

Josef Stierli also states that human beings cannot manufacture any theological grace because grace is entirely God's prerogative and God gives grace to whomever God pleases: "[It] does not lie in [one's] power... to procure or even to merit such moments of grace. But [one] can prepare [one's self to receive grace in such moments] with humility and holy desire by raising [one's] mind to God in a spirit of faith in all the activities of daily life, a practice constantly accessible to [each Christian]." Moreover, Stierli emphasizes that the constant practice of mortification and self-denial are the foundation of the spiritual life. Stierli deems detachment from all inordinate attachments and negation of one's own ego in prayer to be the most important factors in Ignatian spirituality, finding God in all things.

As grace is given by God, so too is contemplation to attain God's love. Jim Harbaugh defines the meaning of attainment of the love of God in terms of neither earning nor working up to, but as gift: "Ignatius agrees with most spiritually wise people that the love of God is a given: it does not have to be earned, it [cannot] be earned." Michael Ivens also asserts that we have to be aware that such a vision of God's love is a grace, not a technique. Even if one does experience grace, that experience cannot represent a definitive spiritual achievement at all. When we acknowledge the truth that grace is given, this leads to humility in God's sight.

266 Stierli, “Ignatian Prayer,” 162.
267 Ibid., 155-161.
269 Ivens, Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, 170.
1.1 Contemplation and Finding God in All Things

David M. Stanley views the Contemplation to Attain God’s Love in the *Spiritual Exercises* as the crown of the retreat and a bridge for the return to the person’s ordinary life and duties. Stanley cites St. Ignatius’ favorite prayer for “finding God in all things” as a prime example of Christian contemplative spirituality. David Lonsdale describes the experience of finding God even amid the many difficulties and challenges of our lives as finding God among the thorns. We may experience God’s grace and love more tangibly when we are in consolation, whereas when we are in desolation, God seems far from us and our spirits are more agitated than in consolation. For that reason, finding God in all things may be challenging because God’s grace is neither attained naturally nor without difficulty.

Therefore, we have to remember that God communicates with us whether we are in consolation or desolation. Harvey Egan points out that God’s self-communication is a gift, both in times of consolation and desolation. Egan emphasizes that this powerful and explicit self-communication of God draws the person entirely to God who is Love Itself. Egan claims that although a person will not always be able to perceive God’s self-communication, it remains as sufficient grace, and as a strength and foundation of the person. Without God’s self-communication, finding God in all things would be an impossible task for us. Thus, prayer and contemplation, purity of heart, and attentive listening are essential elements that dispose human beings toward God’s grace.

1.2 Contemplation to Attain the Divine Love by Grace

The Contemplation to Attain the Divine Love is placed in the fourth week of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

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Exercises. Since spiritual maturity and virtues cannot be acquired by taking simple steps, we must acknowledge that contemplation is not a mechanical process. Franz Jalics defines contemplation as an “interior vision of God’s presence,” he affirms that contemplation is pure grace, which cannot be learned.\(^{273}\) A person may choose to participate in the Spiritual Exercises, but to attain contemplation is a grace from God. As every form of love is an unconditional gift from the giver, so too is the contemplation to attain the love of God.

[Ignatius] distinguishes between three levels of contemplación: looking with the outer senses [106], looking with the inner senses [121-126], and a mental looking that occurs without the involvement of other mental capacities such as memory, understanding and will [234]. This latter is the purest form of ‘acquired contemplation.’ It is ‘acquired’ because, with the help of grace, we can make it our own.\(^{274}\)

Moreover, William J. Connolly argues that the use of any other method, with the assistance of good experienced spiritual directors, or simply the accumulation of many hours of prayer cannot bring a person to experience contemplation. Connolly explains that receptivity in listening is the most important factor in prayer. That includes not only listening to one’s inner feelings and confronting anger, fear, or guilt, but also a dialogue between those inner feelings and the Word of God.\(^{275}\) According to Connolly, it is very important to be aware of our inner movements and, at the same time, to take them into account as we respond to God.

Michael Buckley states that the Spiritual Exercises are “an organic sequence of meditations and counsels, moving through the entire span of a man’s life appropriated in prayer and choice” that bring one’s personal history into harmony with the movements and intentions of the life of Christ, within the imperceptible process of the grace of God – although there is an antithetical parallel


\(^{274}\) Ibid., 25.

movement of temptation. Buckley states that the controversy about the Contemplation to Attain God’s Love has been continued down into the present: Joseph de Guibert’s judgment is that contemplation remains the same as the three methods of prayer. On the contrary, Ignatius Iparragnirre highly values contemplation. He describes the Contemplation to Attain God’s Love as a highly condensed form of the very kernel of the Spiritual Exercises and truly a summary of perfection itself.

