

## CHAPTER 1

### RESEARCH ORIENTATION

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Confucianism, filial piety is the most significant and highest virtue of all ethical teachings. The most important classical literature in Confucianism concerning filial piety is *Shao Chien*<sup>1</sup> (Book of Filial Piety). Probably written in the second to third century B.C., the Book of Filial Piety describes how ancient kings and sages practiced the duties of filial piety rites to heaven and to their parents. The concept of filial piety has influenced the history of China for over 2500 years, and also is the stabilizing and unifying force of the Chinese family system (Chao 1987:21).

A teaching of Confucius, filial piety is emphasized in decidedly Confucian schools. The *Analects of Confucius* 2:5 reports that Confucius said the following with regard to the propriety of ancestor worship: Lord Meng Yi asked about filial piety. The Master said: “When your parents are alive, serve them according to the ritual. When they die, bury them according to the ritual, and make sacrifices to them according to the ritual” (Leys, trans.1997:6-7). Here, “ritual” refers to ancestor worship. Ethically, filial piety is the primary

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<sup>1</sup>*Shao* is the Chinese character 孝, which means “(filial)” or “孝道 (filial piety).” This character is the combination of two words, 老 (“old person”) and 子 (“child”), which means that the child supports the old person. The inner meaning of the Chinese character “*Shao*” is the relational perspective of filial piety. *Chien* is the Chinese character 經, meaning “scripture.” *Shao Chien* is written in the form of dialogue on the teachings of filial piety.

virtue, and is defined as an obligation to serve and honor one's parents, even if deceased. It "originally meant piety to dead parents and ancestors, and the duties owed to them of sacrifice and sustenance." (Parrinder 1983: 321)

"The rite of dead ancestors"<sup>2</sup> is a significant attitude and familial ritual toward death and the afterlife in Confucianism. The ritual teaches that respect for parents and elders is the root of humanity, and that filial piety includes not only honoring parents while they are alive, but also practicing ancestral rites for deceased parents (Oldstone-Moore 2002: 55-56). Therefore, Confucians believe that filial piety does not terminate when the parent dies; rather, filial piety continues after the parent's death in the form of funerals and memorial rites.

Contrary to Confucianism's teaching, protestant Christians can neither agree with nor accept that ancestral rites differ from necrolatry. Filial piety is an important Christian virtue, but to worship the dead is contrary to biblical filial piety. In 1884, Protestant missionaries first arrived in Korea. At that time, Confucianism prevailed in Korean society as the norm in educational and public life. The ideals of Confucianism were the basis of all standards of behavior, ethics, values, and attitudes in the home. Since the introduction of Christianity into Korea, ancestor worship has created conflicts and confrontations between Christian and non-Christian family members.

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<sup>2</sup>The terms "rite of dead ancestors, rite of the dead parents, ancestral rite, ancestor cult, ancestor veneration, and ancestral practice" have been used by different writers to refer to "ancestor worship." Therefore, I will use these terms interchangeably throughout this thesis.

Christians reject the practice of ancestor worship because, to them, ancestor worship is not an accepted way to respect one's dead parent. Thus, Korean Confucians and non-Christians used to criticize Christianity as a religion that does not understand filial piety. Furthermore, the matter of ancestor worship alienates and isolates Christians from their non-Christian family members.

Non-Christians have blamed Christianity for the neglect of parents. Therefore the issue of ancestor worship is still very important in Korean religions, and is currently debated in Korean churches and in the nation as a whole.

When one converts to Christianity from a non-Christian family, non-Christian family members persecute him or her regarding ancestor worship. Korean Christian families are struggling even today with the matter of ancestor worship. Therefore, it is very important to have both a fundamental understanding of Confucius, Confucianism, and ancestor worship and filial piety in Confucianism and the teachings of the Bible.

## **1.2 CONFUCIUS AND CONFUCIANISM**

The name "Confucianism" derived from the teachings of a man named Confucius (551-479 B.C.), whose teachings revolutionized filial piety and ancestor worship. Confucianism has since become the true spirit of the Chinese people and nation as the fountainhead of Chinese culture. The Chinese nation has developed and flourished under the influence of the teachings of Confucianism. The name "Confucius" derived from the Chinese

*K'ung Fu tzu*, which literally means “Master *K'ung*.” “Confucius” is a Latinized name given to him by Jesuit priests. Confucius was known to have the five figures: “protuberant eyes, a prominent nose with large nostrils, a pronounced Adam’s apple, flat ears, and teeth that protruded slightly beyond his lips” (Pierre 1969:89). Confucius is well-known to the world as the greatest philosopher of China and the founder of Confucianism. He is considered to be the preeminent thinker, statesman, and educator among the Chinese. He initiated a new era of popular education in Chinese history. Chang (1957:41) identifies his fundamental educational principles as “self-discipline, domestic harmony, wise government and universal peace.”

Confucius was born in 551 B.C., around the time of Buddha in India, Pythagoras in Greece, and Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian captivity in Mesopotamia (Pierre 1969:17-18). His hometown was the small state of Lu, about two hundred miles east of the Yellow Sea, which today is called Ch’u Fu in the Shantung Province in China. Confucius was of a royal lineage and was a descendant of the Chang kings. His ancestors were high officials in politics and literature, but his great grandfather lost his high position and moved to Lu because of political matters. Confucius’s father was a soldier who died when Confucius was three years old (Oldstone-Moore 2002:28).

Because of the death of his father, Confucius’s family was extremely poor. Though Confucius was having difficulty affording an education, he was devoted to studying. By the time he was fifteen years old, he had mastered

the five sacred books of the Chinese, called “Kings.” At age nineteen, Confucius married a girl of the Kien-kuan family and she had a son one year later. Confucius was successful in his job as a granary manager in his district. In 530 B.C., Confucius opened a school to teach music, poetry, and the rites. Confucius became concerned about preserving the history of his own country and thus added history to the curriculum. The main goal of the school of Confucius was to teach the children wisdom, along with how to love mankind and govern well (Pierre 1969:97). In 528 B.C., Confucius ceased his public job because of the death of his mother. During three years of mourning for his mother, Confucius “refrained from sensual indulgence and activities and devoted himself to the study of ancient *li* (rites) and institutions. By the age of thirty, he already commanded public attention and the respect of the great for the mastery of *li*” (Oldstone-Moore 2002:298). His fame increased greatly as a teacher and a great master of ceremonials in the knowledge of *li* and the art of government in Lu.

When Confucius was fifty-two years old (500 B.C.), he got a government job as the chief magistrate of Cheng-tu, located in a town west of the Lu capital. His abilities received much recognition, and he was appointed the Minister of Justice. His efforts as the new minister improved the moral life of the people and strengthened official discipline. However, as a result of rising jealousy among his Lu neighbors, he resigned and left Lu with some of his followers. In 497 B.C., Confucius began striving for an opportunity to work out his ideal form of government, which he continued for the next fourteen years. (497-

484 B.C.) When he was sixty-eight years old, he was recalled to *Lu* by a new duke but felt he was too old to serve again. After he had left his position, he committed his time to serving the government, to teaching the young and to recording and editing ancient documents from historical Chinese periods. Later, these documents became the classics taught in both private and public schools (Oldstone-Moore 2002:30).

The classics are the foundation of the Sacred Books of Confucianism and became the holy scriptures of the Chinese people. Confucius is identified as the founder of Confucianism, but he referred to himself as merely “a transmitter of the learning of the sage kings of antiquity and the virtuous founder of the Chou Dynasty” (Taylor 2004:26). He was simply collecting and revising a set of guidelines of moral development for individuals, society, and government. He rearranged the ancient writings to enlighten people of his own time by excluding useless and irrelevant information. He taught the ancient guidelines to his own generation. Confucius was an intimate scholar of the ancient documents, but later Confucians referred to Confucius as the founder of Confucianism. His many teachings greatly influenced the people. Confucius was the first teacher in Chinese history to give an opportunity for education to the common people.

Shortly before his death, Confucius experienced strong grief twice from losing beloved family and friends: his only son, *Le*, in 482 B.C., and his favorite student, *Yen Hui*, in 481 B.C. Confucius then died in 479 B.C. at the

age of seventy-three, and was buried near his native town, Ch'u Fu. His small tomb still exists in the town (Chai 1973:30-31). The temple of Confucius is located in the center of Ch'u Fu at the place of Confucius's townhouse. After his death, approximately seventy of his disciples scattered across China, preserving his ideas. Some of his disciples achieved high government positions and began to have a major role in training the rulers of China. Thus, his teachings became a central part of Chinese culture.

Later, Confucian scholars refined and expanded his ideas. These scholars forcefully led China to lessen aristocracy and increase democracy through Confucius's doctrines in the country's early history. Chang (1957:23) states, "The greatest effort of the Confucian scholars was centered on the molding of the national character of China so that the spirit and will of the nation might be unified. A second important contribution of the Confucian school of scholars was made in the fields of education and thought." Thus, the term "Confucianism" includes the original teachings of Confucius and also the teachings of his later disciples which became integrated into the doctrinal and ritual system.

Salavicek (2002:8) wrote that Confucianism not only "gained more and more influence over Chinese political, intellectual, and social life, but also spread to other East Asian countries, particularly Korea, Japan, and Vietnam." These countries have taken directly Confucianism, reformed and reawakened by the spirit of Confucianism. Confucianism has extended and arose in Eastern

Asia. Smith (1973:176-177) explains the influence of Confucianism in Eastern Asia that “Confucianism forms the basis of Eastern culture, extending from the individual and the home to society and the state... Confucianism is not the exclusive property of the people of Eastern Asia alone, but should be shared together with the whole world, for Confucianism originally was not limited by the boundaries of national frontiers.”

In summary, the ideals of Confucianism were adopted as the primary basis and principle of Chinese civilization and as an ethical justification and principle for self-defense and the cultural heritage of East Asian countries.

### **1.3 EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE**

Korea has a plurality of religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Shamanism, Confucianism, Roman Catholicism, and Won Buddhism. Nevertheless, the marvel is that there is no serious religious conflict among the religions except on the subject of ancestor worship, which causes very intense conflict among family members, particularly between Christianity and Confucianism. Ancestor worship does not create any conflict or problem with other religions besides Christianity because the other religions allow and practice ancestor worship. Below are some examples of conflict over the issue of ancestor worship in Korean society.

#### **1.3.1 MY MINISTRY**

While serving as the senior pastor at a Korean-American church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA, I have encountered numerous teachings of Confucianism that have melded into the lifestyles and thoughts of Korean-American Christians.

An example of this process is a member of the church who lost her husband in 2004. As she buried her husband in the cemetery, the congregation shared in her sorrow. The first Sunday following his burial, she did not attend the church. I called and visited to check on her. She explained why she was not in attendance at the church on Sunday, saying that she stayed home alone to perform a memorial rite for her husband and visited his grave in the cemetery during the worship time. She was a newly-converted Christian; however, she felt that if she did not perform her memorial rites to her husband, she would be guilt-ridden. Especially in Korea, ancestor worship strongly challenges many new converts, because ancestral rites are part of the Korean culture. Furthermore, almost all non-Christian Koreans believe that this ancestral rite is a sign of respect for their ancestors.

### **1.3.2 AN EXPERT'S SURVEY IN A KOREAN CONTEXT**

The results of a survey by Ryoo (2000:123-25) indicate how the rite of the dead parents is a challenge for Korean churches; the survey is a clear indication of the importance of this issue to the Korean Christian community.

A few of the questions to pastors and the answers are as follows: “Do you think that the rite of the dead parents presents a problem in your ministry as a pastor?” Seventy-seven percent responded “yes,” and 23 percent responded “no.” “Do you seriously counsel your congregation about the rite of the dead parents?” Ninety-nine percent responded “yes,” while 1 percent responded “no.” “How do you answer, or what do you recommend to your congregation?” Nine percent responded “yes” to maintain the rite, while 61 percent said it depends on the family situation, and 30 percent responded absolutely “no.”

Furthermore, Ryoo (2000:141-44) asked laypeople their thoughts about ancestral rites as filial piety. The answers show how Confucian filial piety influences Korean churches. Regarding the rite of the dead parents, 54 percent responded that the rites are an important matter to Christians, 8 percent stated that it depends on the family situation, and 38 percent responded that the rites are not a big problem. When asked about holding the rite of the dead parents in the home, 45 percent responded that the rites were a definite problem, 30 percent stated the rites were somewhat of a problem, and 25 percent indicated the rites were not a problem.

Regarding the rite of the dead parents among relatives, 33 percent responded that the rites were a problem, 42 percent indicated the rites were somewhat of a problem, and 25 percent attested to having no problems.

When asked about their reasons for implementing the rite of the dead

parents, 53 percent of the respondents stated that the rites were an expression of filial piety, 5 percent responded that the rites were a way to receive blessings, and 41 percent responded that the rites were a good custom. An additional 1 percent chose to skip the rite altogether. Among the people involved in the survey, some were from families that were entirely Christian, while others were from families in which only some of the members were Christian (Ryoo 2000:141-44). As the results of Ryoo's survey indicate, among Korean Christian families, close to 75 percent currently have huge or somewhat large problems with relatives concerning ancestral rites.

These results point out the continued presence of the influence of Confucian filial piety in Korean Christianity. Ancestor worship, accepted as an expression of filial piety in Korean culture, is a big syncretistic challenge to Korean Churches.

### **1.3.3 KOREAN RELIGIOUS COUNCIL'S REPORT IN A KOREAN CONTEXT<sup>3</sup>**

Kim (2007) reported about a scientific lecture of the Korea Religious Council (KRC) held in June of 2007 on *Munhwa Ilbo*, a Korean newspaper. At the meeting, the KRC dealt with the problem of religious conflict over ancestral rites in Korea. Hyun-Dong Song, a professor at Kun Yang University in Korea, used two case studies to present his research regarding family

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<sup>3</sup> I translated and summarized the Korean document to English.

conflicts created because of different religions. According to the first case study, Mr. Kim had been observing ancestral rites six times a year. He was a firstborn son with the obligation to practice ancestor worship for his family. Because of the ancestral rites, trouble developed with his brothers.

Serious disagreements among the brothers commenced four years ago when their mother passed away. Mr. Kim's wife is a conservative Christian, and she believes that ancestor worship is idolatry, but his brothers are non-Christians. His wife desired to do the funeral service with the rituals of Christianity, but his brothers did not want this. They made the decision to have two different funeral services; one was to be done with the rituals of Christianity, and the other with Confucian rituals. Several months later, when the day arrived for ancestor worship on behalf of his father, his wife demanded that he conduct his father's memorial service in a ritual of Christianity versus a Confucian ritual. Mr. Kim wants to follow the opinion of his brothers, using a Confucian ritual, but he cannot do so because he knows how well his wife had served his parents for the previous thirty years. The subject of ancestor worship has created serious relationship breaches among the family members, which continue to occur every year.

The second case study occurred at a funeral service in Mr. Keun's family, which was a very strong Confucian family and had practiced ancestor worship several times a year. Upon his grandmother's death, conflict began among the family members the third day after his grandmother passed away.

The daughter-in-law was a Christian, and she planned the funeral service. She invited her church's pastor, who led the funeral service of her mother-in-law with Christian rituals. Upon arrival at the gravesite for the burial, Mr. Keun's uncles and family members desired to do the burial with Confucian rituals. However, the daughter-in-law made no concession at all, causing a severe quarrel between the Confucian and Christian segments of the family.

According to Song, the most severe family conflicts concerning religion occurred when the first son, who had the authority and obligation to lead in ancestor worship, converted to Christianity, while the other brothers persisted in the Confucian ritual. Song did not suggest any special method to resolve this matter, but was concerned about how to increase the religious unity among the family members.

At a scientific meeting, Sung-Pyo Jeon, a professor at Ulsan University in Korea, presented his research that Buddhism, Catholicism, Won Buddhism, and Shamanism think that ancestor worship is an important cultural legacy to pass on to one's descendants and is an obligation of the children, but Christianity refuses to participate in ancestor worship (Kim 2007).

During the lunar New Year and the Korean Thanksgiving Day, August 15 of the lunar calendar, Korean public television stations broadcast news about the preparation for ancestor worship. Ancestor worship is not a part of Korean tradition but the media intends to portray that it is a part of expressing

filial piety for one's ancestors. This creates conflict among religions on ancestor worship and filial piety.

#### **1.3.4 KOREAN NEWSPAPER'S REPORT IN A KOREAN CONTEXT<sup>4</sup>**

In March 2009, Jung (2009) gave a report about the conflict of ancestor worship among family members, but not because of religious matters on *Seoul Shinmun*, a Korean newspaper. The Korea Juvenile Policy Foundation surveyed two thousand juveniles with regard to their values concerning ancestor worship. Of the juveniles surveyed, 65.5 percent responded positively to "having to practice ancestor worship." This result has decreased 1.5 percent from the previous year, 2008. Among the Chinese, the percentage is 89.7, and among the Japanese, the percentage is 74.9. This survey shows that Korean juveniles are going to change the nation's view of ancestor worship. Because of the different attitudes toward ancestor worship, conflicts are increasing between parents and their children.

Several reasons exist for the conflict concerning ancestor worship, as follows:

Sung-Hoon Kim (age 65) felt it was deplorable that he would not receive ancestor worship from his son after his death, because his son had

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<sup>4</sup> I translated and summarized a Korean daily newspaper to English.

converted to Christianity through the influence of his daughter-in-law. Kim equated ancestor worship with filial piety.

Shin-Young Kim (age 75) was unhappy with her children because they ordered the needed ancestor worship materials from a company. She thought that ancestor worship should come from one's heart, and at the same time, she felt that ancestor worship was equal to filial piety. To order ancestor worship materials from a company does not demonstrate a true love and respect for one's ancestors.

