

THE TANGUN SHRINE WORSHIP AND RADICAL CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT IN KOREA.

(Indigenization and Contextualization in the Ko-
rean Church)

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I. Introduction

At the present the Korean Church, which is the fastest growing church in Asia with great potential for world missions in the 21 century, is facing a critical moment. The crisis the Korean church is facing should be considered from two aspects; one from cultural identity, and the other is ideological or radical christian movement based on the political theology such as liberation theology and "minjung theology." Around 1985 our "Kosin" group(Korean Presbyterian Church), which is known as the most conservative and pro-government group among the Korean churches, strongly protested against the government planning the Tangun Shrine' erection. I suppose that our representatives who participated in the 2nd ICRC conference reported it to you. However, no longer is the Tangun Shrine worship the hot issue in the Korean Church, instead the unification and "minjung" theology has become the debating issue. As far as the minjung theology is concerned, this radical political theology was introduced to the world as the typical Korean theology. So I would like to explain to you the two aspects our churches are facing these days: cultural identity and ideological or theological issue. Some of your papers are focusing on the "texts," on the other hand, my paper brings our "context" to you. So far our theology in Korea mainly discussed the texts, not seriously considering context.

The so-called conservative theology in Korea did not give the right answer to the questions

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raised by the people ; on the other hand they only give right answers to the questions nobody asked. Even the reformed theology is facing a crisis, because we do not answer how to deal with our cultural heritage and complex socio-economic political situation from the reformed perspective. Now no longer is the Tangun Shrine movement threats to us, rather, the debates on unification of the divided nation and anti-government demonstration are difficult issues for us. There is the Unification Church which is a syncretism on the right side, on the left there are the Christian radical movements who try to realize utopia on the earth. The Tangun Shrine and the Christian radical movements are contrasting issues, but we feel the need to discuss them in order to let you know how the reformed theology in Korea deals with the problem of cultural identity and the sociopolitical situation.

1. Tangun Worship : The cultural identity in the Korean churches.

Most nations in the world have their own myth on the founding of the nation and claims divine origin of their people or tribe, Korea is no exception. When the writer went to the elementary school in childhood, the teachers taught students that our nation was founded by Tangunwangum in BC. 2333. To help you understand this myth, I quote the story as follows :

An ancient record relates : In olden times was Hang In(Heavenly god). His son, Ung, born of his concubine desired for himself an earthly life and wanted to be among human society. The father, knowing his son's intention, looked down upon the San Wei and the Taebaek and came to the conviction that his son might bring some benefits to mankind. The father gave his son three talismans and let him go. Ung descended with threethousand followers on to the top of Mount Taebaek under the trees of the sacred altar which place was called the Divine Place. He had command over the Wind Noble, over the Lord of Rain and the Lord of Clouds. Therefore, he had to attend to the planting of grain, the regulation of human life, of sickness, of punishment, and he had to judge good and evil ; in short, he had more than three hundred and sixty affairs to direct.

In this world he regulated all metamorphosis. At that time there were a bear and a tiger who lived together in a cave. They often prayed to the god Ung because they wished to be transformed into human beings. Ung gave them a miraculous wormwood stalk and twenty beads of garlic. He instructed them to eat this and not to see the sunlight for one hundred days-then they would easily acquire human form. These(herbs) the bear and tiger took and ate. They(following the instructions) remained in seclusion for three times seven day(only) and the bear acquired the body of a woman ; but

the tiger had not been able to abstain(from looking at the daylight) and so it was not possible for him to obtain a human body. The bear-woman could find no one to marry, whereupon under the trees of the altar she prayed to become pregnant. Ung changed his form and married her. She became pregnant and bore a son and his name was Tangunwangum.¹⁾

According to this myth Tangunwangum established a nation and gave to the kingdom the name of Choson, land of morning calm. Its capital city was "Assadal" which is now the capital city of North Korea, but later he moved the capital city from Assadal to Mt. Kuwol in Hwanghae province, where there is now a shrine called Sam-song(Three Holy Ones : Hwanin, the Heavenly King, Hwanung, the Heavenly Prince, and Tangun, the first human king). It is not necessary to say that this shrine has become a focus for shamanistic ritual performances in which Tangun himself is worshipped.²⁾ In the beginning of the 20th century Paek Bong, a Korean scholar, started Tangun religion whose god is Tangun. His intention was to prevent the Western religion(Christianity) from spreading in Korea.