Since contemplation is not an automatic process, one may dispose oneself in total openness and receptivity to God’s love and grace. In contemplation, Ignatius insists that God loves us not by words but by the deeds of creation and redemption [231]. Therefore, as our love of God deepens in contemplation, our love must be expressed in our service of God and action in our daily lives. In other words, our response of love must be translated into deeds of service: our prayer becomes our action and our action becomes a prayer. Ignatius calls this dialectic “contemplation in action.”

2 Understanding the Contemplation to Attain God’s Love

In the Contemplation to Attain God’s Love, there are two preludes and four points. The first prelude is the presentation of the place: looking at myself in contemplation I see that I am “standing in the presence of God our Lord and of His angels and saints, who intercede for me” [232]. In the second prelude, I am encouraged to ask for what I desire: an intimate knowledge of the many blessings I have received; to be filled with gratitude for all, that I may love and serve in all things the Divine Majesty [233].

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278 Buckley, “Contemplation to Attain Love,” 93.
The first point is to recall the blessings of creation and redemption, and personalize the special favors that I have received in great affection: how much God has done for me; how much God has given me of what God possesses; and how much the same God desires to give himself to me according to his divine decrees. Then I will reflect upon myself realizing that, according to all reason and justice, what I ought to offer to the Divine Majesty is all I possess and my very self. St. Ignatius’ own prayer, *Take, Lord, and Receive*, guides us to such an offering of self in gratitude and love [234]. Through this contemplation, we come to know that God has loved us first and our love for God is merely a reflection of that love. Therefore, as Michael Ivens clarifies, we have to request the grace of attaining love for God:

> The dynamic of the exercise turns on the two meanings of the love of God, God’s love for us and ours for God…God’s love for us, the absolute and unconditional love by which God loves us before we love him, the love by which God teaches us to love, is the subject of the four points. Our love for God is the love we seek to attain [230], and which we request as grace in the petition [233], and in the prayer of radical self-offering, *Take and receive* [234]…The grace of the exercise is to grow in loving in the way God himself loves.”

For that reason, Buckley states that contemplation to attain the love of God is to have an interior knowledge that one has been overwhelmingly loved by God. Buckley affirms that the recognition itself constitutes a new power within a person to love and serve to God in all things spontaneously. As we increasingly remember and experience the love of God, we no longer seek to attain God’s love but to surrender ourselves totally to God out of love.

Mutuality always exists in personal relationships. Relationship can grow or fade depending on the mutual intimacy of love. Buckley emphasizes that love comes from the experience of being loved: “One is taught to love only by being loved, and this pattern of ordinary experience is

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281 Buckley, “Contemplation to Attain Love,” 95-96.
repeated in the most profound models of religion.” Buckley considers that when our experience of being loved deepens, our love for God also deepens. This realization of God's love kindles affectivity towards God, and thus, from the love of God, we move toward greater service of God:

The final term of the giving of God lies in the love of man; the product of his passivities before God is his activity towards God. Even the power of human love is gift, and the culmination of all the divine actions is gift...[The] unity of three moments – interior knowledge or realization, love or affectivity, service or action – constitutes the full goal of the contemplation of the goodness from God...Knowledge, love and service are moments of a single line of interpersonal surrender.

The unity of three moments, interior knowledge, love and service in contemplation, results from an interpersonal mutual surrender both of the beloved and of Love himself.

2.1 Total Disposition and Total Surrender: *Take, Lord, Receive*

In the 2001 Retreat Directors’ Workshop at Loyola House in Guelph, Fr. Philip Shano quoted the title of an article, “A Long Loving Look at the Real” in his explanation of the deeper meaning of Contemplation. From a reflection on the title, on the one hand, Shano sheds light on what contemplation requires: patience, loving, looking, and discernment of the interior movements and of the outward state of beings, the world, and God. Along with Shano, Jalics asserts that the only contemplative action of which a person is capable is to dispose oneself until only pure consciousness, pure attention remains.

The prayer, ‘Take, Lord, receive’, indicates the demanding path towards this goal, namely that of bringing all our mental faculties to stillness and then just looking...Our whole spiritual life has developed into an immediacy of relationship with God...The fundamental question is whether my attention is really towards God or towards myself.

Jalics calls attention to our transparency to God. Thus the prayer, ‘Take, Lord, and receive’

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282 Ibid., 96.
283 Ibid.
285 Ibid., 32, 36.
mentions the powerful triad offering of self: the memory, understanding and entire will, that is, the whole range of interior faculties. However, for Korean Presbyterian Christians, I suggest offering particularly their fears, concerns, both positive and negative feelings, and all inner faculties in depth to God without any reservation.