Mrs. Choi (age 55) felt stressed close to the memorial day of the dead ancestors or the festival days. She had served her mother-in-law and prepared foods for ancestor worship for more than twenty years. She conflicted with her mother-in-law due to the foods required for ancestor worship. Her mother-in-law asked her to make enough food to share with all of the village neighbors. Furthermore, she stored the rest of the food in the freezer until the next year.

Furthermore, many couples have struggled due to ancestor worship and some have even experienced the extreme situation of divorce. Following are two example cases that happen frequently among Korean families: the first case happened between non-Christians and the second case happened between a non-Christian and Christian.

Mr. Kim (age 53) and Mrs. Lee (age 48) quarreled with each other for several years because of ancestor worship. In 2006 Kim separated from his wife and started divorce proceedings. According to his assertion, his wife was negligent in ancestor worship, did not involve herself voluntarily in the preparation for ancestor worship, and did not go frequently to the house of her father-in-law. In conclusion, Mrs. Lee received an illogical sentence from the court in 2008, after a one-and-a-half-year separation. The court accepted Mr. Kim's assertion that his wife rarely visited the house of her father-in-law but frequently visited the house of her parents, and that she did not involve herself in the preparation for ancestor worship. The ruling of the court pointed out that she was chiefly responsible for their divorce (Jung 2009).

Mr. Lee (age 28) and Mrs. Yun (age 28) got married as college students and they have a daughter, age five. The background of Mr. Lee is traditional strong Confucian Buddhism but the background of Mrs. Yun is Christianity and her father is a pastor. Ever since they married, she has led a hard marital life, troubled in religious matters. In 2007, their conflicts exploded on New Year's Day. Her parents-in-law asked her to go to a relative's house for ancestor worship but she rejected their request. Because it was Sunday, she wanted to go to church instead. Her parents-in-law replied that she could still attend the church's evening worship service, but she refused to participate in ancestor worship on a Sunday. Following the demand of her parents-in-law, she left her home with her daughter and went to her parents' house. Two months later, the couple's parents met and discussed the conflicts but they

could not find a solution to the religious matter and her parents-in-law asked them to divorce. Then, Mr. Lee and Mrs. Yun lived in separation. In 2009, Mr. Lee met another woman and brought a suit for divorce against his wife, requesting custody rights for his daughter. In contrast, Mrs. Yun did not want to divorce her husband, but the family court accepted his request. The court decided that the extreme situation of family religious conflict was caused by Mrs. Yun. In conclusion, the Korean Family Court sentenced that she must divorce her husband and pay him \$300.00 every month for the expense of bringing up a child (Jung 2011).

Three hundred forty-seven citizens participated online in debating the above judgment for two days. It is a surprising number of participants. I want to examine what the average people think about ancestor worship by analyzing their comments. There are many people who commented multiple times and others whose comments are not related to ancestor worship. There are several opinions: agreeing or disagreeing with the judgment of the Korean Family Court, agreeing or disagreeing with ancestor worship, a positive or negative view of Confucian rites and Christianity, and criticism of Christianity. Thus, I will exclude comments which are not related to ancestor worship.

108 participants agree with the judgment of the court. They believe that ancestor worship is a traditional custom and an expression of filial piety. Some are confused, thinking that ancestor worship is a form of Buddhism, not Confucianism. They assume a critical attitude toward Christianity and

think that rejection of ancestor worship is a result of the mistaken teachings of the church. In contrast, 72 participants criticize that the judgment of the court is a mistake. They insist that this judgment is a result of ignorance concerning ancestor worship. The judgment that the wife is primarily responsible for this family conflict comes from an intolerant and irrational judge. Mr. Lee had a new girlfriend before divorcing his wife, and his parents did not accept the wife's request for them to stay married (Jung 2011).

### **1.3.5 SUMMARY**

As the results of Ryoo's (2000 141-44) survey indicate, close to 75 percent of Korean Christian families currently have large or somewhat huge problems with relatives concerning the ancestral rites. The story of my ministry and two commonplace newspaper articles showcase the conflicts of ancestor worship which Korean families currently have trouble. These stories point out that the main reason for the conflicts among family members is that they practice ancestor worship as an expression of filial piety.

## **1.4 RESEARCH GOALS**

Filial piety is a very important ethical virtue in both Confucianism and Christianity, but practicing ancestor worship as an expression of filial piety becomes a very serious religious issue to Korean Christians. How does one preach on an ethical issue that creates conflict among people in a special

context like that of Korea? I have three goals for this thesis in order to give a proper answer to this question. To achieve these goals, I would like to approach each issue historically, theologically, practically, and/or biblically.

First, I will research the current importance of ancestor worship as filial piety in Confucianism in several Eastern Asian countries, specifically China, Taiwan, Japan and Korea. The history of Confucianism spans over six hundred years in Korea. Why does Confucianism emphasize ancestor worship as the best expression of filial piety? Could some systematic theological teaching of filial piety and ancestor worship in Confucianism be compared with the teachings of the Bible?

Second, I will try to find examples and/or teachings of filial piety and ancestor worship in the Old and the New Testaments. Does a different definition of filial piety and ancestor worship exist in the Bible compared to Confucianism?

Third, I will explore the differences regarding filial piety and ancestor worship between Confucianism and the Bible. How does the Bible teach filial piety, and how do Korean Christians respond to Korean critics on the issue of ancestor worship as filial piety?

Eventually, this thesis may give some insights to Korean pastors to understand and preach true filial piety from a scriptural view, and to challenge Korean churches to hold to the truth of the Bible, resisting

syncretistic filial piety with Confucianism. At the same time, this thesis may help nonbelievers to understand how much Christianity emphasizes filial piety, and why Christianity prohibits ancestor worship.

Furthermore, I hope that Korean Christians, who are in conflict with family members whenever ancestor worship is practiced in the home, may be helped to persuade family members with a correct concept of Christian filial piety in which descendants should honor their mothers and fathers with their hearts, strength, minds, and goods while they are yet living.

## **1.5 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH GAP**

Ancestor worship is practiced as a social or cultural tradition in contemporary Korean society. Confucian tradition influences current family relationships, attitudes, ethics, behaviors, values, and many other aspects of Korean life. Many Koreans accept ancestor worship as a cultural tradition because they believe that ancestor worship is the best expression of filial piety.

Compatibility between Biblical teachings of filial piety and Confucian teachings of filial piety raise no controversy in honoring living parents in Korea. However, conflicts exist between Christian and non-Christian family members in performing ancestor worship. The concepts of filial piety in Confucianism and in Christianity are similar, but their real meanings differ. In Confucianism, filial piety should be performed toward the dead in the form of ancestor worship. In Christianity, filial piety should be performed while one's

parents are alive. Confucians practice ancestor worship to obtain blessings and prosperity from their dead parents. Confucian filial piety is a constant challenge to Korean Christians, particularly when converts come from non-Christian families or from a Confucian background.

As shown in the survey of Ryoo, (2000: 123-25, 141-44) 46 percent of laypeople responded that ancestor worship is either somewhat or not a big problem. Even 23 percent of pastors responded that ancestor worship is not a problem in their ministries. This survey demonstrates that Korean Christians lack sufficient understanding regarding the issue and that ancestor worship is still a very important matter in Korean religions.

Confucian ancestor worship, accepted as an expression of filial piety by many Koreans, brings about a practical theological problem for Korean Christians. Confucian ancestor worship has been practiced for about six hundred years in Korea and is accepted as a cultural expression and custom by many Koreans. Even the Korean Roman Catholic Church officially allows ancestor worship as a Korean cultural expression of filial piety at the present time. Korean Roman Catholics were persecuted for a long time in Korean history due to their prohibition of ancestor worship at that time. I will discuss why Korean Roman Catholics prohibited ancestor worship then allowed it in the following chapter. Some prominent Protestant Korean theologians sporadically bring up the issue of ancestor worship as an expression of filial piety. Many Koreans do not consider what the meaning of ancestor worship

is but merely criticize Korean Christians who reject the practice of ancestor worship and neglect the duty of filial piety to their ancestors. The meaning of this theological problem is that Confucian ancestor worship does not have the simple meaning of veneration or filial piety to ancestors but has a specific formula theology. Ancestor worship, which is practiced and accepted merely as an expression of filial piety and reverence to ancestors by many Koreans, is based on a very important doctrine of Confucianism. Although Confucian ancestor worship is specified by their doctrine, many Koreans lack sufficient knowledge about Confucian doctrines and the real meaning of Confucian ancestor worship and filial piety to understand the connection. Also, many Korean Christians do not have an adequate understanding of both Confucianism and the Bible.

In this situation, it is somewhat difficult to identify existing studies that point out the danger of ancestor worship as an expression of filial piety. To approach and to reach a good solution, we need sufficient knowledge of both Confucianism and Christianity. I will approach the practical theological problem with the following questions, which will show what the practical theological problem is and why I mainly deal with a systematic theology of both Confucianism and the Bible through the means of literature study.

What is Confucianism and who is Confucius as a founder of Confucianism?

What is the meaning of ancestor worship and filial piety in Confucianism?

Why does Confucianism teach ancestor worship as a vitally important

doctrine? How does Confucianism practice ancestor worship? How does Confucian ancestor worship have an effect on the culture, education, politics, lifestyle, and morality of Asian countries, specifically in China, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea? How does Confucianism influence Korea's history and present? What is the theological foundation of Confucianism? How do the doctrines of Confucianism differ from those of the Bible? What does the Bible teach about ancestor worship and filial piety? Why do Korean Christians disagree upon ancestor worship as an expression of filial piety? How should Christians respond to non-believers about the subject ancestor worship and filial piety? How do Korean Christians and non-believers overcome the conflicts between them? How do Christians demonstrate the true filial piety of the Bible, instead of ancestor worship, to nonbelievers? Is there any Christian alternative to Confucian memorial services which even nonbelievers may find acceptable?

To overcome the research problem and gap, I will use valuable references that I have collected in my readings for this thesis. Two theses in particular, which relate to Chinese ancestor worship and filial piety, have provided deep insight into the origin of Confucianism, helped to track the progression of Confucian ancestor worship as filial piety in Korea, and provided some practical penetrations to overcome the research gap. Jeffrey Bit Fai Kwok's dissertation (2000) focuses on the process of Chinese filial piety and ancestor worship from early Chinese history to contemporary times, suggesting conservative Christian approaches and responses to Chinese filial piety and ancestor worship.

Douglas John Leach's dissertation (1996) deals with how to approach and develop Chinese ancestor worship and filial piety in an appropriate evangelical perspective. As a missionary in China, Leach experienced the influence of ancestor worship and filial piety as a civil custom and culture in China. According to Leach, Chinese ancestor worship has been practiced as filial piety to dead parents from its earliest beginnings in Chinese history prior to Confucius. These are deeply rooted in Chinese society, and filial piety is a good moral deed, but ancestor worship is against the teaching of the Bible.

There are two books written by Korean scholars which may help us understand the ideals of Confucianism. The first important book is *Confucius Should Die and the Nation Could Live* written by Kyung Ill Kim (2003). Kim is a Chinese literary professor at SangMyung University in Korea. Kim's book demonstrates how Confucianism influences Korean Christianity in a negative way. In the preface, he emphasizes that, although China is Confucianism's country of origin, China has sacrificed many people in the process of casting out Confucianism over the past hundred years. The irony is that Confucianism is losing its grip on the Chinese people, while still remaining popular in the Korean culture (Kim 2003: 8). Kim understands the good in Confucianism, but clearly focuses his book on the bad influences of Confucianism on Korean society and its people. His book is helpful in understanding the influences of Confucianism in Korea, because Korean Christians have not escaped from the influences of Confucianism. He

criticizes Confucianism by stating that the “era of Confucianism is over” (Kim 2003: 83), and “filial piety could kill people” (Kim 2003: 150).

The second book is *Confucianism and Korean Thought*, written by Jang-Tae Keum (2000). This book deals with the concept of the Ultimate in Confucianism, the development of Confucianism in Korean history and culture, the cultivation of Confucianism in Korean political and social thought, the characteristics of Korean Confucianism, and Confucian religious movements in modern Korean Confucianism.

The above references are the very first step in researching the differences and similarities between the teachings of Confucianism and the Bible concerning ancestor worship and filial piety. In the present study, I would like to particularly focus not on comparing the beliefs of conservative and liberal Christians but comparing the teachings of Confucianism and the Bible about ancestor worship as a cultural expression of filial piety, seeking a position acceptable to Korean nonbelievers and liberal or conservative Christians alike. From these basic concepts, I would like to demonstrate the challenges that the ancestor worship and filial piety of Confucianism present to the Korean churches, and the differences between the two belief systems in this matter.

## **1.6 RESEARCH POSITIONING AND METHODOLOGY**

## **1.6.1 RESEARCH POSITIONING WITHIN EPISTEMOLOGY**

Since becoming involved in theological education, I have primarily concerned myself with how the theory or knowledge that I have learned at the seminaries can be placed into reality by practicing it on the pulpit and in living life. I believe that theology should serve the church and the community through practice and ministry and also practical theology should start from the based on the right theology. Thus, the epistemological position of the present thesis adopts both *A Fundamental Practical Theology* and *Postfoundationalist Theology*.

### **1.6.1.1 Fundamental Practical Theology**

As the first epistemological position of the research, I would like to use *A Fundamental Practical Theology* written by Don Browning (1996) as the main. Browning (1996:7) distinguishes between traditional theology and practical theology. Traditional theology begins with theory and moves to practice, but practical theology begins with theory-laden practice, moves to theory, and then returns to practice. Browning (1996:8) divides fundamental practical theology into four movements: “descriptive theology, historical theology, systematic theology and strategic practical theology.”

#### **1.6.1.1.1 Descriptive Theology**

As the first movement of fundamental practical theology, descriptive theology portrays the contemporary theory-laden practices that rise to the practical questions that generate all theological reflection. Descriptive theology describes the tracing and recounting of personal, institutional, and religious situations around a selected issue in specific contexts (Browning 1996:97). Descriptive theology is “a hermeneutical task that governs historical and systematic theology” (Browning 1996:98). The main purpose of descriptive theology is for a “thick description of situations” (Browning 1996:105).

Browning (1996:71) suggests five dimensions of practical thinking for this thick description, as follows:

(1) the visional level (which inevitably raises metaphysical validity claims); (2) the obligational level (which raises normative ethical claims); (3) the tendency-need or anthropological dimension (which raises claims about human nature, its basic human needs, and the kinds of premoral goods required to meet these needs); (4) an environmental-social dimension (which raises claims that deal primarily with social-systemic and ecological constraints on our tendencies and needs); and (5) the rule-role dimension (which raises claims about the concrete patterns we should enact in our actual praxis in the everyday world).

These five dimensions are recommended to use “both for describing the theory-laden practices found in contemporary situations and for describing and critically assessing the Christian witness” (Browning 1996:71). Each category corresponds to the human sciences. Browning emphasizes the importance of the nature of descriptive theology and its relationship to human sciences. As he states:

The idea of descriptive theology is not completely foreign to the human sciences. When they are used explicitly within fundamental practical theology, what is implicit in the so-called secular human sciences becomes explicit. The religious and theological horizon is made clear and direct. Interpretations of situations are made from a directly theological perspective. The human sciences can be used within descriptive theology and their explanatory interests employed to account for biological, psychological, and sociological factors that influence but do not determine human behavior . . . it makes explicit what is often implicit within the human sciences themselves. (Browning 1996:92)

Descriptive theology requires not only practical thinking, but also a pursuit of knowledge and understanding of reality. Descriptive theology is the foundation of the next three movements.

### **1.6.1.1.2 Historical Theology**

As the second movement of fundamental practical theology, historical theology develops from descriptive theology and begins with the question. “What do the normative texts that are already part of our effective history really imply for our praxis when they are confronted as honestly as possible?” (Browning 1996:49) Historical theology helps to identify the real meaning in the present context from the text and the tradition. Browning emphasizes that “historical theology becomes the heart of the hermeneutical process, but it is now understood as putting the questions emerging from theory-laden practices to the central texts and monuments of the Christian faith” (Browning 1996:49). Historical theology includes “the traditional disciplines of biblical studies, church history, and the history of Christian thought. In these schemes, these disciplines and all their technical literary-historical, textual, and social scientific explanatory interests are understood as parts of a larger practical hermeneutical enterprise” (Browning 1996:49). Hermeneutical dialogue deals with the practical theology of the academic world, but historical theology is a “communally oriented interpretive process emerging from the questions of contemporary communities of praxis” (Browning 1996:51).

### **1.6.1.1.3 Systematic Theology**

As the third movement of fundamental practical theology, systematic

theology examines “general themes of the normative Christian texts” in relation to general questions of “the culture” and theological ethics (Browning 1996:51-52). The present and the past themselves are much different from an application of the present and the past. Systematic theology attempts to reach as “comprehensive [a] view of the present as possible” (Browning 1996:51). Following are two fundamental questions: “The first is, what new horizon of meaning is fused when questions from present practices are brought to the central Christian witness? The second is, what reason can be advanced to support the validity claims of this new fusion of meaning?” (Browning 1996:51-52). Browning gives the answers for these two questions. The answer for the first question is that systematic theology addresses general, shared, and common themes of praxis in an orderly way. The answer for the second question is that systematic theology brings critical and philosophical moments into theology (Browning 1996:52-54).

#### **1.6.1.1.4 Strategic Practical Theology**

The first three movements of fundamental practical theology merge in the last movement, strategic practical theology. As the fourth movement of fundamental practical theology, strategic practical theology includes “liturgics, homiletics, education, care, and social action ministries,” and much more (Browning 1996:57). Browning (1996:9) says that “no matter what our practical religious activity, it has implicit within it the movements of descriptive, historical, systematic and fully practical theology.” Four basic

questions make it clear what strategic practical theology is: “(1) How do we understand this concrete situation in which we must act? (2) What should our praxis be in this concrete situation? (3) How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation? (4) What strategies and rhetorics should we use in this concrete situation?” (Browning 1996:55-56). Strategic practical theology emphasizes that theology starts with the historically situated context, moves back to classical ideals, and then moves forward to the future with new formulations.