Now there are several groups among the Tangun religion, they are united to play the leading roles on the movement of the Tangun worship. To make the religious analysis of the Tangun myth, it is a origin myth of the North Korean people, which was made after the unification of Korea by the silla dynasty in the 7th century and just before the Koryu Dynasty in BC. 918-1392. Frits Vos comments on this myth in his book *Die Religionen Korea* as follows: This myth contains some elements to give interesting speculation. Although it is not always so, the bear-worship and belief in human's descendant from bear are found in North Asia as well as in North America.

In another relation we see the vestiges of Totemism in Korea³⁾ (trans.).

Most Koreanologists agree that this myth is closely related with Korea's Buddhism, Shamanism and Taoism, and accordingly we do not regard the myth as real historical fact that took place in time and space.

1) The Tangun Shrine Worship Movement in Korea

There was a rising of nationalism in the Third World after their independence from the Western colonialism in the early 1960s. In Korea also national consciousness was rising among the people, therefore the Tangun myth has appeared as the most important concern

1) Spencer J. Palmer, *Korean and Christianity* : The Problem of Identification with Tradition (Seoul : Hollym Corporation. 1967), pp. 9-10.

2) Ibid, p. 10.

3) Frits Vos, *Die Religionen Korea*(Berlin : Verlag Kohlhammer), p. 27.

for the nationalists and peoples. As early as 1948 the Korean government adopted the Tangun year as national chronology and October 3rd has become the national holiday in the commemoration of the national foundation based on the Tangun myth. Even the Christian president, Dr. Sung Man Rhee and some Christian politicians were not hesitant to use the Tangun year in the name of national self-consciousness. In 1966 President Park Jung Hee with strong national self-consciousness ordered our Prime Minister to erect Tangun Shrine temple in the Namsan Park where formerly the Shinto Shrine Temple was placed during the Japanese occupation. The Korean Christians strongly protested against Park's order, and he changed his order. However, the government erected Tangun Temple in the Sajik Park located in the central place of the city of Seoul. It is needless to say that this temple has become the focal point for the adherents to Tangun religion and citizens.

In 1970s and the early 1980s the voices of the Tangun Temple's erection was silenced, which seemed to be overshadowed by peoples crying for democracy and social justice. But in 1985 the Korean government again expressed their planning to erect Tangun temples around the nation and attempted to expand the existing temple in Sajik Park. So our Church has raised the most strong voices and has taken strong actions against the government's planning, but, they have kept silence on the social justice and democratization. At this time some nationalistic historians and students describes Tangun myth as a historical fact and regards Tangunwangum as a historical real figure, claiming that Japanese Scholars and the pro-Japanese Scholars advocated the Tangun myth as a non-historical and unreliable history in order to justify their colonialism on Korea. For example, Dr. Lee Byung Do, a well known historian, argued that Tangun is not myth but a real historical figure.

Even a young student, Mr. Kim Young Ju, argues that Tangun is a real historical fact, claiming that the grass root's culture of our nation is the father of the world culture and civilization. When we look over the world map, Korean people is the origin from which the world culture came including Japan, Europe and America. The serious thing for the Korean churches is that the Unification Church joined this Tangun shrine movement by agreeing that Tangun is a historical figure and the Eden and 4 Rivers of Genesis Chapter two is located in Korea.⁴⁾

Then why do some nationalistic scholars and people lead the Tangun Shrine movement? They argue that the need of Tangun temple can restore people's ethics and behaviour,

4) Yong Ju Kim, *A History of Tangun Chosen*(kor.) (Seoul: 1987), p. 76.

secondly it brings national self-consciousness(Churchuishik); thirdly it is needed for the purpose of national unity and harmony among the peoples; fourthly it is a royal road leading to the unification of the divided nation. Despite their reasonable arguments for the Tangun worship movement, the Korean Church reject it on the reason that Tangun worship is idolatry which can result in God's severe judgments.