Contemplation is a total disposition and total surrender to God. The prayer of contemplation begins with *suscipe* (take). Since we were given so much more, we therefore return all to the Giver. Jalics says that “Take, Lord, receive” is not so much a devotion as a supreme act of non-possessiveness, recognizing that all is gift. Regarding the end of prayer, “Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me,” Jalics states that the expression “*basta* (enough)” shows that prayer of petition has changed into enormous trust in God. Jalics pinpoints the fact that the prayer “Take, Lord, receive” confirms that genuine indifference starts from the Principle and Foundation. The word “enough (*basta*)” expresses a deep personal contentment to God. It means that God’s love and grace are more than enough; thus, I do not need anything other than God. It resembles a prayer of St. Teresa of Avila: *Nada te turbe...solo Dios basta* (Let nothing disturb you...God alone is enough).

In contemplation, a person no longer leans on any specific choices in life: whether to have a long life or a short one; to be rich or poor, to have sickness or health; to experience honor or shame. One completely devotes one’s self to God, especially through three powerful inner faculties: one’s memory, one’s understanding, and one’s entire will. Out of one’s interior knowledge of

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287 Ibid., 30-31.
being loved by God, one confesses that God’s love and grace are enough for her/him. I agree with Jalics that if a person has experienced God’s love, in this contemplative attitude of being, that person may be freed from hesitation or adherence to attachments in one’s choice or election, but if the presence of God is dominant, they no longer focus on other matters but on God.\footnote{Jalics, “Contemplative Phase,” 37-39.} This experience of the love of God is capable of transforming the person’s self-centeredness into self-surrender and self-submission to God.

To know that our relationship with Jesus Christ has changed is important. In John’s Gospel, Jesus calls his disciples his friends: “You are my friends” (John 15:14). Love consists in a mutual sharing and in mutual loving. The lover shares with the beloved and the beloved shares with the lover\footnote{Ivens, Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, 173.}. Ivens states that the essence of friendship is mutual communication, which comes not from obligation, but from a wish to give:

> The mutual communication…is that which characterizes the love of friendship, a love which is spontaneous and which is directed on each side towards the good or pleasure of the other. In friendship, the giver’s generosity does not coerce, but simply gives the experience of being loved; and the desire of the beloved to give in return comes not from a sense of being put under obligation but from the wish to give, which is of the essence of friendship.\footnote{Ivens, Understanding the Spiritual Exercises, 173.}

However, the beloved no longer focuses on the gifts but on the lover. Deeply content at being loved, one’s heart desires to give one’s self, to surrender all to God in return for God’s love.

### 2.2 Interpersonal Surrender and the Union with God

Buckley declares that the purpose of contemplation is union with God in mutual surrender, communication, and communion, which are both an authentic expression and an experience of love.\footnote{Buckley, “Contemplation to Attain Love,” 99.}
[The] giving of God evokes the giving of [the human]; and in this mutual surrender they become one in their love…Within … [a] person, there is the ecstatic unity in which knowledge, love and service become total surrender…The merger of these two – of the surrender of [human] and of the descending creation of God – is that unity in which the lover and beloved become one, integral in their mutual communication and commingled in personal communion. And to allow for this, La Contemplación Para Alcanzar Amor resumes the principal themes of the four weeks of the Spiritual Exercises into a synthesis by which a person moves gradually to God as [one] is and to whom [one] one surrenders [one’s self] in all things.”292

J. Peter Schineller writes that contemplation invites us to imitate the full humanity of Jesus through recitation of “Take, Lord, and receive.”293 Nevertheless, since God is beyond our consciousness, we may only have a glimpse of the divine mystery through contemplation: “[The] last stage of interior knowledge is to reach the interior life of knowledge – to reach but not to grasp, to apprehend but not to comprehend. The ascent of contemplation is to a deeper interiority, into the depth that is God.”294

Charles J. Healey remarks that a deeper interior knowledge of being loved, as a foretaste of the divine mystery, has the power to transform a person entirely:

A profound conviction of God’s steadfast love and fidelity can be a very liberating force that enables one to turn to God and seek Him alone and His service in a spirit of simplicity and joy. The freedom grows in a context of lively faith and is nourished in prayerful reflection on God’s goodness, mercy, love, and providence.295

Healey concludes that discernment must be made manifest as contemplation in action. In other words, our experiences of God are to be revealed in our lives as external fruits that are our good works.296 Philip Sheldrake states that our engagement in the world increases as our awareness of God’s love increases. Sheldrake acknowledges that our awareness of the injustice and the beauty

292 Ibid., 99, 104.
294 Buckley, “Contemplation to Attain Love,” 103.
296 Ibid.
in the world will increase as we follow in the footsteps of Christ. Our prayer and contemplation or contemplative attitude cannot be separated from our daily lives. We may gradually or radically renounce our former way of life and devote ourselves to more fervent prayer and worship, and increase in virtue and almsgiving, and in acceptance of self and others as we are, because of God’s love. Therefore, we will no longer live a life in which our prayer is apart from our actions, but will live a unified life as a response to God’s love.