#### **1.6.1.2 Postfoundationalist Theology**

As the second epistemological positioning for this thesis, I would like to use postfoundationalist theology as outlined by Van Huyssteen (1997). Van Huyssteen is recognized as an outstanding scholar in the area of postfoundationalism. Postfoundationalism reacts against the alleged objectivism of foundationalism and the extreme relativism of most forms of nonfoundationalism. Foundationalism believes that only one is right; in contrast, nonfoundationalism believes that no absolute truth exists. At the same time, postfoundationalism is the position between foundationalism and nonfoundationalism. Van Huyssteen (1997:4) gives a very distinct definition of postfoundationalist theology as follows:

A postfoundationalist theology wants to make two moves. First, it fully acknowledges contextuality, the epistemically crucial role

of interpreted experience, and the way that tradition shapes the epistemic and nonepistemic values that inform our reflection about God and what some of us believe to be God's presence in this world. However, at the same time, a postfoundationalist notion of rationality in theological reflection claims to point creatively beyond the confines of the local community, group, or culture toward a plausible form of interdisciplinary conversation. Therefore, postfoundationalism in theology is revealed as a viable third epistemological option beyond the extremes of foundationalism and nonfoundationalism.

The aim of postfoundational theology is to strike a balance between God and God's action in the world, between theology and science, to be able to engage in true interdisciplinary reflection. Van Huyssteen (1997:237) emphasizes that "an honest analysis of the differences between the sciences and between theological and scientific explanations might just yield more intelligibility in the apologetic attempt to understand our postmodern world as truly God's own world."

### **1.6.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY WITH THE EPISTEMOLOGY**

Within an epistemological positioning which combines a fundamental practical theology and postfoundational theology, I would like to use seven movements proposed by Müller (2004) for research methodology.

### 1.6.2.1 Seven Movements

Müller (2004:301-304) rephrases the concept of postfoundationalist theology, which is defined by Van Huyssteen (1997), and develops a practical theological research process which calls seven movements. The seven movements of a postfoundationalist practical theology consist of five specific steps described below:

The first step is the context and interpreted experience. Three movements fall under this step, as follows: 1. A specific context is described, the current context/action/field/habitués. 2. In-context experiences refer to listening and describing to gain an understanding of the effect of the in-context experiences. 3. Interpretations of experiences are made, described, and developed in collaboration with “co-researchers,” focusing on the meanings/interpretations offered by the co-researchers. The second step is the tradition of interpretation. The fourth movement belongs to this step as follows: 4. A description of experiences as they are continually informed by traditions of interpretation; the specific discourses/traditions that inform perceptions and behavior should be described. The third step is God’s presence. The fifth movement belongs to this step as follows: 5. A reflection on the religious and spiritual aspects, especially on God’s presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation; an understanding of the co-researcher’s interpretations of their religious or spiritual experiences of

God's presence. The fourth step is strengthened through interdisciplinary investigation. The sixth movement falls under this step as follows: 6. A description of experience, thickened through interdisciplinary investigation; including the conversation with other theological disciplines and with all the other sciences and listening carefully to the various stories of understandings and making an honest effort to integrate all of them into one. The fifth step is to point beyond the local community. The seventh movement falls under this step as follows: 7. The development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community, allowing all the different stories of the research to develop into a new story of understanding.

#### **1.6.2.2 Specific Methods of the Research**

I will choose two specific methods for this research paper: literary research and theological reflection.

##### **1.6.2.2.1 Literary Research**

This research paper is based largely on literary research. For approaching the challenge of ancestor worship as a face of filial piety in Confucianism, I will collect readings from a number of books, certain articles, and a few research works, which are written by Christian and non-Christian writers upon the subject matter. Additionally, I will research and examine these references to accomplish the purpose of this thesis. I believe that literary

research may lead me to qualitative research.

#### **1.6.2.2 Theological Reflection**

In order to compare the beliefs of filial piety between Confucianism and Christianity in this thesis, I will deal with the theological issues. Studying both theological perspectives may help us in the understanding of their beliefs and discovering the solutions to protect Korean churches and the teaching of the Bible from the challenge of Confucianism that practices ancestor worship as its most valuable expression of filial piety.

For developing the theological issues, I will use the integrative approach proposed by Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest (1996)<sup>5</sup>. Lewis and Demarest suggest six fundamental steps that guide an integrative approach to theology. Even though I will not strictly follow these six steps, I will use it for the methodological approach undertaken here. The six steps are as follows:

- (1) Define a specific topic of study;
- (2) Explore previous theological research on the subject;
- (3) Develop a comprehensive and coherent summary of the Old Testament and New Testament texts concerning the chosen topic;
- (4) Formulate a cohesive and non-contradictory doctrine for the

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<sup>5</sup> I will use six fundamental steps for approaching only the Christian theological foundation in chapter three, not for the whole thesis.

subject; (5) Defend the formulated doctrine against contradictory views from other sources including theology, philosophy, psychology, and so forth; and (6) Apply the doctrine and associated convictions to the Christian life (Lewis & Demarest 1996:26).

These six steps of integrative theology's approach suggest a way to transform the knowledge learned at the seminary and the university into reality in the community and the church. These six steps may be summarized with six key phrases: The Problem; Historical hypotheses; Biblical teaching; Systematic formulation; Apologetic interaction; and Relevance for life and ministry as practical fields.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONFUCIAN ANCESTOR WORSHIP IN ASIAN COUNTRIES

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Ancestor worship is currently practiced in the Continents of Asia, Africa, Oceania, Europe, and America. The main difference of Confucian ancestor worship among them is that Confucians practice ancestor worship as an expression of filial piety. The concept of Confucian ancestor worship makes a significant problem for Christians in several Eastern Asian countries under the influence of Confucianism.

I, therefore, will research how Confucian ancestor worship has an effect on Asian countries and Christians, specifically in China, Taiwan, and Japan. Then, I will research how Confucian ancestor worship has influenced Korea's history and Christianity.

#### 2.2 ANCESTOR WORSHIP IN CHINA

China was the birthplace of both Confucianism and its founder, Confucius. Thus, China has the strongest Confucian influence among the Asian countries.

Ancestor worship in China has a very long history of development and was practiced before Confucius was born. According to Chang (1993:21), Chinese ancestor worship has existed for more than 5,000 years. In regard to the origin of Chinese ancestor worship, Wei (1985:122) quotes one account of it from the *Bamboo Chronology*, the Chinese historical book, which states: “Huang-dih passed away and his minister Tzuo Cheh took his clothes, headgear, and scepter and worshiped them in the temple.” This was regarded as the first ancestor worship in Chinese history. In ancient China, the emperor was considered to be the father of all people in his empire. After the death of Huang-dih the following emperors continued this practice and developed ancestor worship.

In ancient times there were several classes in China and they were required to follow certain restrictions concerning ancestor worship. According to Wei (1985:123), feudal princes worshiped the emperors at seven temples: “Tan, Shan, Temple of the deceased Father, Temple of the Deceased Grandfather, Temple of the Late Illustrious Father, Temple of the Near Distant Ancestors, and Temple of Very Distant Ancestors.” Under the leadership of the emperors they worshiped at five temples and under the leader of Ju Hour they worshiped at three temples. On the other hand, “the intelligentsia could worship at two temples, while officials and teachers were allowed to worship at one temple. The masses were denied the privilege of worshiping at a temple and were only allowed to worship at the tomb of their ancestors.” (Wei

1985:123) These restrictions lasted Chou dynasty but Chou dynasty removed these restrictions and gave freedom to choose their own place of worship.

The meaning of ancestor worship continued to develop, forming its current meaning and becoming a part of Chinese culture and social customs. The basis of Chinese ancestor worship is that the living descendants communicate directly or indirectly with the dead ancestors, who can influence this world although they are living in another world. Chinese believe that the spirits of ancestors continue to exist after death and their prosperity and success inspire them to honor their dead ancestors. Hsu (1972:235) explains the distinction of Chinese ancestor worship as follows:

Chinese ancestor worship is of an entirely different order from such limited Western practices... it is the central link between the Chinese world and their world of the spirits. Ancestor worship not only specifically embodies all the general characteristics of the Chinese approach to the supernatural but, to the Chinese, is itself positive proof and reinforcement of all their other religious beliefs. Ancestor worship is an active ingredient in every aspect of Chinese society, from the family to the government, from local business to the national economy.

The worship of Heaven and ancestor worship were based upon the family system and had the same importance in ancient Chinese society. Ancestor

worship was intended to harmonize the relationship between paternal clans and family systems based on clan relationships. Chinese ancestor worship included adoring Heaven, being enlightened by moral virtues, displaying edifying filial piety, showing gratitude to ancestors, and maintaining a pure heart for getting along with others. Wei's (1985:131) description explicitly shows us the original meaning and the purpose of Chinese ancestor worship as follows:

The original purpose of Chinese ancestor worship was to instruct people to revere God and to maintain a pious heart in order to get along harmoniously with others. The original motive of Chinese ancestor worship was not a utilitarian idea of glorifying one's ancestors. Instead, the motive was filial piety which developed those moral virtues and the gratitude that enriched one's character

Ancient Chinese offered an ox or a sheep for purifying man's heart and for cleaning his sins. Ancient Chinese ancestor worship "sought to cultivate a spirit of respect, thereby nurturing a clean heart and a solemn spirit. The combination of these virtues served to make the Chinese people mindful of their historical roots, while continuing to temper their character." (Wei 1985:131)

However, after Buddhism was introduced to China, the original meaning and purpose of ancestor worship were distorted and lost. The meaning of ancestor worship in Buddhism was to help the deceased enter into the Western Paradise. Descendants began to worship their dead ancestors in an effort to help them reach Paradise. This was not the original meaning of ancestor worship in China, but a concept from Buddhism. According to Wei (1985:119), “the present practice of ancestor worship among the Chinese with burning incense, lighting candles, and burning paper money, was added to the original form of ancestor worship after the introduction of Buddhism into China in the first century.”

### **2.2.1 CHRISTIANITY ON ANCESTOR WORSHIP**

The matter of ancestor worship was and is a major problem for the Chinese churches. Under the Confucian society, Chinese Christians have struggled with ancestor worship. Many Chinese have misunderstood that becoming a Christian and accepting Jesus Christ is equivalent to abandoning their parents. Due to a misinterpretation of Matthew 10:37, “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me,” and Luke 14:26, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciples,” many Chinese are afraid of becoming a Christian. As a Chinese Christian, Yeo (1992:314) explains these passages for Chinese readers in his article

“The Mother and Brothers of Jesus”: “to be a follower of Christ means hearing, trusting and obeying God’s Word, sometimes to the extent of giving only secondary importance to one’s family interest and ties (Matt. 10:37, Luke 14:26, John 11:16). That, however, does not imply that being a Christian is to despise, to neglect or to be disloyal to one’s family.”

Furthermore, Yeo (1992:315) persuades Chinese readers that “if we have not begun to love our family, we are not ready to hear what Jesus means by loving God; Loving God is not loving God in place of people; loving God is loving people with the strength and by the grace of God.”

China has a longer Christian history than that of Korea. Christianity was introduced into China on four separate occasions. The first missionary group was the Nestorians in 635, the second was the Roman Catholic Franciscans in 1294, the third was the Jesuits in the seventeenth century, and the fourth was the Protestants in 1807.

When the first missionary arrived in Korea in 1884, the Roman Catholics and Protestants were introduced from China. The ideal of ancestor worship as filial piety came from China. The problem of ancestor worship had troubled the Chinese Christians for a long time, as has happened in Korea. We can see how Chinese churches faced the matter of ancestor worship prior to the Korean churches in the history of Chinese Christianity.

### **2.2.2 ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

The Jesuits and the Dominican-Franciscan priests battled ancestor worship until the decree of Pope Pius XII in 1939 that allowed the Roman Catholics to participate in ancestor worship. When the Roman Catholics re-entered to China, ancestor worship became a major conflict and eventually overthrew their work in China. The Jesuit missionaries, such as Matteo Ricci, understood ancestor worship as a social ceremony and accepted it. Thus, the Jesuits had no conflict with Confucianism. However, the Dominicans and the Franciscans who came to China in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century disagreed with the Jesuits and forbade the Chinese traditional worship of Confucius and the ancestors. They rejected the Jesuit position and its compromise with ancestor worship. In 1665, the missionaries of the Dominicans and the Franciscans competed in the Chinese court with the Jesuit leaders and Buddhist and Taoist scholars. The scholars aimed nine accusations at the Catholic orders:

- 1) Preaching Christ crucified, 2) baptizing annually two or three hundred converts, 3) claiming that the emperor had accepted Christianity, 4) preaching that Adam was created of God and was the father of the human race, 5) seducing the people by the preaching of repentance and by the administration of baptism and anointing, 6) preaching that Heaven (T'ien) is the seat of God and not God himself, 7) forbidding the worship of ancestors, 8) holding, four times a

year, suspicious meetings with Christians and collecting money from them, and lastly, 9) having suspicious relations with the Portuguese at Macao (Rowbotham 1966:313).

Eventually, on November 20, 1704, Pope Clement XI totally forbade ancestor worship and Confucius worship with a decree called “Ex illa die.” On December 29, 1720 this decree was translated into Chinese. Emperor Kang Shi of the Ching dynasty, who previously had a favorable attitude toward Roman Catholicism, became extremely angry at this decree and forbade all activities of the Roman Catholics through the empire. As a result of these factors, Roman Catholics divided on the issue of ancestor worship (Lin 1985:150-51).

The papal emissary who opposed the position of “Ex illa die” approved “Eight Special Permissions” which presented a great tolerance toward ancestor worship.

They advocated that the same ritual could be considered a religious or non-religious action depending upon its context:

In China, a genuflection of a prostration in front of gods were signs of worship; in front of the dead and the ancestral tablets, they became signs of remembrance and family continuity; in front of a living person, they were signs of respect or filial piety.

[Regarding] burning incense... in front of gods, it was a form of prayer; in front of the tablets, it became a form of filial piety; in the house, it was a way to keep away mosquitoes or to perfume the air (Wiest 1988:309).

However, on July 5, 1742, Pope Benedict XIV decreed “Ex Quo Singulari,” which overruled the “Eight Special Permissions.” In addition, Pope Benedict XIV prohibited discussion of the matter of ancestor worship among believers and also participation in Confucian ancestral rituals (Lin 1985:151).

This condition lasted for nearly 200 years until December 8, 1939. Pope Pius XII removed “Ex Quo Singulari” and decreed that ancestor worship was merely an expression of respect for the dead and a ritual to teach the young generation to respect their own culture (Lin 1985:151-52). The Roman Catholics have preserved this decision as their position in China until the present time.

### **2.2.3 PROTESTANT CHURCH**

Protestantism was introduced to China by Robert Morrison in 1807. At that time, missionaries were rejected by Chinese society as a consequence of Emperor Kang Shi of the Ching dynasty forbidding all activities of the Roman Catholics in China in 1720. From this time many Protestant missionaries came to China and tried to adopt the Chinese social and cultural values,

minimizing conflict. The Protestant missionaries, however, confronted the matter of ancestor worship in the same way as the Roman Catholic missionaries, dividing into two groups on the topic of ancestor worship: the liberals and the conservatives.

The liberals, such as William Martin, Allen Young, Alexander Williams, and Timothy Richard, supported and allowed ancestor worship within the church as a way of bringing the gospel to the Chinese cultures (Lin 1985:153). They believed that ancestor worship was a part of the Chinese social structure and accepting ancestor worship was an acceptable method of evangelism for Chinese people. These missionaries thought that Chinese ancestor worship had two major functions: “(1) People expressed their reverence and respect as well as feelings of closeness toward the deceased; and (2) As a nation, China maintained ancestor worship as a form of education. Worship of ancestors taught honor and respect for parents, and worship of Confucius taught the importance of education” (Lin 1985:154). Thus, this group of missionaries did not conflict with Chinese ancestor worship and Confucianism.

On the contrary, the conservative missionaries, such as Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission, opposed ancestor worship as an idolatrous practice. They believed that it violated the first and the second commandments that its rituals and symbols were the product of a superstitious cult which the Bible prohibited.

Conflicts between the two groups rose slowly after 1860 because many Protestant missionaries believed that Chinese tradition lost its purity by the influence of Buddhism and Taoism. On the other hand, the Chinese government rejected Christianity and decreed that burning and destroying ancestor tablets and temples were the worst crime. At that time the liberal missionaries still insisted that ancestor worship did not have any element of idolatry.

Thus, conferences of Protestant missionaries in China were held in 1877 and 1890 to resolve the problem of ancestor worship. William Martin and Alexander Williams held the liberal viewpoint, and Hudson Taylor and others held the conservative viewpoint (Lin 1985:156-57). They met in two separate gatherings because of their differing beliefs.

Martin presented his paper titled “The Worship of Ancestors: A Plea for Toleration.” He pointed out that the practice of ancestor worship contained moral and educational values. Ancestor worship contained some factors of idolatry, but the actions in ancestor worship were not idolatry. In his conclusion statement, Martin suggested that foreign missionaries desist from speaking against Chinese traditional practices. Martin addressed ancestor worship as a keynote speaker of the liberal missionaries. Martin (Covell 1978: 251) gave three points as follows: The first point was that “he rejected both the form and function of idolatrous elements, that is, invocations and

offerings which implied that the deceased were tutelary deities.” The second point was that “he sought to modify both the form and function of certain “announcements” so that they would be regarded not as prayers but as mere expressions of “natural affections.”” The last point was that “he accepted both the form and function of kneeling and bowing, affirming that while these actions were idolatrous in certain contexts, they definitely were not in others. He placed salutations and announcements to the dead in this same category.”

Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission and C. W. Mateer of the Presbyterian Church rejected and opposed Martin’s viewpoint. As a keynote speaker, Taylor insisted that toleration of ancestor worship betrayed Christianity and was an act of idolatry (Lin 1985:152-158)

Martin did not argue with the insistence of Hudson Taylor, and the conferences finished by confirming that ancestor worship is idolatry.

As a result, when the great Centenary Missionary Conference was held at Shanghai in 1907, they adopted the four resolutions concerning ancestor worship from the Protestant standpoint:

- I. That while the worship of ancestors is incompatible with an enlightened and spiritual conception of the Christian faith, and so cannot be tolerated as a practice in the Christian Church,

yet we should be careful to encourage in our Christian converts the feeling of reverence for the memory of the departed which this custom seeks to express, and to impress upon the Chinese in general the fact that Christians attach great importance to filial piety.

II. That recognizing the full provision made in Christianity for the highest development and expression of filial piety, this Conference recommends that greater prominence be given in preaching, in teaching, and in religious observances, to the practical duty of reverence to parents, and thus make it evident to non-Christians that the Church regards filial piety as one of the highest of Christian duties.

III. Recognizing that in replacing the worship of ancestors in China by Christianity, many delicate and difficult questions inevitably arise, we would emphasize the necessity for the continuous education of the conscience of the members of the Christian Church by whom all such questions must ultimately be adjusted, expressing our confidence that, through the leading and illumination of the Spirit of God, the Church will be guided into right lines of action.

IV. That this Conference recommends our Chinese brethren to encourage an affectionate remembrance of the dead by beautifying graves and erecting useful memorials to parents and ancestors, by building or endowing churches, schools, hospitals,

asylums and other charitable institutions as is common in all Christian lands, thus making memorials of the departed a means of helping the living through successive generations (Addison 1925:75-76).

In conclusion, the four resolutions have largely created unity in Chinese churches through the present day, although some Chinese Christian leaders still hold to the same liberal point of view that William Martin did. After 1911, the issue of ancestor worship was no longer debated, because earlier conflicts had made two groups, conservative and liberal, out of the missionary effort. The conservative group “had established the position of total refusal to even discuss the matter of ancestor worship as decreed by Hudson Taylor,” (Lin 1985:160) and the liberal group dropped the ancestor worship matter “so that more attention could be paid to socially related problems” (Lin 1985:160).

### **2.3 ANCESTOR WORSHIP IN TAIWAN**

According to Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org>), about 81.3% of Taiwan’s population is identified as Buddhist or Taoist. The main folk religion of the Taiwanese is Taoism and elements of Buddhism and Confucianism have been brought by the various migrations through the years. Taiwanese worship at least 250 gods with shrines. The ideals of Confucianism are based on ethical codes, social standards and educational philosophies. The ideals

of Confucianism are placed in the center of their lifestyle and Confucian temples are located in the major cities. The presence of Christians in Taiwan, including Roman Catholics, is 4.5%. However, the report of Taiwan Church Planting Partners (<http://www.taiwanchurch.org>) estimates that the population of real Protestant Christians is only about 2-3%.

Taiwan has historically been influenced by Chinese social structure. Many Chinese have emigrated from mainland China for a long time over four time periods: “the Ming dynasty; the Ching dynasty; the Japanese government; and the nationalist government” (Liaw 1985:182). Taiwan currently consists of Taiwanese and Chinese. Thus, Taiwanese society is considered as an extension of the society of Southeast China. Rubinstein (1991:40) states that “the Chinese in Taiwan had developed a rich and complex religious tradition, one with three major components: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism.” Chinese social and religious systems have influenced Taiwan as their basic ethical and moral orientation. The social structure has developed into the kind of clan society seen in China today. The center of the clan society of Taiwan is Confucian ancestor worship as a symbol of unity. Ancestor worship in Taiwan came from Confucian ancestor worship, modified and developed in a Taiwanese style. Ancestor worship is an important social function for the Chinese-Taiwanese. Taiwanese ancestor worship includes “homage to Heaven above and earth below, worship [of] ancestors, and honor [toward] sovereigns and teachers” (Chai 1962:77).

According to Liaw, (1985:185) Taiwanese ancestor worship has two functions. The first function of ancestor worship is an ethical teaching centered on filial piety. They consider that ancestor worship helps them to avoid disaster by assuring protection from the spirits of the ancestors. They believe that the ancestors hold their descendants in a mysterious power and depending on their behaviors the spirits give punishment or protection to the living. Lee (1981:2) points out the role of ancestor worship in Taiwanese education as follows: “the ancestor hall and tablet traditions have played a very important role in the ethical education of the people of Taiwan. The religious education that was derived from ancestor worship cultivated a kind of social identification for each Chinese person, an identification that is evident in the relationships between prince and subject, father and son, brothers, husband and wife, and friends.”

The second function of ancestor worship is a psychological one. Taiwanese believe that the human soul after death exists to allow communication between the living descendant and the spirit of the deceased. This belief comforts the grieving people who attend a funeral service. The thought that they may have communication between the two worlds is a great consolation to the people. Thus, Taiwanese serve their ancestors' spirits as if the ancestors were still living in this world and they spend much money for the funeral ceremony and the grave site. The burning of houses, cars, and money is performed to send these things to the spiritual world for the use of the dead ancestors (Liaw 1985:186).

Hwang (1955:93) describes clearly the characters of ancestor worship in Taiwan; Taiwanese Chinese believe that “each person has three souls and seven breaths. After death the first soul will be reincarnated, the second will go with the coffin, and the third will stay in the ancestral table. The seven breaths will disappear in seven weeks after death, one each week.” Ancestor worship is practiced several times throughout the year and many people participate in it. In Taiwan, the dead ancestors are worshiped on the following occasions:

Chinese New Year; the fifth day of the first month; the fifteenth day of the first month (Lantern Festival); Ching Ming Festival (Clear and Bright Festival); the fifth day of the fifth month (Dragon Boat Festival); the fifteenth day of the seventh month (Ghost Festival); the fifteenth day of the eighth month (Moon Festival); the ninth day of the ninth month (Tsung Yun Festival); winter solstice; and the last day of the year (Liaw 1985:187).

These special festivals enhance family union and strengthen community cohesion. Among the special festivals, Ching Ming Festival is the most popular social and religious event. This clear and bright festival is the time to gather family members at the ancestors’ tombs to clean the gravesite and to repair the graves. Family members offer food, drink, incense, and paper money to the ancestors to express gratitude for the blessings the living

descendants enjoy (Liaw 1985:188). During these festivals Taiwanese worship the paper tablet, the wooden tablet, and the tomb of the ancestor.

### **2.3.1 ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

The Taiwanese Roman Catholic Church has allowed members to participate in ancestor worship. In particular, on the Chinese New Year of 1971, Cardinal Yu Ping addressed “the public ancestor worship with incense, food sacrifices without meat, and prayers offered to heaven and Chinese ancestors in general” (Hung 1985:201). He declared that ancestor worship was not to be viewed as idolatry anymore but is in accordance with God’s will, as expressed in the fifth commandment. Furthermore, the Roman Catholics practiced ancestor worship inside a Roman Catholic Church building. In spite of the declaration of the Cardinal, the Roman Catholics lost ten percent of the members between 1970 and 1980: from 303,800 down to 276,700 (Hung 1985:202).

### **2.3.2 PROTESTANT CHURCH**

Dr. James Maxwell, an English Presbyterian, entered Taiwan through the south in 1865 as the island’s first Protestant missionary. In 1872, the Canadian Presbyterian Mission sent George Mackay to the north of Taiwan. After introducing Christianity to Taiwan, churches grew healthily on both sides of the island. In the 1930s, the famous Chinese evangelist John Sung

visited Taiwan and awakened Taiwanese Christians. With remarkable results, Taiwanese churches had grown continually in the south under a succession of missionary evangelists until World War II. Due to the war all missionaries were expelled and Christian leaders were persecuted by the Japanese. However, with the end of Japanese occupation, Taiwanese Protestant churches increased because the many missionaries who fled from mainland China entered Taiwan.

Many missions have established schools, hospitals, radio and television stations, and publishing companies there. Although different denominations and missionaries have worked together, the influences of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism have hindered evangelization of the Taiwanese. As a result, the Christian population is currently a small percentage in Taiwan. Christians there have struggled with ancestor worship, similarly to China. One group tries to make a contextualization of ancestor worship, comparing it to a Christian memorial service, hoping to keep the peace and evangelize family members and relatives. The other group still believes that ancestor worship is idolatry. Taiwan Christians continue to debate over the nature of indigenization, contextualization, and religious syncretism. This statement of China Christian Yearbook (1917:296) is still largely true in Taiwan today:

The Christian church in China up to the present time has been using prohibitive measures almost entirely in dealing with the question of ancestor worship. Hence those outside the church

have misunderstood and misjudged it. It is the common conception of non-Christians that Christians care nothing for their ancestors, and that one has to abandon one's regard for one's ancestors before he can join the church and be baptized. This is a very wrong conception and is most unfortunate.

Such a mistaken view of Protestant churches has placed Christians in a difficult situation to be able to bring their relatives to Christ in Taiwan. Furthermore, the negative image of churches has caused new Christians to leave the church and to revert to the old type of worship. Liaw (1985:193) cautions against a contextualization of Chinese theology and accepting ancestor worship as a traditional and social custom in Taiwan; rather, he suggests finding a way to participate in the traditional funeral ceremony and national festival, the Ching Ming Festival, without worshiping the dead ancestors—by leading a Christian memorial service as a substitute for offering sacrifices to the ancestors.

Taiwanese follow six steps in ancestor worship, as follows: “Kneeling and kowtowing before the wood tablet which is written the name of ancestor on it and casket during the funeral; Burning of incense and paper money at the ancestral shrine; Sacrifices and presenting of sacrificial foods; Burning of candles before the tablet; Idolatrous ceremonies at the grave; Worship of ancestral tablets.” (Price 1948:203)

Liaw (1985:192) suggests how to transform the traditional Chinese funeral process into a Christian Chinese-Taiwanese funeral process as follows:

- (1) A memorial table is traditionally established for the benefit of the friends and relatives of the mourning family, on which to burn incense sticks in worship of the deceased. Although Christians do not worship a deceased person, we should establish a similar table to show our respect for the deceased and our love and concern for the family members.
- (2) Placing the body in the coffin and closing the coffin are very important parts of the Chinese funeral. I have devised a different plan for placing the body in the coffin and closing it. I ask the funeral workers to cover the body with a white sheet adorned with a red cross. This action, accompanied by appropriate music, helps the family members relieve their emotional burden as they say goodbye to their loved one.
- (3) The coffin is moved to the funeral parlor or church for the Christian memorial service. In the last part of the service I usually place a table covered with a white cloth by the pulpit. Then each relative and friend of the deceased sets a flower on the table to form a cross. In the meantime, the choir sings a beautiful hymn. If he so desires, the Christian can bow his head to the picture of the deceased to show his respect. The beautiful music and comforting words of the memorial service serve to comfort the bereaved.
- (4) After the funeral service the coffin is moved to the hearse which will be

followed by the mourners. At this time the choir sings Christian songs, and a music band is sometimes hired to play hymns. After traveling a certain distance, the procession will stop and those not related to or close friends of the dead person for the burial service.

Chinese-Taiwanese traditionally hold seven memorial services, one every day for seven days after the burial. These services are to worship the dead and are led by a Taoist priest or Buddhist monk. Liaw (1985:193) suggests to Christian families that these seven memorial services be used as an evangelistic tool by sharing the message of the Bible and Christian songs. Through hymns, passages of Scripture, and giving flowers, Christians show their love and respect for the dead without worshiping them.

## **2.4 ANCESTOR WORSHIP IN JAPAN**

According to the *Religious Yearbook 2009* published by the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan (<http://www.bunka.go.jp>), as of December 31, 2008 there are 52.3% Shintoists, 42.2% Buddhists, 1.1% Christians, and 4.3% others in Japan.

The Japanese are essentially a religious people. There are more than eight hundred million gods in Japan and the Japanese religions stemmed from animism and naturalism. The Japanese even believe that “spirits inhabited great mountains, (The Kiso-ontake sect and the Fuji sect of Mt. Fuji are present day examples of such beliefs), large rocks and stones, or peculiarly

formed rocks, (e.g. the 'Mezame no toke' or 'bed of awakening of Agematsu,' Shinshu, and the 'treasure house of stone' of Banshu, etc.); many even believed that spirits lived in trees such as gingko, camellia, cherry, plum, willow, pine, and cedar" (Hashimoto 1962:36). Shinto and Buddhism are two major religions in Japan. Shinto, literally "the way of the *Kami*" (sacred forces or beings), was to "designate the indigenous religious tradition of the Japanese as distinguished from more obvious foreign importations like Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity" (Drummond 1971:21). Shinto had rich religious complex characteristics, and mingled with the forms of Buddhism. These two religions included ancestor worship, which has reinforced this practice in the religion and culture of the Japanese people. Ancestor worship is integrated into the life of the Japanese as a whole. In a Japanese household, there are three kinds of ancestor worship at the sacred altars: "The worship of the First Imperial Ancestor by the people; the worship of the patron god of the locality, which is a relic of the worship of clan-ancestors by clansmen; and the worship of the family ancestors by members of the household" (Hozumi 1973:32-33).

The worship of imperial ancestors as the first kind of ancestor worship has been practiced at the thirteen great festivals and the eight small festivals as the ceremony of worship in the Imperial house. The thirteen great festivals take place as follows: The first great festival is held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January, which is the festival of the sacrifice to the origin of country. The second is held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February or the anniversary of the succession of the first

Emperor and the foundation of the Empire. The third great festival is the Spring Sacrifice to the spirit of the imperial ancestors, which is held on the day of the vernal equinox. The fourth is the spring sacrifice to the shrines of gods. The fifth is held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April, which is the anniversary of the death of the first emperor. The sixth and seventh take place on the day of the autumnal equinox. The eighth is held on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October, which offers the first fruit of the year to the first imperial ancestor. The ninth is the festival of the feast of the new crop of rice, beginning on the night of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November and ending on the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup>. The tenth is the anniversary of the death of the late emperor. The eleventh is the celebration year's festival of the emperors within three generations previous to the previous emperor. The twelfth is the celebration year's festival of the late emperor. The thirteenth is the celebration year's festival of the mother of the reigning emperor (Hozumi 1973:39-44).

The eight small festivals are held as follows: The first is held on the New Year at the three temples in the sanctuary of the imperial palace. The second, the festival of the prayer for the Year's crop, is held on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February in the three temples of the imperial sanctuary. The third is held the middle of December, on which is played the sacred music before the temple of the first imperial ancestor. The fourth is held on the emperor's birthday. The fifth, as an annual festival, is for the worship of the emperors within three generations previous to the previous emperor. The sixth is an annual festival to worship the consort of the late emperor. The seventh annual festival is for

the worship of the mother of the reigning emperor. The eighth is the celebration year's festival is for all the emperors excluding the first emperor Jimmu Tenno and the emperors within three generations from the previous emperor. (Hozumi 1973:44-47)

According to Hozumi (1973:48), there are three populations or groups of clan-ancestors worshiped as the second form of ancestor worship: "the divine branch which consisted of the descendants of gods; the imperial branch which included the descendants of the imperial families; and the foreign branch comprising the descendants of naturalized foreigners." These three branches are divided again in many clans which mean that there are many clan-gods and ancestors worshiped.

The last kind of ancestor worship is the worship of family ancestors by members of the household. There are classified under three categories: sacrifice days, sacrifice months, and sacrifice years. The sacrifice day is held the day in each month which is the day of an ancestor's death; the sacrifice month is the day of the month corresponding to the day and month of an ancestor's death; the sacrifice year is the day of the month in the first, fifth, tenth, twentieth, thirtieth, fortieth, fiftieth and hundredth year after their death. After the hundredth year, the anniversary celebration is held every fifty years (Hozumi 1973:55-70).

Furthermore, Japanese practice ancestor worship in four distinguishing festivals for the dead. The first festival is the mortuary rites. These are rites to worship one's ancestor when a man or woman dies.

The second festival is the mortuary tablet. This tablet is made with wood, the posthumous name is written on it (*kaimyo*), and it is placed on the Buddhist altar. Buddhists believe that "the tablet becomes the essence of the deceased and talk to it just as if the person were still living, perhaps reading portions of the sutra or attempting to console the ancestor's soul" (Yamaguchi 1985:45). The mortuary table is the visible symbol of a presence of the dead. It is the greatest symbol in ancestor worship and most precious to the Japanese because they believe that the spirits of their ancestors and deceased family members live in the mortuary tablet. The mortuary tablets were not originally related to Buddha but came from the teachings of Confucius in China which say to serve heaven as if heaven actually exists and serve the dead as if one were serving the living. This ideal was adopted by Buddhism and used for inscribing the posthumous names of the dead which are received from the priest as a proof of Buddha's laws.

The third festival is the Bon Festival celebrated by Buddhists in July or August which combines the observances of the Chinese Ching Ming festival. The purpose of this festival is to save and console the dead spirits of the ancestors who are suffering in hell, hanging upside down (Hashimoto 1962:18-19). During the Bon Festival people visit the graves, trim shrubs,

clean the gravestone, burn incense, and offer flowers, food, and prayers. Generally they believe that the spirits of the dead ancestors will come back from hell during the Bon Festival to spend a few days with the living descendants. The Bon Festival lasts for four or five days and on the last day the descendants make a fire at the front gate to say goodbye to the spirits of the dead ancestors (Yamaguchi 1985:45). The fourth festival is the anniversary rites (*hoji*) for the dead. These anniversary rites are practiced “on the first anniversary of the death and on the anniversary years of three, seven, thirteen, seventeen, twenty-three, twenty-seven and thirty-three. These ceremonies are held for remembering a particular deceased member of the family” (Yamaguchi 1985:46). The reason why the anniversary rites are held until the thirty-third anniversary is that they believe the spirit of the dead is incorporated into the collection of the spirits of the ancestors in the other world after this.