2) The Tangun Myth and Indigenization Debate

With the rising of nationalism in Korea in the early 1960s, the Korean Church had the indigenization debates, and it has to do with Tangun myth. In August 27, 1962, D.T.Niles of Ceylon visited the Korean Church and spoke on indigenization at the Christian Literature Society in Seoul. This stimulated the indigenization debates in Korea. "With little reaction from the conservative camp, the debate has remained largely an internecine war within broadly neo-orthodox circles. But its importance for the church as a whole cannot be overlooked."⁵⁾ In his lecture's Niles called for the necessity of a Korean theology. He used the following simile:

First, the gospel is seed, the Church is a flower grown from the seed. But the flowers that come from the seed differ according to the soil in which they are grown. Likewise, each churches has its own distinctives according to its national culture... Second, the Gospel is theology. There is German theology in Germany, English theology in England, Indian theology in India; likewise the Korean church should have its own Korean theology.⁶⁾

From 1963 onward articles and essays on indigenization increasingly began to appear. Dr. Sung Bum Yun, professor of Methodist Theological Seminary in Seoul, was the first Korean scholar to advocate Korean theology. His book *Christianity and Korean thought*(Kor.) was a significant treatise on indigenization. Borrowing Bultmann's concept of *Vorverstandigkeit*, he defines indigenization as the pre-understanding of self, of self-identity prior to receiving the Gospel. Accordingly traditional religions play an important role in making people receptive to the Gospel, because they are the soil in which the Gospel seed is planted.⁷⁾ Yun's study of indigenization begins with the Tangun myth. In this account, one

5) Harvie M. Conn, *Korean Theology: Where has it been? Where is it going?* (Gotema, Japan: Reformed Ecumenical Synod Pacific Conference, 1970), p. 12.

6) D. T. Niles, *The Bible Study and Indigenization*, "The Church and Mission in Korea, Harold S. Hong, ed., (Seoul: CLSK, 1963), pp. 279-280.

7) Sung Bum Yun, "Whaning, Whanung, and Tangun are god," *Thought World*(kor.) (May, 1963) p. 267.

comes upon interesting similarities with the concept of the Trinity in Scripture. Therefore, he related the Tangun myth with God's Trinity, and identified it with God. He regarded the Tangun myth as the treasure of the Korean people the *Vestigium Trinitatis*. Whanin in the myth stands for the Father, Whanung for the Holy Spirit, and Tangun for the Son.⁸⁾

Due to the similarities between Trinity and the myth, some scholars maintain that the myth was formed under Christian influence between the fourth and eighth centuries, when Nestorian ideas spread to China and thereafter to North Korea. Non-Christian Koreanologist Byung Do Lee says that the Korean trinity is found in the Tangun myth. Il Cho Chang, Professor of Hankook Theological Seminary (the most liberal presbyterian seminary), suggests to use the Tangun myth as the stepping stone for evangelism by making the comparative study between the Creation story in Scripture and the Tangun myth. He argues :

Some may complain that we take again the Tangun myth seriously which people already looked down as worthless pagan myth since a long time ago. But though that is a pagan myth, it is a necessary to reflect on it for mission and theology. Until now the missionary attitudes of the Korean church has never paid any attentions to the so-called non-Biblical theory or myth... Theology does not only analyzes and defends the contents of Scripture, but also it should be the meeting place to meet the situation in Scripture and our context. Although we can not expect any connection between the creation story in Scripture and the Tangun myth, however, there is possible dialogue between the two in theology. It is the task of Korean theology⁹⁾

Here we can understand that many Korean scholars take our cultural heritages seriously and they relate it to christianity. Then what is the conservative group's response to the indigenization debates and what does it mean for us? In a word we, the Kosin group, by closing our eyes on it, did not express any response to this debates. We gave our attention to the "texts" of the Bible, but we did not teach students how to consider our cultural heritages and our traditional religions. It is needless to say that Dr. Yun's indigenization on the Tangun myth is a syncretistic approach because he made a great mistake in attempting to synthesize native culture and biblical Christianity. He sought the linkage between Christianity and traditional Korean thought. he neglected the distortion of the truth that invariably is the result of its being handled by the natural man. J.H. Bavinck tried to interpret the

8) Ibid.

9) Il Jo Chang, "Theological Understanding on Tangun Myth," *Christian Thought* (kor.) (December, 1961), p. 71.

"moment of truth" in heathen religions in terms of common grace, and this common grace becomes the point of contact. But for Yun, however, the point of contact is the similarity between Christianity and traditional thought. In this respect, he emphasized the *analogia entis* of Karl Barth.