3 Hindrances and Possibilities in the Contemplation to Attain God’s Love

We may be not always aware of God’s love, and contemplation does not always occur when we desire it. God is able to penetrate the core of human heart, and grace is always available, yet hindrances and barriers on the part of human beings are many. I will detail in this section some hindrances and barriers to contemplation, especially for Korean Christians. In addition to reviewing some hindrances and barriers specific to Korean Christians, I will highlight some possibilities for daily contemplation.

3.1 Hindrances and Barriers in Contemplation

I have become aware that cultural influences may interfere with personal acceptance of God’s love. First of all, some elements in Korean culture may promote the suppression of inner movements and feelings. As a spiritual director, I have directed various age groups of women in Canada with a Korean cultural background. According to my experience, the most difficult part is guiding women to recognize their inner movements. I found many of them had great difficulty in recognition or in expression of their feelings. They have suppressed inner conflict, and in particular their negative feelings. Therefore, emotions such as anger, fear, shame, sadness, or

guilt have been hidden and restrained.

Korea has a culture of dignity (chemyon moonhwa) due to the influence of Confucian teaching. K. H. Kim points out how Korean Christians try to guard their honor and reputations in a negative way. One of the negative impacts is extreme other-centeredness. Therefore, out of fear, fear of criticism by others, or fear of vulnerability in the face of others, Korean Christians have habitually ignored and repressed their negative feelings as though they have never existed. They become accustomed to yielding to others’ expectations and demands. Therefore, the most difficult task for Korean Christians is to acknowledge or speak about their authentic inner movements.

Secondly, a distorted image of self may affect a person’s ability to accept God’s love. According to Byong Oh Kim, the relationship of fathers and sons in the Korean Presbyterian tradition is becoming more emotionally distant because it is not based on love and affection but control and submission. B.O. Kim explains that this reality occurs when shame-bound fathers want to hide their vulnerable masculinity. As I stated in Chapter 2, Korean Presbyterian Christians may experience some degree of difficulty in building intimate relationships with their fathers and with God because of their relationships with strict fathers. These negative experiences may therefore deter the person from attaining divine love. If the wounded person belongs to a strict culture which encourages habitual suppression of inner movements, that person may experience even more difficulty in recognizing inner movements and God’s love. For this reason, many Korean Christians find it difficult to believe in or accept God’s unconditional love. As a result, these

298 K. H. Kim, Worship and Life in Korean Church, 92-94.
persons can accept neither themselves as they are, nor others, including God, truthfully.

Thirdly, when our ego and pride are too strong, we may not be able to let go of self-centeredness or self-love. We listen to the message we want to hear but reject what God wants to tell us: “[This person] is...in the presence...of an idol: [one’s] own complacent identity. [That person] becomes immersed and lost in [his or herself], in a state of inert, primitive and infantile narcissism.” When we are filled with narcissism and have a distorted image of self, others, and God, we cannot perceive a true vision of self, others, and God. The church may preach the love of God, and we may read the Bible, yet these may not touch the authentic core of our being. Our purely intellectual knowledge leaves us with a sense of deep alienation from our life experiences. Furthermore, as the Scripture says, “no one is free from sin” (Pro. 20:9). If we have sunk into sin, whether it is venial or mortal, it blocks the path to contemplation of God’s love. St. Ignatius explains sin as inordinate attachment. We must repent by renouncing our sins and every form of inordinate attachment, self-centeredness, and narcissism.

John Navone criticizes spiritual acedia. Navone says that acedia (spiritual torpor) not only shrivels our vision of God’s goodness and love but also fails to hope in God. He cites St. Gregory the Great (c. 540-604) as including acedia among the seven deadly sins. According to Navone, acedia repels the divine goodness and love by weariness and boredom: “The inability to delight in God is the inability to glorify God. If faith is the ‘eye of love’ that ‘sees’ and delights in the beauty of God’s love in all things, acedia implies the absence of the love which both ‘sees’ and delights in the all-encompassing splendor of God’s love.” Acedia prevents us from discerning God’s presence, and leads us to despair of attaining the vision of glory in God.

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301 Peter G. Van Breemen, As Bread That is Broken (Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1974), 50.
303 Ibid.
I have reviewed some hindrances to attain God’s love. If the impact of culture works toward suppression of one’s inner movements or feelings, it may interfere with the personal experience of God’s love. Moreover, a person who has a fearful and strict image of God due to familial and cultural influences may experience difficulty in accepting God’s love. In addition, a person who has been deeply wounded from early childhood, due to negative experiences, or who has feelings of fear, anger, anxiety, or shame, may be deterred from attaining divine love. Humans may build barriers that make attainment of God’s love exceedingly difficult. When we lose a true vision of self, others and God, how can we delight in the beauty of God’s love and glorify God? In the following section, I will suggest some possibilities of experiencing God’s love in our daily lives.