These festivals are based on the belief that after death the spirit of the dead person departs from the body and rambles through the house in a state of commotion. Furthermore, if the descendants neglect or dishonor these rites, the spirits of the dead ancestors actually take vengeance on them, causing failure, curses, disease, suffering, misery, adversaries, and disaster.

#### **2.4.1 CONFUCIANISM**

Confucianism dominated Japanese intellectual life throughout the Tokugawa period (1603-1868). Confucianism had been introduced from Korea about 404 A.D. and about two hundred years later Confucianism became associated with the Japanese language, propagated after learning to read and write Chinese (Smith 1973:1-6). Confucianism had passed through various steps of development and the elements of Confucian thought were clearly the fundamental recurrent thought in the Japanese mind. Confucian ethical and political principles were considered to have an important role in the position of the central government as a basic manual for training administrators after Prince Shotoku (572-621) declared the “Seventeen Article Constitution” which paralleled texts from the Confucian classics in 604. In the Nara Period (710-784), it was the curricula of the government schools for trained administrators. By the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries the ideal of Confucianism had been completely replaced by Buddhism. Despite this, however, it became more of a merging, and Confucianism was able to survive because “Buddhist priests studied and taught the Confucian classics, and after the reinterpreted Confucianism of the Sung dynasty was brought to Japan in the twelfth century, they were the group most responsible for its spread and gradual popularization” (Smith 1973:9).

In 1632 Tokugawa Yoshinao (1600-1650) supported building a temple to Confucius in Japan, and Confucian books such as the Lesser Learning, the five Classics, the four Books, along with the Confucian ethical relationships of cause and effect, were adapted in the curriculum of the Tokugawa for the

clan schools. The government attempted to preserve its precepts in Japan, but eventually, the principles and fundamental forms of Confucianism were accepted by the people “as the basic pattern for social relationships and the regulation of family life, while for the government and ruling classes, it extended to all fields of intellectual and social activity” (Smith 1973:13).

Thus, Confucianism influenced the Japanese customs and beliefs. Japan had learned and adopted many customs of China for the development and enrichment of the culture over many centuries. The teachings of Confucianism have influenced Japanese moral codes, education, values, customs, social virtues, and culture until the present time.

In particular, the form of ancestor worship in Japan was influenced by Confucian ancestor worship. The Japanese government officially began to participate in the society’s spring and autumn Confucian sacrifices in 1926. After 1926, the highest officials such as the Prime Minister, Home Affairs Minister, and other heads of departments joined in personally and delivered short addresses honoring Confucianism, emphasizing its principles, and supporting development of spiritual discipline (Smith 1973:136). In 1937, Confucian ceremonies became a national observance and the government Confucian virtues of loyalty and filial piety was proclaimed in a striking manner as follows:

Verily, loyalty and filial piety as one is the flower of our national entity, and is the cardinal point of our people's morals. Hence, national entity forms not only the foundations of morality but of all branches of things as politics, economics, and industry.

Accordingly, the great Way of loyalty and filial piety as one must be made manifest in all practical fields of these national activities and the people's lives. We subjects must strive all the more in loyalty and filial piety for the real manifestation of the immense and endless national entity (Smith 1973:143).

These morals, laws, and customs are based on the doctrine of ancestor worship. Filial piety is not only for the living parents, but also even includes dead parents and emperors. The expression of filial piety to the dead is ancestor worship in several national ceremonies. Chinese society emphasized harmony and peace in family and the symbol of such harmony and peace is ancestor worship in Japan. The same ideal of Chinese ancestor worship was also introduced to Japan. The Japanese family system was considered as a variation of the traditional family system of China in which ancestor worship had been firmly upheld.

According to Shibata (1985:247), "ancestor worship has the peculiar nature of seeking the imperishability of life in the continuity of family, and the patriarchal social setting would provide a most powerful support for it. Japanese ancestor worship was most likely accelerated by Chinese

influences because both countries were patriarchal at the time of nation building.” Thus, without ancestor worship Japanese religion and society would lack their current identity. The Japanese usually understand that ancestor worship is one of the old traditional customs and something beyond any particular religion. When they hear about religion, Japanese instinctively think of the term “ancestor worship.”

### **2.4.2 BUDDHISM**

After Buddhism was introduced from Korea in 538, Buddhism had amalgamated with the ideals of “Shinto” which was one of the popular Japanese folk religions, and Buddhism further accommodated to Confucianism later. The distinct characters of the religions in Japan mingle, with many factors of various religions in a syncretic form. The reason that the practice of ancestor worship influences Japan so strongly is that Confucian ancestor worship is bonded with the ideal of death in Buddhism. Generally, Japanese practice ancestor worship at the Buddhist temples and they are compelled to join Buddhist temples and ancestor worship. The factors of the patriarchal social structure, the syncretistic nature of ancestor worship, and the parish system of modern Buddhism strengthen the relationships of Japanese family members.

Japanese believe that death is not end to man’s existence; rather, the dead ancestors somehow exist beyond death, between the living and the dead of

the house. They think that death is not an ending in itself, but an existence of a new form in the afterlife. There is a very important reason that Japanese have practiced ancestor worship. Japanese Buddhism considers that the dead can be saved through the good works and merits of the living, and by the performance of ancestor worship. Practicing ancestor worship makes possible “the comforting [of] the spirits of the dead, which practices are based on the shallow notion that the dead can be easily saved through rites and offerings, such as the Obon festivals and the memorial services” (Hashimoto 1962:29). This ideal came from Buddhism and was added to Confucian ancestor worship as it reformed in Japan.

Due to this belief, the practice of ancestor worship is a reflection of a significant feeling of closeness and continuity with the dead to Japanese, and ancestor worship has been prevailing in Japan. Shibata (1985:247) describes well this fact, stating, “The vast majority of the Japanese people observe the customs of visiting the graves (*bosan*), communications between the living and the dead, the family altar (*butsudan*, translated into English as *Buddhist altar*), religious funeral rites, and periodically visiting religious shrines. These ancestral rites have provided unity and solidarity, not only within the immediate family but in the community and the nation as a whole.” Ancestor worship in Japan is centered upon the *bosan* (graves) and the *butsudan* (family altar).

Currently, Confucian ancestor worship has been strengthened by the supporting power of Buddhism's involvement in ancestor rites in Japan. The current form of ancestor worship in Japan is influenced by the fundamentals of Buddhism. The Buddhist ideas of heaven and hell emerge in Japanese ancestor worship. Buddhists believe that when a man or woman dies, "the person takes on a form of deity (*hotoke*) which is worthy of worship and offerings from family, relatives, and descendants" (Yamaguchi 1985:44). Thus, Japanese Buddhist families offer food, water, fruits, and flowers to the dead person and perform lighting of candles, ringing of bells, chanting of the sutras, and burning of incense before the coffin. They then stretch out their arms, bow down, and worship the dead. Ancestor worshipers believe that "the spirits of the ancestors and other deceased relatives expected this of their descendants and families" (Hashimoto 1962:22) and that the spirits of ancestors dwell in the shrines or in the Buddhist altar.

Takeda (1971:3) describes the current Buddhist view on ancestor worship in Japan as follows:

Buddhist temples on the front line of denominational organization are expected to be strategic points of evangelism, but this is merely an assumption. In reality, they rather depend on their power to control the practice of ancestor worship among all their parishioners for their continuity, for this is the economic foundation which keeps the temples alive among common

people. It is a fact that relations between temples and their people have been established through the *ie* (household) over the centuries, and Buddhist sects obtain their security on the basis of the parish system.

As mentioned above, Takeda emphasizes that ancestor worship in Japan has been based on the sociological unit of *ie*, or the household system, over the centuries. In other words, to understand Japanese ancestor worship, one needs to know the concept of the *ie* system. The *ie* system is a fundamental part of ancestor worship as the key Japanese social institution that requires ancestor worship. The concept of the *ie* system is melded with the Japanese culture in general and has developed from generation to generation.

Lebra (1984:20) defines the concept of *ie* as “a vertically composite form of unclear families, one from each generation” and Aruga, (1970: 65) an ethnologist, defines it as “a household group organized about a married couple and engaged in business or production.” The *ie* is a social unit that involves its members living together cooperatively. David Reid (1981:24) explains the concept of *ie* as follows: “The institution that requires the ancestral cult is the *ie* or household system and it has already been noted that this system serves as a prototype to which Japanese people seem to turn almost instinctively when setting up an organization.”

As Reid mentions above, ancestor worship and the *ie* system are interrelated. The definition of ancestors in the *ie* system by Aruga makes clear the mutual relationships among families as follows: “The term ancestors means, in brief, guardian deities of the *ie*. In order to understand the distinctive nature of Japanese religion as it comes to view in the ancestral cult” (Hirano 1980:147). In order to assure the continuation of the household lineage, *ie* unions consist of all members of the direct line and the collateral line. These two different lines have a relationship between superiors and subordinates. Aruga (1970:42) states the role of each member in the direct line as follows:

“They were expected to contribute directly to the continuance of the *ie*. And its central figure, the *kacho* or head of the direct line *ie*, supervised its enterprises and expenditures, demonstrated that he was the one with final responsibility through fulfilling the office of priest in services for the *kami* (or gods) and for the ancestors, and exercised control over each individual member so as to preserve and continue the *ie*.”

The statement of Aruga points out that the idea of double ancestors exists in the *ie* system. The idea of double ancestors has two meanings. The first meaning of double ancestors is the founder of each particular *ie* together with the generations of those who followed him and the second meaning of double ancestors is the ancestors of the main house, generation by

generation, in a situation where there is a family tree relationship among main and branch houses. Berentsen (1985:262-63) interprets this statement in three meanings of the term “ancestors”: “(1) the founder of the *ie* as the ancestor par excellence. (2) The souls of all the ancestors of the house counted in a stricter or looser sense. (3) Any deceased person whose tablet may be found in a family altar, this person is included in the object of the rites, although he/she may not be a member of the *ie* at all.”

Due to the first concept of double ancestors, the Japanese practice emperor worship. According to this concept, Japanese government emphasizes that the family system forms one large household with the Emperor as its head. Yamaguchi (1985:49-50) interprets the first idea of double ancestors as follows: “The ancestors of the Imperial family are the founders of the nation which is regarded as the extended household of Japan. From this it can be said that the ancestors of the Imperial family are also the ancestors of all Japanese people... In view of this, loyalty to the Emperor (*chu*) and filial piety (*ko*) cannot be separated.” This quote means that the emperor is god and all Japanese must worship him just as they worship their ancestors. At the same time, it means that ancestor worship is filial piety.

Yamaguchi (1985:48) explains the concepts of the *ie* system mentioned by the above writers as follows: “The *ie* preserves its stability because each linking member contributes to the success of the household enterprise. The *ie*’s future existence is guaranteed because it provides mutual assistance to

each individual. In many cases it becomes impossible for a single *ie* to carry out this dual function. When this occurs several *ies* form a relationship to help each other.”

### 2.4.3 PROTESTANT CHURCH

Roman Catholic missionaries arrived in Japan in 1549 and the first Protestant Christians entered Japan in 1818 to secure permission to trade. The first Protestant worship service was held on the deck of Commodore Perry’s flagship on Sunday, July 11, 1853. Protestant missionaries first entered Japan on July 4, 1859. The first Japanese Protestant church was officially organized in Yokohama on March 10, 1872 under the leadership of Samuel Robert Brown (Dutch Reformed), James Curtis Hepburn, and James Ballagh (both Presbyterian). This church was called the Church of Christ in Japan. On that day ten young Japanese men were baptized, the first fruits of those initial Protestant missionaries (Drummond 1971:143-167).

Since Protestantism was introduced to Japan in 1859, ancestor worship has been the biggest barrier to Christians evangelizing the Japanese. When the first Protestant missionaries observed the mortuary customs and ancestor worship of Japanese native culture, they defined ancestor worship as “idol worship.” Participating in ancestor worship is considered to give the appearance of idol worship. Conversely, Japanese originally understood ancestors as the founders of households, *ies*, and successive household

heads. They essentially accepted ancestor worship as a patrilineal phenomenon. The spirits of the dead ancestors as the successive household heads influenced the life of the descendants. If the descendants failed to properly care for their ancestors with the appropriate rituals, they would frequently encounter health problems, business failures, and personal problems. The first generation of Protestant Christians, however, followed the teaching of missionaries as normative. The new converts confronted “serious conflict with other people, sometimes in their own household and wider circle of linked households, sometimes in their communities, and sometimes in relation to the national government” (Reid 1991:109). The orthodox Christian church proclaimed the true Christian position with regard to ancestor worship as follows:

In accordance with the Scriptures, the orthodox Christian church teaches that we are to respect our parents and truly honor our ancestors, and for this reason we reverently hold memorial services and festivals for the comforting of the spirits. Although we take special care of the dead and have high regard for our ancestors, in Christianity we do not worship the dead. As human beings, we should only worship the one true God who is the creator of heaven and earth and the source of our being; although we pray to God for the eternal peace of the dead, we do not worship the dead (Mullins 1998:139).

Thus, the non-Christian Japanese consider that Christianity is a fine religion, but criticize that Christianity does not take good care of their ancestors because the Japanese Christians do not worship their ancestors in general. Ancestor worship has been practiced in the whole country on many occasions and Christians do not participate in the ceremonies of ancestor worship under Buddhist traditions. The criticism of Christians comes from the fact that Christians do not participate in the Buddhist altars, mortuary tables, and festivals. Thus, many Christians are challenged to give up their faith in Christ or are hesitant to become a Christian and get baptized (Hashimoto 1962:33).

According to Reid (1991:97), "Protestant Christianity in Japan has been influenced by the ancestral rite tradition in such a way that one must take this influence into account in order to understand contemporary Japanese Protestantism." This means that the ideal of ancestor worship not only is melded into the belief of Japanese Christians, but also is associated with Japanese life. Mullins (1998:7) explains the reason why Japanese Christians are struggling with the ancestral rite tradition through the history of other religions as being that "the Buddhist tradition was introduced to Japan via China and Korea from the late sixth century, Roman Catholic Christianity was transplanted in the sixteenth century, and various Protestant denominations began missionary efforts from the latter half of the nineteenth century after Japan reopened its doors to the West." As I show above, Protestant Christianity was transplanted into the long history of other religions such as

folk religion, Shintoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Roman Catholicism. When Protestant Christianity was introduced in Japan, the precept of ancestor worship had already been propagated throughout the whole nation as a custom of society by the influence of Shintoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

Because Japanese think that ancestor worship is a part of their culture as a fundamental duty, the term “ancestor worship” does not appear in a Japanese mind; rather, ancestor worship is a part of the Japanese lifestyle. They do not think of ancestor worship as worshipping ancestors. Although the Japanese Protestant church holds a very negative view of ancestor worship, many Japanese Christians have Buddhist altars in their homes. They attend church, read the Bible, and pray regularly and at the same time they keep Buddhist mortuary tablets, sutras, and memorial photographs associated with ancestor worship and rites. Thus, ancestor worship is seen to be a primary hindrance of evangelism in Japan.

Shibata (1985:247) points out clearly that “the prevailing practice of ancestor worship, which is closely associated with Shintoism and Buddhism, is a major obstacle to the Christian effort of evangelism. Even many Japanese Christians are still battling with this age-old practice.” Japanese Christians who hold no Buddha altar or mortuary tablets at home and do not participate in ancestor worship as a religious act might still join in family rites as a family obligation. For Japanese Christians who keep the mortuary tablets in the

altar to Buddha, however, it is very hard to avoid conducting the periodic rites at the Buddhist temple. Reid (1991:132) points out the reaction of these two groups to ancestor worship, writing that “Christians with a *butsudan* (Buddha altar) in the home participate more fully in household and community rituals for the dead than Christians with no *butsudan* (Buddha altar) in the home.” Although there are conflicts among Christians, Japanese Christianity rejects dual religious alliance in this form of religious behavior.

The problems of ancestor worship arise increasingly in the encounter with the Christian faith. Although Christianity has a 450-year-old history and numerous missionaries are evangelizing in Japan, the population of Christians is still only 1.1% of the Japanese population. Is there any special reason or context why they are unable to effectively evangelize the Japanese people in spite of such a long history and the numerous missionaries working in Japan? Berentsen points out three major problem areas of ancestor worship that challenge the Christian faith in Japan. These three problem areas show clearly the reason why Japanese Christians are struggling with ancestor worship and why evangelizing is very slow in the context of Japan.

The first problem area is related to ancestor worship. Ancestor worship functions in Japan as “part of the social, inter-human milieu, including the ethical code that governs the social relationships” (Berentsen 1985:264). The *ie* system is characterized by patriarchal, patrilineal, primogeniture, and patrilocal rule. These four elements are all subordinate to the overriding

principle of the continuation of the *ie* itself. They are involved in the continuity of family relationships from the past into the future, including the living, the dead, and the as-yet-unborn. The symbols of the ultimate reality of the *ie* is in the grave and the family altar in ancestor worship. Japanese regard their ancestors as living family members. Thus, ancestor worship does not worship ancestors as a conduct of religion, but it is a part of filial piety and seen as the responsibility of descendants by the average Japanese. The ancestors and their descendants are connected together in a circle of obligation (Berentsen 1985:265).

The second problem area concerns the relationships between the living and the dead (Berentsen 1985:266). This life and the afterlife cannot be separated. In the ideal of ancestor worship, death is not an ultimate end to man's existence. The dead person has a continued existence beyond death and provides the basis for a fundamental community between the living and the dead of the house. The Japanese believe that the spirit of the dead person is in the process of growth after death. As a child passes through steps from birth to adulthood, the soul passes through corresponding steps from a dead spirit to a mature ancestor. Takeda (1971:170) explains the important steps of this process. These steps are as follows:

The *imiake* (also called the man-chuin) at the forty-ninth day after death when the soul completes its stay in the purgatory (*chuin*) and the final memorial rite (*tomuraiage*) at the thirty-third

or fiftieth anniversary, which marks the decisive turning point between the period of growth towards ancestorhood (*sorei*) and the state of ancestorhood itself. Having arrived at this stage, the *sorei* is conceived of in terms of a supraindividual, unlimited, abstract being that may easily be identified with a specific kami (gods) or Buddha.