Even though Kosin group did not react against the indigenization debates, some theologians of the conservative church severely criticize Dr. Yun's "Tangun theology" as dangerous form of syncretism. Here we will quote one of many criticisms on Dr. Yun's Indigenization theology :

The forming of indigenization theology seems to be fit for the spirit of age, because Korea is attempting to establish the Korean democracy. The Korean democracy could be possible through politics, but not through Korean theology. Christian truth we believe is not a relativistic political theory of philosophy but it is and absolute unchangeable; therefore, we can not conceive of any Gospel truth which was only true according to the Korean situation. Seeds containing life never produce different fruits according to different soils.¹⁰⁾

2. The Radical Christian Movement in the Korean Church

From the beginning the theology of the Korean Church was so conservative that the liberal theology of the Western church was denied by the pastors and seminary students. The American missionaries who came to Korea in the end of 19th century mostly were from the conservative groups or fundamentalism with "Puritanic zeal and Wesleyan fervor". To help you understand the characteristics of the early Korean theology and faith, I quote again the Dr. Palmer :

The typical missionary of the first quarter of the century after the opening of the country was a man who still kept the sabbath much like his New England forebears a century earlier. He looked upon dancing, smoking, card-playing, and the drinking of liquor as sin in which true follower of Christ should not indulge. In theology and biblical criticism he was strongly conservative, and he held as a vital truth the premillennial view of the second coming of Christ. Higher criticism and liberal theology were deemed as dangerous heresies.¹¹⁾

Accordingly, the missionary programs of the missionaries were usually preoccupied with direct evangelism, baptizing and church planting, not with social concern. Community reform

10) Eui Hwan Kim, *Gospel and Truth* (kor.) (Seoul: Christian Literature Crusade, 1975), p. 24.

11) Palmer, op. cit., p. 26.

and social betterment were regarded as use of time and energy that could be more gainfully employed in evangelism. This can be a weakpoint, but this can be a reason for the rapid church growth in Korea. Dr. Samuel Moffet, formerly presbyterian missionary to Korea, put his finger on the reasons of the church growth in Korea as follows :

Many reasons have been given for the amazing Protestant growth, which was particularly notable in the Presbyterian church.

The most important reasons seem to have been a stress on people-to-people evangelism, Bible training for the entire church membership, the adaptation of the Nevius method (which promoted self-support, self-government and self-propagation), and the unique outpouring of the Holy Spirit in revival.¹²⁾

However, this strong conservative theology was especially challenged and criticized from the more progressive church, liberal theologians, and students. The John Bunyan's Pilgrim Progress's faith was almost accused to be individualistic, neglecting the social responsibility of Christians. Bonhoeffer has become a hero for the young men and liberal minded people in the Korean church. In 1960s the liberal group has expressed social concern by protesting against the military dictatorship of the president Park's regime. While this liberal group made a strong protest against the military dictatorship, they accused the conservative church of isolationism, literalism and verbalism. Despite their strong criticisms on the conservative theology and faith, this "new theology" was acceptable to some but was rejected by the majority.

In 1970s this "new theology" has raised strong winds on the church as well as in the society by introducing liberation theology of Latin America to Korea. The radical political theology made great impacts on the church as well as on the society because this theology gave a good theoretical foundation to those who fought against the Korean government on the human right issues. Strictly speaking, liberation theology was introduced to Korea in 1970 and the Moltman's theology of hope was introduced in 1973, this radical theology gave the awareness of political responsibility to the church. Anyway the liberal group and conservative group have shown interest on this because the former studies to learn from it while the latter studies to criticize it. The liberation theology of the WCC was implemented by the KNCC's churches and its theologians.

The climax of liberation theology came to in a theological declaration made by some liberal theologians and the church leaders in the protest against the "Yusin Constitution"

12) Samuel Moffet, "Korea," *The Church in Asia*, Donald Hoke, ed., Chicago : Moody Press, 1975), p. 378.