3.2 Possibilities in Contemplation

David T. Asselin acknowledges that our growth in faith is solely God’s work. However, he emphasizes that human collaboration with the divine initiative of grace is the most important factor for personal spiritual growth. According to Asselin, openness to being moved by God, examination of and reflection on personal interior movements through prayer, and keen recognition and response to God’s initiatives are demanded of human beings.\(^ {304}\) Ignatian discernment could provide a way for the Korean Presbyterian Church and Korean Christians to attain sanctification, yet without the practice of discernment in daily life, such knowledge might remain inefficacious.

We have no doubt that God speaks in and through the church as it represents the Body of Christ. However, the Korean Presbyterian Church and Korean Christians are boasting of the number of their congregations, the size of their church buildings, and their magnificent spiritual programs. The Korean Presbyterian Church is recognized as a rich group. The gap between the preaching

and the actions of the Korean Presbyterian Church has negatively influenced its members. When the church and Christians lose their prophetic voice, they risk being swallowed up by the world. Preaching the gospel does not have power unless they live as they preach. Unless they change their way of life, neither the church nor its members will live for the greater service and glory of God.

According to the Two Kingdom meditation in *the Spiritual Exercises*, Christians can choose only one option: either Christ or Satan [91-100, 136-148]. Scripture says that we cannot serve God and, at the same time, mammon (Matthew 6.19-29). If we do not choose Christ, we blindly compromise with the worldly power and authority, and we follow Satan: “Riches are slow poison, which strikes almost imperceptibly, paralyzing the soul at the moment it seems healthiest. What numbers of men and women, religious people, let themselves get caught up in their later lives by the spirit of middle-class tastes?”305 The Korean Presbyterian Church and Christians must detach themselves from richness, honor, and prosperity, and abandon themselves to God as they imitate the humility of Jesus who invites them to labor with him.

Philip Sheldrake introduces us to an easy and practical method of deepening our relationship with God. Sheldrake proposes a Jungian analysis of ‘active imagination’ in our dreams. Jung encourages us to write down, to reflect upon, or to paint our dreams. Jung strongly believes that unconscious depths can interact not only with an individual consciousness but also with God through writing, through reflection, or through painting: “This leads to an enlargement of consciousness by admitting into it feelings or ideas from the unconscious…I can see that to reach down into my centre is not merely to confront inner feelings and reactions, but to meet God

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305 Breemen, *As Bread That is Broken*, 106.
where he is most certainly to be found. When we frankly search ourselves, we all have at least one or more weak points or blind spots of which we could hardly be aware. Therefore, we may possibly write down, reflect upon, and paint not only about our dreams but also about our daily concerns and expectations. We may attain self-knowledge as we become conscious of our blind spots and of our deepest desire for God.

The most profound personal spiritual experience of a Christian would be the one touched by the abundance of God’s love. As divine love is given by grace, therefore we must listen attentively, and thus dispose ourselves to receive God’s Love. At the same time, with confident expectation, abnegating all self-seeking, and recognizing one’s self-nothingness as a creature are the indispensable conditions for contemplation. Contemplation should not remain merely a personal dimension of religious experience. Authentic inner experiences of divine love must be expressed in our service and action inspired by love of our God and love of our neighbors. Thus, contemplation in action and finding God in all things is no mere ideal but becomes actualized in our service.

Contemplation is a total disposition of self and a total surrender to God. Self-surrender leads a person into the deeper dimensions of contemplation of the Trinity’s mutual surrender, mutual communication and mutual communion. Although St. Ignatius indicates that the human being has been created “to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul” in the Principle and Foundation [23], we cannot always dwell in contemplation. Sometimes, PF may not resonate in our consciousness. Instead, a distorted image of self, others and God is developed in a culture that suppresses inner feelings and movements. Sometimes, we may over-indulge in fun and amusements especially in times of desolation. We also may be locked up in a

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cell of self-centeredness, narcissism, sin, or spiritual *acedia*. These obstacles and hindrances, which human beings themselves have created, prevent them from experiencing God’s outpouring of love.

However, the most difficult or painful moments of desolation may become the most blessed opportunities to experience God’s immeasurable love. When we recognize our nothingness in deep humility, we ought to abandon ourselves to God who alone can give us divine love and grace. Therefore, the point of our acknowledgement of nothingness and self-abnegation may become the most grace-filled of moments. In deep humility, we no longer fear nor hold on to the worldly expectation of richness, honor, or long life. Thus, we understand who we are as creatures with many blind spots and weak points, yet longing for God. If we are aware whether we are heading towards God or away from God, we may start to pray from that point. Total self-surrender and an inviolable disposition for God in Christ in the deepest humility are the apt expression and experience of love. From this realization of the depth of God’s love and deep contentment in God, one may cast one’s self down before God in praise, “Take, Lord, and receive!”
Conclusion

1 Summary

This thesis aims at analyzing “sanctification” in the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), which the Korean Presbyterian Church has taken as a doctrine, in the light of Ignatian discernment. A critical analysis of sanctification sharply reveals the lack of concrete method and guidance in Christian discernment to attain Christian sanctification. In this thesis, the necessity of an application of the three key elements of Ignatian discernment – election, obedience, and contemplation – to this Presbyterian doctrine of sanctification has been reviewed in a critical and creative manner, with special attention given to influential cultural aspects. The purpose of this thesis is to assist the Korean Presbyterian Church and individual Christians to attain sanctification as they love and serve God and God’s people from their experience of God’s love.