Thus, ancestor worship is essential to the life of the Japanese because if descendants worship their ancestors properly, the ancestors will use supernatural power to guide the life of the living and give protection, blessing, prosperity, and fortune. The ancestors and the descendants are linked in a circle of interdependence.

The third problem area is “the position of the ancestral spirits vis-à-vis the position of the person who performs their rites” (Berentsen 1985:268). The ancestors are put in a supernatural and supra-human position in ancestor worship. Thus, the ancestors and the descendants are connected in a circle of cosmic continuity. Accordingly, Japanese cannot separate and neglect the religious elements of ancestor worship.

The reason that many Japanese Christians hesitate to cease the traditional rites of ancestor worship is that if they neglect or dishonor their ancestors, the spirits of their dead ancestors take vengeance on the living descendants.

Many Japanese people believe seriously that their dead ancestors can take vengeance on them, and they fear ghosts and apparitions.

Although several obstacles challenge the Japanese Christians to keep their faith in Christ, there are obvious reasons to reject ancestor worship.

Hashimoto (1962:33-40) points out three reasons why Christians do not worship their dead ancestors' spirits via religious rites. The first reason is that they believe in the holy and true living God of Exodus 20:3-5. The second reason is that they recognize ancestor worship itself as essentially wrong. Ancestor worship depends on the Buddhist point of view but is against the Christian point of view. Christians believe that ancestor worship in Japan is nothing more than traditional customs apart from the Christian faith. The third reason is that "Christians have a much more realistic awareness of what the ancestors' 'desires' are likely to be, and of the futility of holding such rites for the souls of the departed" (Hashimoto 1962:35). This is the main reason why Christians do not observe rites for the spirits of their dead ancestors.

## **2.5 ANCESTOR WORSHIP IN KOREA**

Since Protestant Christianity was introduced into Korea in 1884, Korean Christians and churches have remarkably grown to a number of close to nine million members. According to Statistics Korea ([www.kostat.go.kr](http://www.kostat.go.kr)) the population of Korea was approximately 47,041.434 in 2005. According to the national population and housing census report as of the same year, among

the entire population of Korea, Protestant Christians are 18.3% (8,616.428), Roman Catholics are 10.9% (5,146.147), Buddhist are 22.8% (10,726.463), Confucians are 0.2% (104.575), other religions are 0.8% (214.058) and 0.1% (205.508) did not respond. The sum of the religious population of Korea is 53% (24,970.766) and the non-religious population is 46.9%.

This report shows that Christianity, including both Protestant Christians and Roman Catholics, is competing with Buddhism in South Korea. According to the Korea World Missions Association ([www.kwma.org](http://www.kwma.org)), South Korea is the second largest missionary-sending nation after the USA. At the twenty-second annual meeting on January 9, 2012, KWMA gave a report that Korean Protestant churches have sent 23,331 missionaries to 117 countries all over the world. Here arises a question: if, according to the report of Statistics Korea, the population of Confucianism is only 2%, then why does Korean Christianity struggle with ancestor worship? Are there other fundamental factors which have hindered the establishment of the teachings of Christianity?

Son (1988:61-70) points out that ancestor worship in South Korea has declined due to several factors, which are the fall of the Chosun Dynasty, no official institutions to teach and transmit Confucian traditions thus leading to the weakened status of Confucianism, the secularization of the traditional worldview, the estrangement of ancestral tablets, disintegration of traditional family and social structures, and the strong influence of Christianity. Nevertheless, many Korean people still participate in ancestor worship

because the Korean people consider that ancestor worship is a high virtue of filial piety to a dead ancestor. Oldstone-Moore (2002:102) observes Confucian ancestral rites as filial piety in South Korea, “The Confucian heritage in South Korea is still evident in patterns of daily life. Practice of ancestral rites is widespread. An overwhelming percentage of the population, even among those who identify themselves as Christian, practices Confucian rituals and ceremonies, primarily in the form of ancestor veneration.”

The primary reason answering the question above is that although the population of Confucianism is only 0.2% in Korea, Confucian customs, values, and beliefs have dominated Korean culture, thought, and education. Moral standards associated with Buddhism, Taoism, and Korean Shamanism have become a vital aspect of daily life. Confucian ancestor worship in Korea has the same form and ideal as that of Japan. The primary meaning of Confucian ancestor worship in ancient China was the respect or veneration for parents, ancestors, and emperors. However, since the ideals of Buddhism and Shamanism were mingled with Confucianism, the meaning of ancestor worship became a contemporary form. Adams (1995:103) indicated that the Korean Confucian worship had built upon Buddhist and Shamanistic ideas of the soul as follows: “Ancestor rituals of both religious traditions were concerned with making certain that the soul of the deceased was adequately provided for so that it would not wander and cause difficulties for the living. Sociologically these rites served as a kind of closure on the life of the deceased and fostered harmony among family and friends of the deceased.”

When Christianity was officially introduced to Korea in 1884, Korea was a society in which the beliefs of Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism dominated Korean life, education, morals, thought, and politic standards. Paik (1929:23) points out the relationships of these three religions and how these three religions have influenced the current religion in Korea, citing “The high ethical and moral standard of Confucianism, the religious inspiration of Buddhism, and the mysteries of life and death and of the spiritual world of Shamanism.” As a result, Koreans practice the religious rituals from ancestor worship, ask for efficiency through Buddhistical prayers, bow at the shrine of mountain demons, and recite Confucian classics. Confucianism had “the cultured man, the citizen, but has developed little of the spiritual element in the heart of the people. Strange as it may seem, for the masses of the people these three cults have been syncretized” (Paik 1929:22). Above all, for the five hundred years under the Chosun Dynasty, which took Confucianism as a national religion, the ideology of Confucianism had held sway over the heart of the Korean people.

Ancestor worship in Korea had formulated during the period of the tri-dynasty that was limited primarily to the royal families. The three dynasties are Peck-Che, Silla and Koryo. During the Peck-Che dynasty ancestor worship had a form for venerating the founding father, named On-Cho, and during the Silla and Koryo dynasties ancestor worship was practiced to venerate its own founding fathers. Buddhism was introduced in Korea in 372 and its primary

beliefs prevailed popularly for approximately fifteen hundred years there (Paik 1929:18). Until the end of the Koryo dynasty, ancestor worship had no definitive form. Although Buddhism was dominant during the Koryo dynasty, Confucian ancestor worship, including the three-year mourning ritual, was practiced in the Koryo society. The idea of ancestor worship from Buddhism, which was the official religion of the Koryo dynasty, continued to be practiced in the Yi dynasty under Confucianism as the ruling ideology. The concept of Buddhism was integrated into Confucian ancestor worship which became the essence of the modern Korean ancestor worship.

Furthermore, there is no doubt that contemporary Korean ancestor worship is a result of the Korean native religion's form of worship having a long history in Korea with both the Chinese form of Confucian ancestor worship and the idea of Buddhism.

Then, what is the native religion which has influenced the contemporary Korean ancestor worship? It is Shamanism. Confucianism and Shamanism are completely different religions but at the same time they are very closely related to each other in the matter of nature worship. Palmer points out the relationships between them as "the primitive ethos of the Korean people derives from Shamanism, a polytheistic and polydemonistic religion based on nature worship. Although the religious force of Confucianism permeated the social and political life of the people, particularly at the top levels, Shamanism has traditionally retained the most powerful religious influence upon the

population as a whole” (Palmer 1967:6).

### **2.5.1 SHAMANISM AND ANCESTOR WORSHIP**

Shamanism had influenced the development and establishment of Korean ancestor worship. Shamanism had a form of animistic nature worship which consisted of a universal worship and fear of spirits. Shamanism has a longer history than the history of Confucianism in Korea. Korea is a country where Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, and several new religions exist together peacefully in the society. Shamanism has fundamentally influenced how Confucian ancestor worship stands firmly in Korea. Ro (1988:11) points out the influence of Shamanism in Korean religion history: “Shamanism, as the oldest form of religious belief in Korea, has always been the most influential religious tradition. Due to its flexibility and receptivity, shamanism has been successfully incorporated into other religious traditions, such as those of Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Christianity that have been introduced to Korea.”

Shamanism comprises “a vast number of gods, demons, and demi-gods, the legacy of centuries of nature worship. Imagination has peopled earth, air, and sea with supernatural beings whose multiplicity makes them ubiquitous and whose powers for good or evil demand worship” (Paik 1929:17). The experience of ecstasy takes place among those who participated in the shamanistic ritual. The ecstasy in a shamanistic ritual may enable one to

engage in a conversation with “gods” and “spirits.” Exorcism is considered a form of shamanistic healing. The worship form of Korean shamanism essentially had the form of non-duality “of the sacred and the secular, of religious ritual and secular play, of men and gods, and of spiritual and material life... Spiritual blessings and material well-being were not separable from each other; yet, on the other hand, the spiritual dimension—the concern for supernatural powers—was deeply rooted in man’s daily life within the material world” (Ro 1985:12). Shamanistic rituals provided an appropriate cosmological and ontological speculation. This concept and practice of shamanism influenced other religions in Korea.

Yu (1978:155-156) describes explicitly the nature of Korean shamanism spirituality as follows:

Shamanism spirituality attempts to seek a resolution for the conflicts caused by physical and social disorders or cosmic disharmony. These conflicts often appeared in a form of disease, a loss of life, immature death, calamities by unknown reason, etc. These conflicts, however, according to the shamanistic spirituality, can be resolved by a shaman who is supposed to possess the power of relating the world of man to the world of the “spirit” and “gods,” the living to the dead. In doing so, a shaman is able to go beyond the boundaries of the duality and to make a harmonious relationship between the

conflicting two worlds. A shaman, therefore, is able to communicate with the deceased, heal the sick, appease the malice of evil spirits, and invoke the protection of the benevolent ones.

According to Kim (1972:17-21), shamanism has 273 spirits which are divided into three dimensions: nature gods (174, 63.6%), human gods (90, 33.3%), and other gods (9, 3.1%). Moon (1982) explains that there are 73 kinds of spirits responding to shamanistic rituals (*Gut*, which is a dance accompanied with drum for the purpose of exorcism and healing), 115 kinds of spirits appearing in shamanistic paintings, 138 kinds of spirits worshiped in shrines, and 11 different kinds of spirits which protect and guide households. The *Gut* is the highlight of the role of the spirits in the process of exorcism and healing. The *Gut* is a ritual ceremony to obtain blessings and to recall of the souls of the deceased by songs, dance, drum beating, and cymbal clanging.

Shamanists believe that everything is spirit (神) and thus worship natural objects such as the sun, the moon, the stars, the wind, clouds, rain, mountains, streams, stones, caves, animals, trees, and other things. These are considered as gods to them. In Korean shamanism the highest god is called "*Hananim*"; *hana* is "one" and *nim* is an honorary suffix word. This title means someone who rules in heaven or personifies heaven. *Hananim* in Korean Shamanism is the celestial God of the Heavenly Kingdom who reigns over the universe and the realm of spirits. As Shamanism developed, a

concept of *Hananim* became an essential part of Korean religions and thoughts from ancient times. *Hananim* is also used for the unique God of Christianity, the Supreme Lord and Creator. However, in the Chosun dynasty, the non-Christian *Hananim* was first called another name, *Hanulnim*. *Hanul* is “sky” and *nim* is an honorary suffix word. *Hananim* became a later form of the word *Hanulnim* but Korean Christianity translates God as *Hananim*, meaning that there is only one God in heaven (Palmer 1967:7-8).

In Korean Shamanism, human gods consist of three kinds of spirits; chosang spirit (the spirit of a dead man who had descendants), chosang-mangryong spirit (the spirit of a dead man who had no descendant), and youngsan spirit (the spirit of a dead man who had not married) (Kim 1972: 22). These spirits are considered to be able to eat food, to control blessings and misfortunes, and even to marry like a living man. The concept of shamanism plays a significant role in providing a proper world view for ancestor worship. The shamanistic world view contributed to having a concept of relating life to death and the world of a departed spirit to the world of man. The concept of shamanistic ritual became a religious form in Korea. Ro (1988:16) explains the position of ancestor worship in the Korean context: “ancestor worship was no longer a ritual exclusively belonging to the Confucian tradition, but rather it was the most important and popular family ritual for all Koreans regardless of their religious affiliations, until Christianity was introduced.”

Confucianism accepted and changed the shamanistic spirit worship to

ancestor worship. Furthermore, Confucianism developed the idea of shamanism and believed that ancestors were supposed to have the power to give misfortunes to their descendants or offer blessings to them.

## **2.5.2 CHOSUN DYNASTY IN KOREAN HISTORY**

Traditionally in Korean history, the idea of Confucian ancestor worship and filial piety has yielded great influence on Korean lifestyles and culture. What is the challenge of the filial piety of Confucianism for Korean churches? The most challenging part of this filial piety is that people in Korea have practiced ancestor worship as the best expression of filial piety for a long time. Confucianism was introduced into Korea in 1122 A.D. Confucianism, however, flourished when it was accepted as a national religion and the center of ethical standards for the Chosun dynasty.

Sunggye Yi, the first king of the Chosun Dynasty, adopted Confucianism as his national ideology to justify and solidify his revolutionary dynasty. King Yi forced Confucianism on the people to expurgate the ideal of Buddhism which was the national religion of the previous Koryo dynasty. In the period of the Chosun Dynasty,<sup>6</sup> the father or the eldest son of the family had almost absolute power, even killing family members to maintain the family's honor. Sunggye Yi adapted this view and people acknowledged smoothly that the

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<sup>6</sup>Confucianism in Korea existed prior to the Chosun dynasty (1392-1910). Dealing with the entire Korean Confucianism history would require another research. Thus, the scope of this thesis is not to cover the entire history of Korean Confucianism, but instead to begin from the Chosun dynasty, which has most influenced modern Korean Confucianism.

king is to be regarded as the father of the whole country. The ideal king is a benevolent Confucian, acting as the father of the entire group of people.

During the Chosun dynasty (1392-1910 A.D.), Korea possessed a typical educational system reflecting Confucian ideals, “to such an extent that court officials would offer ‘royal lectures’ to the ruler, reflecting the Confucian ideal that it is an enlightened and cultured monarch who can best serve the people” (Oldstone-Moore 2002: 71). King Sunggye Yi (1392-1398) was the most famous king to develop and expand Confucianism in Korea. King Yi adapted the teachings of Confucianism in the principles of government, to the moral basis of the country, and to education (Slavicek 2002: 73). By that time, Confucianism prevailed throughout Korea. The Yi dynasty government had established many Confucian schools throughout the country and continually taught an ideology of filial piety and ancestor worship. Ancestor worship was practiced as “a most important national ritual” (Lee 1988:1). Chosun Dynasty legal documents show several examples of legislating aspects of ancestor rites as a matter of state and public policy in 1391, 1402, 1407, 1428, 1431, and 1432. Adams (1995:105) states that “the 1397 legal code was especially influential in setting in motion the processes that would thoroughly transform Korean society.”

Confucians built temples in important villages throughout the country to worship ancestors and Confucian sages with ostentatious ceremonies and sacrificial offerings (Ro and Nelson 1995:22). King Yi settled into a model

Confucian civilization. For five hundred years, the Chosun dynasty had dominated with the ideas of Confucianism. Lee (1987:69) affirms that the organization and development of ancestor worship were widespread and established during the last years of the Koryo Dynasty and throughout the Chosun Dynasty as cultural and sociological functions; “in spite of its profound religious significance, ancestor worship provides a powerful focus for social organization among kinsmen, much as the early Confucian reformers intended.” Thus, Confucian ancestor worship imposes upon indigenous custom and reforms overwhelmingly successful in Korean society.

Oldstone-Moore (2002: 93) indicates how much influence the teachings of Confucianism, especially the ancestral rites, yielded in South Korea:

Rites for the dead are widely observed in South Korea, and many homes will have manuals on proper practices of ancestral rituals. Observance of these rituals is costly and time-consuming. In 1980, the Korean government promulgated the “Guideline for Family Rituals” to curb the expense of honoring ancestors. Although the law is in effect, practices continue relatively unchanged, for ancestral rites are a primary way of expressing filial piety and family unity.

Koreans currently practice ancestor worship and visit ancestors’ graves

during the festive days as an annual traditional custom. Typically, ancestral rites are still practiced on the Chinese New Year, the Korean Thanksgiving Day, August 15, the birthday of the dead ancestors, and the anniversary of the date that one's forefathers died. Additionally, Confucians practice autumn and spring sacrifices at the Confucian shrine of the Historic National Confucian Academy in Seoul to honor Confucius and his Chinese and Korean disciples. Special ceremonies are also performed on Confucius's birthday, September 28, in the academy's Confucian shrine and in many ornate Confucian temples located in the South Korea countryside.

Furthermore, a former president of South Korea, Dae Jung Kim, was teaching Confucian thought at a university as a professor. He believed that "Confucian principles of fairness and compassion support democratic ideals and practices" (Slavicek 2002: 112).

### **2.5.3 KOREAN CHRISTIANITY HISTORY**

#### **2.5.3.1 Korean Roman Catholicism**

In 1939, the Roman Catholic Church was released officially from the prohibition of ancestor worship. In the early Korean Roman Catholic Church history, however, the Roman Catholic Church was prohibited from participating in ancestor worship because it was regarded as an idolatry, which was against the first and second of the Ten Commandments. When

Roman Catholicism was introduced to Korea through Korean scholars, the Roman Catholic converts were in fierce conflict with the conservative Neo-Confucian scholars due to the matter of ancestor worship. As a result of refusing to submit to ancestor worship, Roman Catholicism produced many martyrs over its three centuries since being introduced in Korea.