(Reform Constitution) which seems to perpetuate the Park's military regime. It is a "Human Right Statement," an important theological statement. It says :

The present reality of Korean society is that human rights have been mercilessly trampled upon. Politically, the people have been deprived of their sovereign rights, and there is only a facade of democracy, while the people's religious freedom is withheld. At this time when even religious freedom is being withdrawn, the Church must earnestly repent of its former negative attitude of being just and onlooker, and it must make a new decision to fight until it achieves the freedom to establish human rights.¹³⁾

As a matter of fact, another theological declaration already appeared six months prior to the statement mentioned above, which is the 73 Christian Manifesto, the so-called Korean Barmen Declaration. This was more radical and somewhat more critical of the traditional apolitical stance of the Korean church and even the declaration of human rights by the KNCC. The statement declared :

We stand in a historical tradition of such struggle for liberation as the independence movement by Christians against Japanese colonialism. We realize that our Christian community has often lacked the courage to take a decisive stand, and that the theological outlook of the official bodies of Christian churches has been too pietistic to take up revolutionary roles. It is not needless to say that this statement reflects liberation theology, and Hockendijk's Messianic Kingdom also is seen in the statement.

Jesus the Messiah, our Lord, lived and dwelt among the oppressed, poverty-stricken, and sick in Judea. He boldly stood in confrontation with Pontius Pilate, a representative of the Roman Empire, and he was crucified in the course of his witness to the truth. He has risen from the dead to release the power of transformation which sets the people free. We solve that we will follow the footsteps of our Lord, living among oppressed and poor people, standing against political oppression, and participating in the transformation of history, for this is the only way to the Messianic Kingdom.¹⁴⁾

2) Minjung Theology in the Korean Church

The liberation theology in Korea has soon developed to minjung theology. "Minjung" is a Korean word for people in English, and accordingly "minjung theology" is liberation

13) KNCC, "Declaration on Human Rights," *The Christian Press* (December, 1, 1973), 2.

14) "Theological Declaration by Christian Ministers in the Republic of Korea," *Mission Trends No. 3*, Gerald Anderson, ed., (Grand Rapids : Wm. Eerdmans Pub., 1976), p. 232.

theology contextualized in the Korean Church. It started in 1974 when Chi Ha Kim (Kim Chi-Ha), a young Roman Catholic poet, who was in jail for many years, used the term "minjung" to describe a fighting by the people against a authoritative government. The minjung theologians are very proud of having established pure Korean theology and many theologians outside the Korean Church think highly of this "Korean Liberation theology." But this theology is not pure Korean theology, because "the poor" in liberation theology is only replaced by a minjung which has become popular term in the society as well as in the church.

Here we need to make a brief mention on the poet Kim, for his poem were much read in the Korean society and he was awarded "Lotus" award of Asia-African Writers' Association in 1975 and "The Great Poet" by Poetry International in 1981. But for the conservative minded people he is a very radical man as he constructed a dialectical synthesis of Christianity with Marxism. He understood Christianity in terms of liberation, and accordingly, he believed in the validity of violence to achieve liberation. While he was accused by the government to be a Communist and was in jail, he, as a Roman Catholic, was in contact with liberation theology through the Roman Catholic priests. At this time many Roman Catholic priests and student groups were also involved in the anti-government struggle. Of course, Kim played a leading role in this anti-government struggles and he boldly expressed his radicalism by affirming revolutionary actions for the realization of democracy and social justice in his famous "A Declaration of Conscience." He says in the declaration that we need the violence of love for the oppressed "minjung."

Violence and destructiveness obviously bring suffering and hardship. But we must sometimes cause and endure suffering. Never is this more true than when the people are dozing in silent submission, when they can not be awakened from their torpor. To preach non-violence at such a time leaves the defenseless before their enemies. When the people must be awakened and sent resolutely off to battle, violence is unavoidable. Ghandi and Franz Fanon agonized over this dilemma. Father Camilo Torres took a rifle and joined the people.¹⁵⁾

Minjung theology was advocated by Nam Dong Suh, a professor of Yonsei University in Seoul under the influence of Chi Ha Kim (Kim Chi-He) in 1974. After the professor Suh' article on minjung has appeared in 1974, other liberal theologians and professors joined this new Korean theology and they put much efforts in basing their theological foundations on the Bible. The study of minjung theology came to climax in the theological

15) Sekai, ed., *Letters from South Korea* (New York : IDOC, 1976), p. 395.