Firstly, I investigated the doctrine of sanctification in the WCF and how the doctrine is understood by the Presbyterian Church, with some critiques from other Protestant denominations. Critics within the Korean Presbyterian and other Protestant Churches claim these churches have failed to represent God’s holiness because of inconsistency between their faith and action. W. G. Lee comments that the church appears to be an unconcerned spectator to moral collapses and communal crisis in Korean society. Many other Korean Protestant Church leaders and theologians have appealed for reformation of the church through self-examination and fundamental life change toward God.

According to many theologians of the WCF, sanctification is the divine gift of grace. However,

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307 W. G. Lee, About the Korean Church, et al., (see introduction, n. 4).
308 D. W. Kim, “Secularization in the Korean Church,” (see introduction, n. 5).
as Jan Rohls reckons, sanctification consists in an enduring repentance and on-going conversion on the part of human beings. A. A. Hodge underscores the passivity of the human person as crucial when God reveals the truth in the Divine Providence of grace. However, Hodge insists that after a person has experienced God’s grace, she/he needs to co-operate with the Holy Spirit. For that reason, Hodge claims that sanctification is both a grace and a duty, a duty to respond to God’s grace. George Stuart Hendry asserts that the grace of God calls us into “responsible decision” and “responsible obedience.” Therefore, Christians are not in a state of pure passivity in the process of sanctification. Rather the essential factors for attaining Christian sanctification are ongoing conversion and the ability to respond to the grace of God.

However, sanctification has been misunderstood in many ways. J. S. Rhee enumerates three fallacies surrounding sanctification within various traditional religious approaches in the Korean Protestant Church: disciplinary sanctification, fatalistic sanctification, and mystical sanctification. For this reason, Seyoon Kim argues that the Korean Protestant Church must seek a second Reformation through repentance, development of theology, proper education of ministers, proclamation of the Gospel, enhancement of a life-giving spirituality, and a summons to all Christians to live according to the Gospel.

As S. Kim professes, unless the Korean Presbyterian Church renounces boasting about the number of its congregations, about the size of church buildings, and about its various spiritual programs, etc., the Church cannot be a “principal agent” of God in the world. For this reason, both the communal church and individual Christians are required to practice self-examination

309 Rohls, *Reformed Confession*, (see chap. 1, no. 34).
310 Ibid., 195-96.
311 Hendry, *Westminster Confession for Today*, (see chap. 1, no. 45).
312 J. S. Rhee, “Understanding Sanctification,” (see chap. 1, n. 57).
313 S. Kim, “Reformation of the Korean Church,” (see introduction, n. 23).”
and discernment at all times to discern the best choice and action in God. Without effective
discernment, the Church and Christians might easily be deceived by their inordinate attachments
and by the enemy of human beings. Moreover, Christians need to respond to the grace of God
through decisive choice and decisive action. As “sanctification” in the WCF sharply reveals the
lack of concrete method and guidance to attain sanctification, I focused on three key elements of
Ignatian discernment: election, obedience, and contemplation to attain God’s love (contemplatio)
to remedy this situation.

Secondly, in Chapter 2, I examined how Ignatian discernment helps Christians to decide and act
according to the will of God as they become free from inordinate attachments. Michael Ivens
values the First Principle and Foundation as the groundwork of the whole moral and spiritual
edifice of the Exercises because it gives one an opportunity to look at one’s personal inordinate
attachments. As a person meditates on the First Principle and Foundation, that person may
recognize her/his weak points, blind spots, and areas of enslavement, where healing and growth
are needed. Thus the person may gain true self-knowledge. The First Principle and Foundation
also leads Christians to focus on the fundamental motivations proposed in Christianity: the
greater glory and service of God and the salvation of one’s soul. Thus the person attains
indifference, which is an attitude of equipoise, an affective space and a desire for God and God’s
will, in making one’s personal concrete decision.