The Roman Catholic faith was introduced into Korea by Korean scholars with Christian literature printed in Beijing, China in the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Italian Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) introduced Western science and Christian literature in China and wrote a book, *In His True Doctrine of the Lord of Heaven*, in 1601. He demanded his readers abstain from the negative attitudes of Confucianism, rather following the teachings of Christianity outlined in his book. In 1631, Do-wong Chong, a member of the annual embassy of Korea, brought many books from China and Ricci's was one of them. It received very little attention until Roman Catholics began to settle in Korea. In 1777, Yak-Chon Chong and Shyol-Sin Kwon began to have an interest in the new doctrines and followed the precepts of the Christian books. In the winter of 1783 Sung-Hun Yi went to Beijing as a delegate of the annual Korean embassy members. He was converted at the age of 27 in February 1784, exactly 100 years before the arrival of the first Protestant missionary, Horace Newton Allen, M.D., and was baptized by the Jesuit Father Louis de Grammont at the North Church in Beijing (Paik 1929:26-27). He was given the Catholic name of Peter, which means "Rock." As his name indicated, he became the foundation stone for

the Korean Catholic Church. His baptism was breaking news among Catholic missionaries in Beijing at that time. The report of Father de Ventabon to his home country told it as follows:

I inform you with great joyfulness that God made a convert to the light of the Gospel in a kingdom where no single priest entered at all...we gave them several doctrinal books, and one of them at the age of 27 who was a learned person read these booklets and opened his mind. With God's help, he confessed the faith...We asked him what he would do if the king ordered him to give up his faith. He answered immediately without hesitation, "Rather than give up what I believe to be the truth, I am ready to suffer any torture or even death"...He was given the name "Peter" as his Christian name (Dallet 1979:306).

He was the first Korean to become a Roman Catholic. Peter Yi returned to Korea the next year in 1784 and baptized his friend Duk-Cho Yi. The number of Catholics gradually increased in the whole country (Paik 1929:27).

Introduced over two centuries earlier than Protestant Christianity in 1884, Koreans themselves founded the Roman Catholic Church in Korea in 1784.

The Korean Roman Catholic Church, however, was not following the teaching of Ricci (Kim 1988:22-23).

At that time, Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit mission accepted ancestor worship

as a civil ceremony in China and the ancestor worship controversy arose among the missionaries there. Ricci taught that Christianity in China needed to include “the wearing of Chinese rather than Western liturgical vestments” (Adams 1995:96) and the Christian converts continued in their ancestor worship. The Jesuits understood ancestor worship as part of the Confucian ethics and social structure. They felt that the term “worship” was not proper, it was rather “veneration.” The Franciscan and Dominican missions, however, considered Confucian ancestor worship to be religious and superstitious idol worship, and they rejected Confucian ancestor worship and prohibited new converts to participate in all Confucian ancestral rites. Consequently, the two missions brought this issue to Pope Benedictus XIV and the Pope made it clear in 1742 that Confucian ancestor worship was not allowed in the Catholic Churches. The Chinese Roman Catholics followed the new instructions and were being confronted with sufferings and persecution in 1784 when the Korean Roman Catholic Church was founded in Korea.

The infant Korean Roman Catholic Church was not exempt from afflictions due to a negative attitude toward Confucian ancestor worship. The first victim and persecuted person in the Korean Roman Catholic Church was Thomas Pumwoo Kim in 1790 (Kim 1988:23). He was accused of burning ancestral tablets.

An ancestral tablet has two meanings in Confucianism. As an ancestral tablet is the image of the invisible soul, Confucian believes that an ancestral tablet

is the image of the invisible soul to express their respect to their ancestors while they were alive. It is the first meaning of an ancestral tablet. Confucian also believes that an ancestral tablet is the resting place of the soul. It is the second meaning of an ancestral tablet. Therefore, Confucian holds an ancestral tablet for preventing that the soul loiters around without a resting place (Lee 1988:41).

The early Korean Roman Catholics thought of the ancestral tablet and ancestor worship just like current Korean Christians: that the soul of the dead parent resides in the tablet as a member of the family and that those still living possess an obligation to care for and feed the dead soul in the tablet. Pumwoo Kim would later reject the notion that the dead soul has the power to bring blessings upon his descendants, to protect them in troubles or to cause disasters for the living.

In 1788, before this matter happened, Korean Catholics sent Yuil Yun to the Bishop of Beijing, who belonged to the Franciscan order, to ask about how Catholics responded to traditional customs, including the problem of ancestor worship. Bishop Gouvea made it clear in 1790 that the Catholic Church did not allow the practice of and participation in ancestor worship. The final statement of Gouvea prohibiting ancestor worship meant that Korean Catholics had to refuse the duty of their family, society, and state and also refuse involvement with Confucianism, which was the national religion (Dallet 1979:329-30).

The dialogue between Bishop Gouvea and Yuil Yun is as follows:

Yuil Yun: The holding of an ancestral memorial service (worship) is designed to serve the dead as if one served living parents. It renders the life of a Catholic convert very difficult not to be allowed to observe an ancestral memorial rite. Can't there be any way to overcome this hurdle?

Bishop: Catholicism attaches great importance to sincerity; and the offering of foods to the dead violates sincerity (Choi 1988:39-40).

Korean Catholics experienced confusion at the unexpected answer from the Bishop, because ancestor worship was regarded as a basic practice of filial piety. Forsaking ancestor worship would be the denial of their dead parents and forefathers (Dallet 1979:330-31). Accordingly, Korean Catholics burned their ancestral tablets and rejected ancestor worship. Through the Bishop's ruling, many left the church at this time. Moreover, the Korean government, which operated under Confucian ideals, considered Catholicism as an evil religion and prohibited the importing of Catholic Christian books from Beijing. Many converts were unemployed, displaced in society, considered foreigners, and mistreated grievously. The Korean Roman Catholics were confronted with many persecutions as the cost of the proscription of ancestor worship. Although many Catholics renounced their faith, others withstood all

the harsh persecutions courageously.

The first organized persecution took place in the Shin Hae year of 1791. It has been called the Shin Hae persecution due to occurring in the Shin Hae years. This persecution started with Chi Chyong Yun, a man of the noble class who lived in the town of Jin San located in the southern province of Korea. He was converted in 1786 when he was twenty-eight years old. In 1791, when his mother passed away, he refused to make an ancestor tablet or offer sacrifices to his ancestors. His action caused a commotion among his relatives. They accused him before the king. Chi Chyong Yun was brought to trial in a court. Before the investigators, he said: "Since I accepted the Heavenly Lord to be my great parent, it would not be right and honoring not to follow the order of the Heavenly Lord. Since the religion of the Heavenly Lord prohibits making a wooden table, I buried it under the ground. I would rather do wrong to my deceased mother than to the Heavenly Lord" (Choi 1974:429).

His statements were against the order of the king and his parents. During Yun's trial, many other critical petitions and investigators reported to the King with the following words, "In every word he honors the teaching of the Heavenly Lord. It might be right for him to disobey the order of the King or the parent. It would never be right, however, to disobey the teaching of the Heavenly Lord even under the severest punishment. Yun would have taken it as an honor to be beheaded" (Choi 1974:429). Then, the king accepted this

saying and was finally persuaded to sentence him to be executed. Chi Chyong Yun and his nephew Syang Yen Kwun, however, still refused to offer sacrifices and practice ancestor worship, and they were beheaded in December of 1791. This event was the beginning of the Shin Hae persecution, which lasted until the end of the year 1811.

After this time, the Korean Catholic Church suffered and was severely persecuted several times by the Korean Confucian government and the traditional Confucian scholars who rejected Catholicism in the years 1815, 1819, 1827, 1839 (Kihae Persecution), and finally in 1866 (Kim 1988:25). After the Kihae Persecution, the Catholic Church's membership grew from 10,000 believers in 1857 to 23,000 believers in 1865 (Dallet 1979:327). The last persecution, the Pyungin Persecution, occurred in 1866. The persecution was nation-wide, toward both the missionaries and Catholics, with imprisonment, cruel torture, and a ruthless holocaust. On March 8, 1866, four foreign missionaries, Bishop Berneau and Fathers Bretenieres, Beauliue, and Borie, were beheaded. The executioners of the missionaries cut off their heads from their bodies and shouted, "It is done" (Kang 1997:5).

Dallet (1979:619) recorded in his book *The History of the Catholic Church in Korea* about the identity of the Korean Royal Court's persecution against the Korean Roman Catholic church, "Reviewing persecution with faithful eyes, it brought many valuable results. There are many new elected persons in heaven and the Korean Catholic Church sent powerful seekers in front of

God. In spite of many difficulties, the plentiful fruits of missionaries' message are due to martyrs' prayers." The Pyungin Persecution lasted eight years, until 1873. The number of martyrs was presumed to be from eight to twenty thousand. Paik (1929:37) points out how the early Roman Catholic Church became rooted in Korea: "The Roman church was planted in Korea under very extraordinary, if not romantic, circumstances. The history of the growth through persecution in a new environment, which we have just observed, was nothing short of remarkable." Their self-sacrifices of life were a seed for planting Roman Catholic Church in Korea.

#### **2.5.3.1.1 Japanese Shrine Worship**

The ancestor worship controversy had continued in the Japanese-occupied Korea for thirty-six years (1910-1945). The Japanese government had forced the Korean Christians to participate in shrine worship and the Korean Roman Catholic Church had worked together with "the Protestant churches in protesting against the idolatry of shrine service and refusing shrine visits on numerous occasions" (Kim 2011:386). The Korean Catholics understood even before 1936 that participating in the shrine ceremonies was idolatrous. Two years later in 1938, the Roman Catholics, however, suddenly changed their attitude toward shrine worship, stating that it is not a religious ceremony but just a national ceremony. At that time German, Italy, and Japan joined World War II and Pope Pius XII declared this change in his papal circular letter.

After all this, the Roman Catholic Church made a decision for the Korean and Chinese Churches in 1939. On December 18, 1939, Pope Pius XII declared that ancestor worship is not idolatry, but merely a civil rite to express filial affection to dead ancestors. In 1940, the Korean Roman Catholic Church accepted this decision and allowed congregations to participate in ancestor worship. Roman Catholics regarded the rite of ancestor worship as a part of their civil, not religious, affairs (Choo 1958:3).

The controversy over ancestor worship among Korean Catholics had come to an end. In 1940, the Roman Catholic view became a traditional custom in the Korean Catholic Church. Twenty-three years later, the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) reaffirmed this new attitude. According to section 37 of the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy:

Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters that do not involve the faith or the good of the whole community. Rather, she respects and fosters the spiritual adornments and gifts of the various races and peoples. Anything in their way of life that is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, as long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit (Abbott 1966:151).

Contemporary Roman Catholics in Korea have a compromising attitude toward the rites and even pray for the dead. Choo (1958:202) describes the teaching of the current Korean Roman Catholic Church about Confucian ancestor worship in detail: “Today the Korean Catholic Church allows bowing, burning incense in front of a corpse or a picture, and offering prayers for the dead during the funeral service and on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup> days after death. The Church has even set a day, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November, as a time of memorial and visiting ancestral graves.”

As shown in Korean Catholic Church history, the Korean Catholic Church was persecuted by the Korean Confucian government during the middle of the Chosun dynasty because of its rejection of the traditional customs, especially ancestor worship. After 1939, the Korean Catholic Church has not struggled with ancestor worship anymore. At the present time, it is instead participating freely in ancestor worship.

### **2.5.3.2 Protestant Church**

Although the Korean Protestant church is growing persistently and the population of Protestant Christians is 18.3% of the entire Korean population as of 2005, the matter of ancestor worship is still an unresolved issue in Korea today. Son (Lee 1988:61) defines the history of ancestor worship in Korea as the “shedding of blood.” In the same way as the early Korean

Roman Catholic Church, the early Korean Protestant Church shed much blood due to the matter of ancestor worship. From the very beginning, the Protestant missionaries affirmed that ancestor worship was contrary to Christian belief and practice.

Historically, the first visitor to Korea as a Protestant missionary was Charles Gutzlaff, a member of the Netherlands Missionary Society, in 1832. He visited in a very short-term way and had no recognizable result. After the visit of Gutzlaff, no Protestant missionary visited Korea for thirty-three years until Robert Jermain Thomas appeared in 1865 (Paik 1929:38-41). Thomas graduated from New College, Edinburgh, was ordained to the ministry at Hanover Chapel in Scotland on June 4, 1863, and was appointed to work in China under the London Missionary Society. In July of the same year Thomas left Scotland with his wife for China. Two years later, Thomas received a small allowance for traveling expenses from the Bible Society and sailed from China with a large number of Chinese Bibles to distribute in Korea. On September 4, 1865, Thomas arrived at the Korean coast and spent two and a half months there, but there were no visible effects from this journey (Paik 1929:42-44).

The next year, Thomas took an opportunity as an interpreter and guide to embark on an American vessel, the General Sherman, loaded with goods to be sold in Korea on an experimental voyage in the expectation of opening the country to trade. He sailed toward Korea, where the land of his missionary

dream was. The General Sherman arrived at the coast of the Daedong River at the end of August in 1866 and asked the governor of the Pyungyang Province to allow them to open trade relations with Korea. The fearful governor did not allow it and asked the Americans to leave, but they did not. Although they didn't have permission from the governor, the vessel pushed up the river and drew near to the city of Pyungyang, today's capital of North Korea. Unfortunately, the ship became stuck in mud and soon its occupants began a fight which resulted in the tragic end that the entire crew was killed and the ship was burned by Koreans. During the fierce battle the sailors tried to escape from the burning ship to the river bank and the waiting Korean soldiers began to kill them. Thomas jumped into the Daedong River with a few Bibles inside his pocket (Kim 2011:98-100).

When Thomas reached the river bank, Chun-Gwon Park killed him. Before he died, Thomas handed a Bible to Chun-Gwon Park, who later became a Christian and a leader of Anju Church. Furthermore, Young-Sik Park, who was a barrack gate officer, "used the Bible pages as wallpaper and [his community] later became the site of the first church in Pyongyang, Neoldarikkol Chapel" (Kim 1971:49). Thomas passed the Bible to soldiers and was killed on September 2, 1866 as the first Protestant martyr in Korea. He was 27 years old (Kim 2011:100). However, Paik (1929:45) evaluates that, in his death, "Thomas discovered the missionary value of Korea, and formed a high idea of the province as a sphere of missionary labor."

In 1884, official American Protestant missionaries entered in Korea. The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America gained an interest in a Korea mission effort through its missionaries in Japan and tried in several ways to bring this to fruition. In 1884 the Board of Foreign Missions of the Northern Presbyterian Church in the United States of America appointed Horace Newton Allen, a medical doctor born in April of 1858, as a medical missionary to Korea to open missionary work there and he arrived at Jemulpo on September 20, 1884 as the first resident Protestant missionary in Korea (Paik 1929:76-77). Being a doctor, Allen had a good opportunity to serve as King Gojong's physician and the King appointed him to the office of vice minister. On April 9, 1885, Allen opened a clinic named "Gwanghyewon"; on April 23, the government assigned a few officials to this clinic and it was renamed "Jejungwon," which meant "saving many people" (Kim 2011:125-26).

The first ordained pastor missionary entering Korea was Horace G. Underwood, who was born in July of 1859. He arrived at Jemulpo on Easter, April 5, 1885, sent by the Northern Presbyterian Church of the USA (Kim 2011:129). On the same day Dr. William B. Scranton, Rev. Henry G. Appenzeller, and Mrs. Mary F. Scranton, who were appointed by the Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, arrived at Jemulpo as the pioneer missionaries of the Methodist church to Korea (Paik 1929:75). As a result, Protestant missions in Korea were officially started. Underwood began by joining the ministry of Allen at the hospital and in evangelistic work.

When he started working at Allen's Jejungwon, the Royal Hospital, "there was no freedom of missionary work and no direct evangelism could not be carried out in Korea at the time; it was truly God's divine providence to allow the missionary work to start through medical missions" (Kim 2011:131).

Confucianism as a challenge for Korean churches began upon the first introduction of Christianity into Korea in 1884. At that time, Confucianism prevailed in Korean society as the norm in educational and public life. The ideals of Confucianism were the basis of all standards of behavior, ethics, values, and attitudes in the home. The teaching of Confucianism had made a strong influence upon Korean culture and thinking. Christianity in Korea was built on the basis of Confucian principles and ethics. As Christianity began to take root, Confucianism already had five hundred years of history in Korea. For Koreans to receive Christianity at all, the only option was to come to harmony with the teachings of Confucianism. Because of the similarities between biblical ethical teachings and Confucian precepts, the growing Korean church easily accepted the teachings of the Bible. Thus, Confucian ideologies influenced Korean Christianity in this way (Suh 1996:248).

Since Protestant Christianity was introduced into Korea in 1884, the Korean church had suffered severely because of the rejection of ancestor worship and had seriously confronted the controversial issue of ancestor worship among Christians. As seen above, the Chosun dynasty government had taught that the root of all moral principles was filial piety, and ancestor

worship was an extension of filial piety to the dead parents.

In 1896, the Korean church dealt officially with the problem of ancestor worship. At that time, there were very difficult questions to the missionaries regarding ancestor worship and plural marriage relationships. The missionaries debated and discussed these subjects. Although ancestor worship was defined as a contrary religious action to Christianity, this statement was made by a few missionaries at Seoul, not on behalf of the whole country. It, however, was taught continually that ancestor worship opposed the teaching of the Bible. Furthermore, refraining from ancestor worship was made of one of the requirements for becoming a church member.

After these decisions, the issue of ancestor worship did not stop being debated among the missionary bodies who served in other countries like China, Japan, India and South Central Africa. As a result, in 1897 the Korean Church adopted a resolution that Christians would serve and obey God only. They rejected the wrong decision of the Roman Catholics, and abandoned the custom of ancestor worship practiced for a long time in Korean history (Huntley 1985:276).