consultation sponsored by the Theological Commission of the KNCC on the subject "Minjung and the Mission of the Church," which was held in Seoul, in October 22-24, 1978. It is very interesting to note that President Park Jung Hee was assassinated by his own KCIA chief two nights after the consultation. We suppose that there are about twenty minjung theologians in Korea, but the ideas of minjung theology slightly differ on minor details. To put minjung theology in a word, it is "Bonhoeffer's worldly interpretation of the Bible and the secular meaning of the Gospel. It is a development of the political hermeneutics of the Gospels in terms of the Korean reality."¹⁶⁾ The book *Minjung Theology*, a product of the consultation and published by the by the commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia, is very helpful for those who want to get more informations and knowledge on it. Due to the our limitations on time and space, we are not able to discuss minjung theology in details. Let us say that it is the contextual theology in Korea reflecting the Korean reality. So this minjung theology made a great impact on the church as well as on the society. Now minjung theology has almost become ideology to guarantee the utopia to the "minjung".

Liberation theology and minjung theology gave it's birth to the radical Christian movements who struggle to establish the Messianic Kingdom in which the minjung can become the "master" of history. The KNCC and many Roman Catholic priests and laymen are involved in social and political actions, there are another radical groups within the Protestant churches challenging the status quo represented by the government are the Korean Student Federation (KSCF) and Urban Industrial Mission (UIM). All these seeks to translate liberation theology into political action. They are motivated by the strong conviction that the realization of social justice is mission, and believe that the corporate salvation of society is more important than any form of individual salvation. They largely focused on social justice, many students of KSCF became involved in disruptive political activities and were put into jail. In this regard, the WCC's "presence is mission" theory was widely practiced by this group. Besides the students of the KSCF, other Christian students got involved in the anti-government protests and demonstrations by appealing to "Christian socialism." For them captialism is injustice, immoral, and irrational, and America is an imperialistic nation. Many "conscientized" students interpret the Bible from the ideological viewpoint in which the Bible condemns capitalism. For example, they interpret the Babylon in the Revelation as the symbol of capitalism to be destroyed by revolution. It is serious danger

16) Yong Bok Kim, "Korean Christianity as a Messianic Movement of the People," *Minjung Theology* (Singapore : CTCCA, 1981), p. 19.

for the Korean church that we have many students distorting the Scriptures in this way.

With respect to Urban Industrial Mission. It is the most radical dissident group threatening the government and the industrial world. Their main concern is not evangelism in the industry and factories, rather their involvement is in labor-management disputes and the struggle for better wages for low paid workers. In other words, UIM appears to industrialists and managers as a political pressure group. This type of activity is consonant with a radical understanding of mission. Accordingly, UIM's minister and evangelists have not been hesitant to level charges against what they regard as the injustices of employers or to fill an arbitrating role between the employer and the employed. Inevitably, they tend to side with the weak in labor-management disputes. However, such activities of UIM have precipitated much anger, hatred and strong opposition from the employers. It is also well known that UIM is strongly supported by the CWME of WCC. This is seen in the Nairobi Report :

Confrontation with government, economic and church structures has come about almost inevitably in many localities where groups engaged in Urban Industrial Mission are taking seriously the Bible's demand for faithful witness to the Gospel among urban peoples of low economic and social status. Clergy and people in Chile, the Philippines, Thailand and Zimbabwe, among other places, have suffered physical abuse, harassments, imprisonment, loss of jobs and even exile for their part in urban and industrial mission activities. The CWME has tried to provide a framework for international exchange of information and mutual encouragement of the some local UIM groups on all six continents through regional contact groups and in international advisory group.¹⁷⁾

Here we need to mention another group practising "doing theology" in Korea in the 1970s. This group consists of the foreign missionaries who engaged in the so-called socio-political mission. Some Protestants and Catholic missionaries also assume challenging attitudes towards the government on human rights issue. When they were not hesitant to charge against the Korean government of having violated on human rights and social justice, the Korean government has deported them on the grounds of their behaving illegally "meddled in domestic political matters." So they responded by sending "An Open Letter" to their fellow missionary colleagues around the world. The letter emphasize that social concern is the duty of all Christian, and that this should be extended to all areas of human life : cultural, social, economic and political. When the Korean government insists that missiona-

17) David Johnson, *Uppsala to Nairobi* (New York : Friendship Press, 1975), p. 87.

ries should regard themselves as guests, they replied that they were not guests but prophets for the Korean society.