Moreover, the procedure within Ignatian discernment indicates how to follow the will of God
without any reservations or inordinate attachments. Discernment requires human choice and
action through the process of prayer. To discriminate between the will of God and our inordinate
attachments, St. Ignatius teaches us how to discern our spiritual movements: desolation and

314 Ivens, the Spiritual Exercises, (see chap. 2, n. 94).
consolation, the characteristics of the good and evil spirits and their tactics. In spiritual consolation, humility is the most important factor since it prepares us for times of desolation. In times of consolation, distinguishing false consolation from spiritual consolation is also crucial because even though a person may experience consolation, it may lead her/him away from God. Therefore, one needs to examine the whole course of consolation: the beginning, middle, and end, in order to prevent being misled. For this reason, Christian discernment, as Lonsdale specifies, might be considered as choosing life over death and choosing God.315

Above all, St. Ignatius and the Ignatian theologians seem to focus more on spiritual desolation. In times of desolation, as the soul is separated from its Creator and Lord, the soul experiences darkness of soul, turmoil of spirit, an inclination towards what is low and earthly, a restlessness, all rising from many disturbances and temptations. St. Ignatius, Lonsdale and Toner give some useful tactics to deal with the destructive effect of desolation.316 The most important teachings on spiritual desolation are to remember that consolation will return in God’s good time [321] and make sure not to make any important decisions or change any previous resolution which was made in times of consolation [318]. St. Ignatius speaks of three times of a correct and good choice of a way of life, election. The focal point of Ignatian election is the greater glory and service of God and salvation of one’s soul. St. Ignatius also insists on the importance of confirmation.

Thirdly, in Chapter 3, I reviewed the Ignatian teaching on obedience in order to identify the vital motivation underlying it. In Ignatian discernment, confirmation by authority, such as parents, superiors, the church, or the Scriptures, is greatly emphasized. St. Ignatius stresses obedience of a subject to authority because he believes that all things are connected through Christ in God.

315 Lonsdale, Music of the Spirit, (see chap. 1, n. 88).
316 See chapter 2, 49-52.
Moreover, St. Ignatius regards obedience as ranking first among all other pious and holy motivations of the person. For this reason, he believes that a person who disobeys is deceived and darkened, and the soul is in danger because self-love is leading the soul into perversion and delusion. For St. Ignatius, disobedience to one’s spiritual father or superior is based in pride and the sequel is vainglory.317

Most of all, we have to remark that Ignatian obedience is not based on a hierarchical understanding but rather on God’s love. Balthasar affirms that Christ is the fundamental model of obedience. According to Balthasar, the mutual kenotic love of the Trinity, the ultimate self-giving and self-emptying in consubstantial communion in the Trinity, is the fundamental factor in the _kenosis_ of Christ (Philippians 2:6-7). Balthasar defines the _kenosis_ of Christ as “self-abandonment (_Gelassenheit_), which is based on total trust and love. _Gelassenheit_ is a habitual self-openness to the love of God in humility, hope, faith, and love even in the face of a potential ambiguity and an unstable path. Both Balthasar and St. John Ruysbroeck state that there is one constant inward and outward movement in the _kenosis_ of Christ, which is a constant rest and constant activity in his self-abandonment in God through the Holy Spirit.

However, Korean Presbyterian Christians have questioning attitudes toward obedience. In the traditional Korean Confucian culture, a person renders absolute obedience to authority, especially to one’s father: “this fearful relationship with [one’s] father has not disappeared in contemporary Korean society, [even in] Christian communities.”318 To imitate the _kenosis_ of Christ, his humility and obedience to God, their experience of God’s love is indispensable to Korean Presbyterian Christians. Therefore, we Christians have to return to a room of prayer in every situation of obedience. In our prayer, we may renounce our own understanding of God and

317 Ignatius, _Letters of St. Ignatius_, (see chap. 3, n. 198).
318 K. H. Lee, “Suffering and Healing,” (see chap. 1, no. 84).
discern God’s love toward us. In our prayer, we may find our deepest desire in our service to God. In our prayer, we may have mystical experiences of God’s immeasurable love; thus we may learn to trust and love God without fear. For this reason, I observed the *contemplatio* in the next chapter.

In the fourth Chapter, I examined the contemplation to attain God’s love. Thomas Merton states that contemplation is essentially a listening in silence and in expectancy, with an open disposition, which is the summit of the Christian life of prayer. Ignatius Iparraguirre states that contemplation has been valued as a highly condensed form of the very kernel of the *Spiritual Exercises* and truly a summary of perfection itself. Theologians agree that human beings cannot procure God’s grace by an act of will. As Harvey Egan indicates, the powerful and explicit self-communication of God draws a person entirely to God who is love itself. When a person is united to God’s outpouring love, the prayer, “Take, Lord, and receive,” is nothing but an offering of self in gratitude for God’s love.

However, the experience of the strictness of their fathers affects Korean Presbyterian Christians, who tend to have a distorted image of God. Therefore, they may possibly have some degree of difficulty in trusting and abandoning themselves to God. Our love and service of God come from the experience of being loved. Therefore, recalling the experience of God’s love will help the Korean Presbyterian Christians to trust and surrender to God. Contemplation is a total disposition, a total surrender of one’s memory, understanding, and entire will to God. Buckley states that “the unity of three moments – interior knowledge or realization, love or affectivity, service or action – constitutes the full goal of the contemplation of the goodness from God [and] a single line of

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319 Merton, *Contemplative Prayer*, (see chap. 4, no. 264).
320 Buckley, “Contemplation to Attain Love,” (see chap. 4, no. 276).
321 Egan, *Mystical Horizon*, (see chap. 4, no. 272).
interpersonal surrender.”

2 Contribution to the Contemporary Korean Presbyterian Church

The Great Awakening in Pyung Yang City in 1907 was a communal movement of conversion. Korean Christians reflected on their lives in the light of the word of God as they challenged by the word and touched by the Holy Spirit. Through continual Bible studies and prayer meetings, Christians honestly repented from their sins and turned to God. This movement in Pyung Yang inflamed the other cities and throughout the country. Christians’ lives were radically transformed. This movement promoted the growth of the Church. At present, many Korean Church leaders and Christians look forward to a revival of the Great Awakening. Theologians urge the Church and Christians to restore their sanctification. Nevertheless, without deep reflections in the light of the word, without honest confessions of sins, and without fundamental life changes through repentance, the Korean Church and Christians may not expect the revival of the Great Awakening.

This thesis implies the necessity of learning how to apply Ignatian discernment concretely to the Korean Presbyterian Church and to individual Christians to attain sanctification. To enhance their ability to choose and to act through motives of love, according to the way of Christ and of the sanctifying Spirit, learning Ignatian discernment is critical. I expect to help Korean Presbyterian Christians to become more focused on the purpose of creation, namely the praise, reverence, and service of God and neighbor, and the salvation of their souls. Fulfillment of this purpose will demand of them that they face the challenges and difficulties of life in this world to

322 Buckley, “Contemplation to Attain Love,” (see chap. 4, no. 282).
the point of accepting actual poverty, shame and death. However, a genuinely intimate, loving relationship with God will enable Christians to recognize their ecclesial duties and roles as a true vocation and self-surrender to God in praise and service.

Both individual Christians and the Korean Presbyterian Church need to learn not only the methods of Ignatian discernment but also the purpose of discernment. They must be ‘indifferent’, not leaning to any particular way of life or worldly goal, such as success, church growth, or prosperity. The exercise of Ignatian discernment should end in conversion, as the person is touched by the love of God. Bernard Lonergan affirms that affective experience of God’s love inclines a person toward conversion: religious, moral or intellectual. Lonergan describes that through experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding, a person may have new data, new observation, new description, and new insight, the person thus reaching a new decision.324

Through this conversion process, each time the person becomes a new person and attains sanctification, because affective experiences of God touch our history and our personality, which affect our choices.325 Discernment through prayer is fundamental to be able to receive the strength to love and serve God. For this reason, discernment is a matter of “being,” not of “skills,” because it is a question of who we are and who we will become in relation with God. Through Ignatian discernment, we may find the will of God and our deepest desire in God. Thus, our prayer, discernment, and action together form a unified process of sanctification, in Ignatian terms, “contemplation in action.”

Therefore, learning the art of discernment is an indispensable practice for Christians who seek to become true disciples of Christ. I hope this thesis will make a true contribution to the Korean

325 Robb, “Conversion,” 12.
Presbyterian Church and to individual Christians, assisting them to experience God’s love through a fuller response to the sanctifying grace of God. I believe that understanding and daily practicing Ignatian discernment will be greatly helpful to Korean Presbyterians as they search for sanctification and for union with God.

3 Further Lines of Study

I explored Ignatian discernment in view of its application to the Korean Presbyterian Church and to Christians as individuals, especially to those who are yearning to attain Christian sanctification. However, further study on obedience is needed because I limited myself to centering attention on God’s love. For this reason, the cultural, moral and social aspects of obedience were not discussed thoroughly. Ignatian teaching on obedience emphasizes that Christians need to obey authority only where no sin is involved. However, there is some possibility of confusion in the Korean situation.

Especially when Christians have to confront cultural, social or moral injustice, they need to discern which choice and action will be the most in harmony with the greater glory and service of God. Therefore, further, more detailed study of the Ignatian teaching on obedience is required.

In addition, obedience must be discussed from the perspective of authority as well. There is a chance of subtle oppression on the part of authority, which must not misuse Ignatian teaching on obedience as a tool for controlling the Korean Presbyterian Church and Christians in the name of love of God; obedience must be examined and introduced carefully in order to prevent manipulations on the part of either the authority or the subordinates. Thus obedience must be discussed without insisting on total submission of the subordinate in the absence of discernment.

In conclusion, a careful, detailed study of Ignatian teaching on obedience must be discussed further in the Korean context.
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