Aside from the fact that the presence of any foreigner in Korea today is in itself of deep political significance, we feel that this issue could be approached from a number of directions. How long, for example must a missionary live in a foreign land before he ceases to be a guest? If a missionary chooses to identify himself as a guest, does this mean that the demands which the Lord places on him become secondary to those which the Korean government places upon him? What of Amos, who journeyed to a foreign land and spoke prophetically? And if we are really guests, who is the host? Is it the rulers of this nation or its people? Furthermore, what is the responsibility of the guest to the host? Does the guest sit quietly even if he discovers that his host has become ill or is dying? Why does a guest have the right to "meddle" in the most crucial aspect of life—the religious—but not the human?¹⁸⁾

3) The Unification Debates and Political Involvement

In 1980s the radical Christian movement can be characterized by their involvement in political party and unification debates. In 1988 Korea had general elections to elect the lawmakers in each areas, some ministers and theologians who engaged in socio-political mission joined the party for Peace and Democracy led by Dae Jung Kim (Kim Dae-Jung), opposition political leader and well known around the world. Dae Jung Kim (Kim Dae-Jung) is one of our most famous political leaders. During the Park's government regime, he spent many years in jail and in exile in the USA because he was opposed to the government. Now democracy has been restored, he is president of the largest opposition party (PPD).

Although this party claims that they are taking the anti-Communist line, it is said that they have leftist elements and some radical Christian groups usually support KDJ. For example, Rev. Dong Whan Moon (Moon Dong-Whan), formerly a professor in Hankook Theological Seminary, has been appointed one of vice-presidents in that party. On the other hand, many ministers and church leaders of the radical Christian groups now play an important role in leading the anti-government struggles outside the churches.

In Korea we don't have Christian political party like in Germany or Netherlands, but we can say that we have the Christian socialists who try to combine Christianity and Marxism. They changed Christian theology to ideology by which they attempt to establish the

18) "An Open Letter" *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 65, No. 258, (April, 1976), p. 179.

Kingdom of God on the earth. The mean to establish it is not reformation of the society but revolution. Accordingly the society considers them too radical or revolutionary. Our society still regards "middle of the road" approach better and usually rejects radicalism.

The radical Christian groups in Korea began to change from the struggles for democratization to the struggles for the reunification of the divided nation from 1985, because they judge that democratization is already at least partly being realized. The unification issue appeals to our students and is a favorite issue now used by our radical students. For them, the Korean government and the presence of the US army in Korea are becoming an hindrance to the realization of the divided nation, so the government should be overthrown and the US army should withdraw from the penninsula. The anti-American spirit is strong in these radical groups that we often hear the shout "Yankee, go home!"

As far as the unification debates in Korea is concerned, the WCC played the important roles on it. The WCC's theology of peace is reflected and practiced in Korea. The WCC held a consultation on peace and justice in North East Asia from October 29-November 2, 1984 in Tozanso, Japan, in which they decided to send the official delegates to North Korea and South Korea in order to seek the possibility of reunification. Subsequent to their visit to North Korea, many visits were made by the delegates of the NCC of Japan, the US, Germany and Australia, and many consultations were held from 1985 until now discussing the unification of the penninsula. In this way the WCC expressed their solidarity with the Korean Church. The dominant theme of these conferences discussing unification of the penninsula was peace and justice. However, the WCC's idea of peace is horizontal rather than vertical by which the realization of peace in international order through the reconciling works of Jesus Christ is more important than the reconciliation of the fallen man and God through the Cross of Jesus Christ. To help understand their idea of justice and peace let us quote from Tozanso' Statement :

"The people of the world stand in need of peace and justice. Peace is not just the absence of war. Peace cannot be built on foundations of injustice. Peace requires a new international order based on justice for and within all nations, and respect for the God-given humanity and dignity of every person. Peace is, as the Prophet Isaiah has taught us, the effect of righteousness. "The churches today are called to confess anew their faith, and to repent for the times when Christians have remained silent in the face of injustice and threats to peace. The biblical vision of peace with justice for all, of wholeness, of unity for all God's people, is not one of several options for the followers of Christ. It is an imperative of our time.

"The ecumenical approach to peace and justice is based on the belief that without

justice for all everywhere, we shall never have peace anywhere"¹⁹⁾

Last April the Korean society has got involved again in the great controversy on unification since Rev. Ik Whan Moon(Moon Ik-Whan), formerly professor in Hankook Theological Seminary and an elder brother of Rev. Dong Whan Moon, made his illegal visit to North Korea and exchanged a hug with the dictator Il Sung Kim(Kim Il-Sung), which is unusual custom for the Orientals. Most people were shocked to see Rev. Moon's visit to North Korea and his meeting with Kim Il-Sung. However, some people support his visit and as a consequence the society was again polarized. The conservative groups shaply criticize Rev. Moon's action, while the radical groups and the KNCC applauded him and said that his action would promote the reunification of the divided nation. This Rev. Moon is a liberal Presbyterian pastor and is a strong advocate of Minjung theology. In practice he seems very favorable to Communist North Korea and very critical of our society and government in South Korea.

Conclusion

As "Jürgen Moltman once said, the modern church in the world is faced with the crisis of identity-involvement, and it is just the same in the Korean Church. Now the Korean Church is still wrestling with how to deal with it's cultural heritage and how to be involved in the complex socio-political situation. The issues that the Korean Church is facing can be described as indigenization and contextualization. Some mis-siologists consider the two terms as the same, others understand that contextualization is broaden than indigenization, and there are those who make the distinction between the two terms.²⁰⁾ We would also like to make the distinction between these two terms.

Concerning the Tangun shrine worship, the Korean Christian do not like to worship Tangun as a national god, but they recognize the significance of the myth. Tangun is not a historical figure. In this regard we agree with Levi-Strauss's words that myths have an internal logic of their own. But they are not about the real world.²¹⁾

Anyway the Tangun shrine issue challenges us to think about how we deal with

19) Erich Weingartner, "The Tozanso Process : An Ecumenical Contribution to the Struggle for Peace and Justice in North-East Asia," *Reunification : Peace and Justice in Korea*, Christian Conference of Asia, ed., (Seoul : KNCC, 1988), p. 18.

20) Al Krass illustrated the difference by comparing indigenization to what one reads in the National Geography and contextualization to reading Time magazine.

21) Harvie M. Conn, *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds*(Grand Rapids : Zondervan Pub., 1984), p. 322.

our cultural heritages. We learn Abraham Kuypeis cultural mandate from the Reformed theology in the Netherlands, so we, the students of Korea Theological Seminary in Pusan, quite often discuss Calvinism and culture. Many books on that are translated into Korean. However, we did not take our traditional culture and the values of the old religions seriously. It seems to us that Reformed Theology might be irrelevant to issues such as demon possessions, angels, ancestral worship in Korea, since it is not much concerned with these matters. Instead of that our professors may be sometimes be teaching subjects that have less prolitical value to our Korean students. Seminary professors are scratching where it didn't itch. !

Contextualization is also the urgent issue for the Korean church. While the radical Christian groups are too keen in socio-poplitical issues neglecting the essential tasks of the Church ; the conservative group are too keen in the orthodox doctrines neglecting the social application of the Gospel to the controversial issues such as social justice and unification. We need the relevancy of Reformed Theology to the Korean contexts. We will close this paper by quoting from Dr. Richard R. De Ridder :

The real task of the witness of Christ is to enable men to be obedient within the context of covenant, to make the covenant relevant, and to let the tradition touch today's situation in a life-giving way. This is not always easy since the implications of covenant life are not always easy since the implications of covenant life are not always clear and it can not always be said with the kind of definiteness we would like what the covenant life must be like in the present. The record of the past is crystal clear concerning God's gracious and liberating deeds in the past ; to assert the same thing as positively in the present is difficult. One witnesses God's continuing work of grace when he walks the way of obedience. The stipulations of the covenant are one of its gracious elements ; God has not left his people in the dark concerning his expectations from them in their covenant life.²²⁾

(This paper was delivered at the 2nd meeting of International Conference of Reformed Church held in Langley, British Columbia, Canada. June 18-30, 1989.)

22) Richard R. De Ridder,, *Discipling the National*(Grand Rapids : Baker Book House, 1971), p. 222.

The Rise and Nature of Historical Criticism

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Introduction

The roots of historical criticism lie as far back as the Enlightenment of the eighteenth

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