The Korean church demanded all catechumens to adopt and publicly confess seven statements in front of the congregation at their time of baptism. Here are the three statements related to ancestor worship. The first of these three

confessions was, “since the most High God hates the glorifying and worshiping of spirits, follow not the custom of the honoring of ancestral spirits, but worship and obey God alone” (Paik 1929:214-15). The third confession was related to the first confession; “since the filial reverencing of parents is something which God has commanded, during the life of your parents piously reverence them, and using all strength be faithful to them as by the command of the Lord” (Paik 1929:215). The fourth confession was related to polygamy; “since God has appointed one woman for one man, let there be not only no abandoning of each other, but let there be a wife and no concubines, a husband and no lewdness” (Paik 1929:215).

It is very clear that Protestant Christians believed that ancestor worship was the actual worship of the spirits of the dead ancestors and not merely veneration of the ancestors.

#### **2.5.3.2.1 Japanese Shrine Worship**

Korean Protestant Christians did not suffer imprisonment and martyrdom as much as the Korean Catholics had, but many Korean Christians suffered and were martyred by the Japanese government during the thirty-six years of Japanese occupation of Korea (1910-1945). Since Japan occupied Korea in 1910, the Japanese government considered the Korean Church as the major obstacle against their colonial reign. The Japanese police infiltrated church worship services and sermons and intimidated Christian schoolteachers,

pastors, and evangelists (Kang 1997:50). According to Adams (1995:98), “the Japanese put extreme pressure upon all Koreans to participate in ritual bowing at Shinto shrines. There was particular pressure put upon schools to include Shinto rites in the daily morning exercises.” The Japanese government conciliated the Korean people that bowing before the Shinto shrines was an expression of patriotism, not a religious deed.

The Japanese introduced the Shinto to Korea in 1918. Shinto, as the traditional folk religion of Japan, was a religion which consisted of elements of animism, shamanism, phallic worship, and ancestor worship. The Japanese built a palace for their gods on Namsan (Mt. South) in Seoul in 1925. The spirits of ancestors, Japanese deities, the Japanese emperor, and the sun goddess were worshiped in Shinto shrines. The Japanese had continually built Shinto shrines and palaces in several locations throughout the country and officially organized shrine worship. Then, the Japanese government imposed Shinto shrine worship (神社参拜) upon the Korean people (Kim 2011:377-78). Shinto shrine worship challenged the Korean Christians as a very serious enemy of the Christian faith.

From 1932, the Japanese government forced shrine worship upon the schools in Korea. The schools were the easiest to control, making them the first target. To persuade the schools, General Governor Minami Jiro conciliated the leaders with these words: “Korean and Japanese must become one in image, heart, blood, and flesh. True unity is not in simple

harmony or the shaking of hands; we must unite together in body and mind. The purpose of this unity is to eventually achieve equality inside and outside without any discrimination at all” (Han 1989:255). In addition to imposing shrine worship, the Japanese government persistently persuaded the Korean people to accept it voluntarily as a national ceremony but constrained the Korean Christians to participate in the shrine worship ceremony. The Japanese insisted that Koreans join in shrine worship, involving the worship of ancestral gods and the emperor god.

On December 30, 1935, a Japanese official called a committee of school principals and reproached them with the following words about shrine worship:

The shrine is a place where the spirits of our national father and veteran statesmen are dedicated; it is a public institution toward which we express our respect and reverence... From an educational viewpoint it is necessary to worship such consecrated spirits, for it is an essence of national morality... Therefore, shrine worship is nothing more than a practical discipline of respect and reverence to ancestors (Kim 1971:180).

Korean Christians, however, rejected shrine worship because they believed that it was not a civil rite but idolatry. Shrine worship seems to be another name for ancestor worship because shrine worship includes worshipping

ancestors. Korean Christians faced many persecutions because of their rejection of ancestor worship and Japanese shrine worship. The Japanese compelled the mission schools, missionaries and teachers to participate in shrine worship but the Christians did not compromise. Then, the Japanese forced the mission schools to close or took over the schools and changed their names. In 1937, the Japanese demanded that the shrine service be required in Korean churches. In order to compel the shrine worship, “they built shrines all across the country and promulgated laws requiring all citizens to participate in shrine service. Their policy was to set up one shrine per each village” (Kim 2011:384). In 1938, they demanded all schools to display the picture of the emperor which was distributed and worship it. In addition, they prohibited the use of the Korean language at the schools.

Although they were oppressed perpetually, the Korean Christians believed that shrine worship was definitely idolatry and rejected participating in it. The attacks and persecution of the Japanese arose against the Korean churches and Christians. The following statement shows how the Japanese considered the Korean Christians: “Nearly 500,000 Christians across Korea have a very cold attitude toward the state of affairs. They are not willing to accommodate national ceremonies like the shrine service because of the disagreement with Christian doctrines. They even claim Jesus as the King of kings, and thus they should be punished properly for their contempt” (Han 1989:255).

Eventually, in 1938, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Evangelical Holiness, the Salvation Army, the Anglican Church, and the Methodist Church decided to participate in Shinto shrines and assured their members that such actions were not idol worship, but the Presbyterian Church withstood the oppression. Prior to this, in April 1938, the Japanese gathered the Christian leaders at West Police Station and forced them to adopt and embrace shrine worship.

In the same way, the Japanese threatened the Korean Presbyterian presbyteries in several ways to make the church participate in shrine worship. As a consequence of the conciliation of the Japanese, North Pyeongan Presbytery, which was the strongest presbytery among the 23 presbyteries in the Korean Presbyterian Church, allowed shrine worship in February of 1938 and 17 other presbyteries followed to join in shrine worship (Kim 2011:389). As a result, in September 1938, Taek-Ki Hong, the Chairman of the 27<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Korean Presbyterian Church, officially announced the adoption of shrine worship as a patriotic national ceremony when two Japanese policemen in civilian clothes accompanied each delegate. He declared the position of the Korean Presbyterian Church on shrine worship as follows: “we understand that Shinto shrine worship is not a religion and is not contrary to Christian doctrine. We are also aware that the Shinto shrine worship is a patriotic national ceremony. Thereby we pledge ourselves with uttermost devotion as following imperial subjects and take the lead in participating in shrine worship under the national emergency” (Kim 2011:392).

Although the 27<sup>th</sup> general assembly of the Korean Presbyterian Church made the decision to allow and participate in shrine worship in 1938, until August 15, 1945, the Korean Independence Day, some Korean Churches and Presbyterian missionaries had stood perseveringly against the Japanese coercion of shrine worship. Rev. Sang Dong Han made five codes of conduct to fight against shrine worship in his region, South Gyeongsang Province: “dismantling the existing presbyteries; refusing baptism and Holy Communion conducted by pastors who participate in the shrine worship; organizing new presbyteries with those opposing shrine worship; mutual aid among those opposing the shrine service; and group worship services and active recruiting the supporters” (Kim 1980:160).

Due to the strong opposition to and the rejection of Japanese shrine worship many Christians suffered persecution, being imprisoned and martyred. A great martyr of the Korean Church, Rev. Kee-Cheol Joo, stood against Japanese shrine worship until the end of his life. He, who was one of the most significant leaders in fighting shrine worship, strongly resisted shrine worship and preached that it was idolatry. The Japanese arrested, imprisoned, and inflicted much pain on him. He was imprisoned several times for six years with all kinds of ordeals and his eyes, lungs, and heart were degenerated beyond repair. While he was in prison, the Japanese threatened and tortured him persistently to give up his pastoral position, but in vain. In the end, he passed away at the age of 47 on April 21, 1944.

Kim (2011:405) records the additional martyrdoms of the Korean pastors who resisted the Japanese shrine worship and were martyred as followed:

Some 50 ministers were martyred in prison. Among them were: Rev. Young Han Lee of Methodist Church who was martyred in Haeju Prison, Rev. Bong Jin Park of Evangelical Holiness Church who was released after much torturing in Cheolwon Prison but was martyred soon after, and Rev. Bong Suhk Choi, also known as Rev. Choi Gwonneung (power), who was released from the prison but was martyred in Gihol Hospital in Pyongyang. Rev. Taek Gyu Jeon was martyred in Hamheung Prison, and Rev. Tae Hyeon Choi of the Seventh Day Adventist Church was martyred as well.

Since December 18, 1939, when Pope Pius XII declared that ancestor worship was not idolatry but merely a civil ritual to express filial affection to dead ancestors, Roman Catholics have allowed the rituals as the remembrance of the dead ancestors in Korea. Furthermore, the Roman Catholic Church allows prayers for the dead. Protestants, however, interpret ancestor worship in various ways, and current debates are occurring between conservative Christians who believe that ancestor worship is idolatry, and liberal Christians who agree with the Roman Catholic perspective. Protestant churches, in particular the Presbyterian churches,

retain the conservative viewpoint of ancestor worship, but some are attempting to resolve the matter of ancestor worship in Korea. Attempting reconciliation between Confucianism and Christianity is a good attempt, but it makes a syncretistic problem between the teachings of the Bible and the teachings of Confucianism.

Although the vast majority of Protestant Christians withstood and rejected participation in Confucian ancestor worship, there were some people who had a different opinion concerning participation in ancestor worship. Young-Tai Pyun, who was a prime minister of Korea, was one of them in the history of early Protestant Christianity. Pyun examined the practice of ancestor worship by giving five critical questions and answers in his book, *My Attitude toward Ancestor Worship*. His five critical questions (Paik 1926:19-20) were: “1. Is it beside God and therefore against God? 2. Is greed an incentive? 3. Is fear a motive? 4. Is it unethical? 5. Is there a deified object of visibility?” Pyun (Paik 1926:29-36) gave answers to these five questions as a conclusion that ancestor worship (*chesa*) was not idolatry as follows: “1. God gave the command to ‘honor thy father and mother.’ 2. The concern is for all of one’s family and greed is not a motive. 3. No evil spirits are involved, hence there is no fear. 4. The main concern with the rites is ethical and social. 5. The memorial tablets are only symbolic remembrances.” Pyun criticized the early missionaries, arguing that they were ignorant of Korean traditions and made the Protestant Christians imitate their teachings.

### 2.5.3.2.2 Controversy among Korean Protestant Churches

Sung-Bum Yun, a Methodist theologian, took the position that ancestor worship was an expression of filial piety and lacked a religious nature. Yun (1973:18) believed that “bowing to memorial tablets is not idol worship, though it may seem so. It must be asked if showing respect to the national flag is idol worship.” Furthermore, Yun brought three opposing arguments concerning the early missionaries and Protestant perspective of ancestor worship: “First, the early missionaries and their converts were governed too much by the Old Testament view of idols as literal objects of wood and stone. Second, the missionaries misunderstood the real nature and purpose of the rites. And third, early converts followed Christian tenets to the letter, thus reflecting their Neo-Confucian tradition (Yun 1973:18).”

Yonggi Cho, who was a pastor of Full Gospel Church of Seoul, the biggest church in the world, faced serious public criticism in 1977 because he gave advice for a new convert with a strong Confucian background to continue with ancestor worship. Then he delivered a public sermon on the subject of ancestor worship on November 30, 1979, as a defense of his counsel to the new convert, as follows:

Ancestor worship is nothing but honoring one’s parents. I do not understand why people say that it is idol worship. . . . Parents are parents whether they are alive or dead. Isn’t our custom to

visit our living parents and prepare food for them? . . . It is quite natural then that we think of our deceased parents on such days as their birth or death. It is quite all right to prepare food thinking of our deceased parents as if they were present, to erect a cross instead of an ancestral tablet, and to bow down . . . We honor our parents with bowing down. It is not an idol. . . . Our deceased parents have gone either to heaven or hell. Even though they have gone to hell, they are our parents. Having an affectionate remembrance of them is keeping God's commandment. . . . The Apostle Paul was a great man. To the Jews he became like a Jew to win Jews. To those under the law he became as one outside the law that he might win those outside the law. . . . Thus, to perform ancestral worship is really a good thing. In the past we performed sacrificial rites to God (Kim 1988:29).

His sermon threw Protestant churches and leaders into stimulated and heated discussion and was confronted with nation-wide criticism. Christian leaders criticized his sermon. According to Kim (1988), ten representative Christian leaders declared publically with critical statements on the Christian Weekly Press printed on Nov. 7, 1981. Their critical remarks showed what Korean Protestant Christianity thought about ancestor worship:

We express our filial piety to our living parents. Deceased ones are not persons. Preparing food and bowing is contradictory to the Commandment (Chung, Sung- Koo). What Christianity makes important is the person. We believe in God as a person. The dead parents are not persons...Bowing to impersonal beings is nonsense (Chung, Chin-Kyung). In 1 Corinthians 10:20 Paul said "What pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons." Sacrificial rules are prescribed in the Scriptures. Ancestor worship is idol worship (Lee, Jong-Yun). There have been two kinds of mission policy in Asia, accommodation and transformation. Whereas ancestor worship was tolerated in such countries as India, China, and Japan, it was intolerable in Korea. The first mission policy in Korea was transforming old customs. It rejected wine, tobacco, opium, divination, and ancestor worship. Though ancestor worship is a traditional cultural rite, it includes idolatrous elements and cannot be tolerated (Kim, Myung-Hyuk). Preparing food and bowing to the deceased parents even without making an ancestral tablet is obviously idolatry. Jesus himself abolished the Jewish sacrificial system and instituted worship with prayers... Numerous men of faith have suffered because of this problem of ancestor worship. it would be a disgrace to them if we say that bowing without a tablet is not idolatry (Chun, Kyung-Young). If there is a pastor

who says that it is all right to prepare a sacrificial table and bow, he must be lacking in theological foundation (Choi, Hae-II). Preparing food and bowing is contradictory to theology and the Bible (Choi, Hoon). Since the deceased ancestors cannot be the object of worship, and since we are not allowed to idolize them, it is not right to bow down to the deceased ancestors (Kim, Jong-Dae). In this regard a person better follows the ecclesiastical regulations of his denomination rather than making his own personal interpretation of the Scriptures (Ra, Sa-Haeng). The question of whether bowing down at the worship ceremony is idolatry should be asked in the light of Korean Protestant tradition and its ecclesiastical regulations. To say that bowing down is nothing but a form of indigenization is rather misleading about what really is meant by indigenization (Kim, Kwang-Shik).

Sun-Whan Pyun, a professor of the Methodist Theological University, recently expressed his affirmative view about ancestor worship as follows: “Ancestor worship is a social product of a large-family system. To express filial piety and perform sacrifices is to follow an ethic designated by Heaven. Ancestor worship is an expression of filial affection, not idolatry” (Kim 1988:31).

This controversy still exists in the Korean Protestant church. Some liberal theologians and pastors attempt to contextualize the Christian gospel as well as a political or sociological attempt to de-Westernize and nationalize traditional Christian beliefs. This movement encourages ancestor worship. In contrast, conservative theologians and pastors take precautions against the liberal trend and attempt to provide clear solutions.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CONFUCIANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Confucianism is known for its non-religious nature because it emphasizes virtue and a rationalistic aspect. However, Confucianism presents “the religious aspect as a more certain hypothesis” (Keum 2000:3). The Confucian School of Nature and Principle makes its relationships, including man and the entire universe, “with the Ultimate as the basic necessary principle in an extensive and intricate philosophical system” (Keum 2000:3).

The Ultimate is the foundation or basis of the world of phenomena and the producer of all things. It also orders and controls all existence.

Confucianism’s Ultimate is related to the universe through the creation and management of it. Although it transcends the world, it is at the same time immanent in it, embracing it. The path to unity with the Ultimate is that of respect and sincerity. Respect provides for the purity of man’s heart. The concentrated awareness is an attitude of faith towards the Ultimate. Sincerity in achieving union with the Ultimate provides a mystical, mysterious, or spiritual experience. Through respect man meets the transcendent Ultimate (Keum 2000:10).

Above all, Koreans absolutely believe that Confucianism is a religion at the present day. If a Korean believes Confucianism, he/she rejects other religions. The Koreans do not believe two religions at the same time. This means that Confucianism is not just a philosophy or a non-religious nature. Confucianism has its own specific worship form, temple, canon, afterlife and gods like those of Christianity. Thus, a comparison of the theological foundations of Confucianism and Christianity is intended to clarify the reader's understanding of ancestor worship and filial piety. This chapter presents Christian doctrines more than those of Confucianism so as to relate how Christianity's teachings are distinguished from those of Confucianism.

## **3.2 CONFUCIAN RITE AND CHRISTIAN WORSHIP**

### **3.2.1 CONFUCIAN RITE**

Confucian worship consists of the worship of heaven and earth, and the ceremony to Confucius and one's ancestors. Among the various types of worship in Confucianism is ancestor worship, which is the worship of dead persons, and is considered by them as filial piety. Ancestor worship is based on the belief of the existence of the souls of dead persons, and is conducted by the kinship group. Ancestor worship is based on the continuance of the personality in some form after the death of the physical body, and is seen as a way to have a spiritual relationship between dead and living family members. Confucianism has three major forms of ancestor worship: "(1) the

funeral rites, (2) the mourning observances, and (3) the continuing sacrifices to the *manes*” (Thompson 1975:47).

The reason for the importance of ancestor worship in Confucianism is that its followers believe that “the ancestors dwelt in three specific places: within the home, within the family or lineage cemetery, and within the lineage temple” (Thompson 1975:53). For the purpose of filial piety, dead ancestors are the object of worship in Confucianism. Confucianism believes that honoring the ancestors and practicing ancestor worship are the best way to avoid disaster and receive fertility. When Confucians worship dead ancestors, the belief is that the spirits of the dead ancestors descend to the place where the family group worships them. One Chinese proverb says, “Western man worships God as almighty because God made him; the Chinese demand service from their gods because man made them” (Thompson 1975:57).

Roo (2000:70-74) describes that Confucianism has nine sacrificial rites in which a family performs ancestor worship for their dead ancestors, translated as *chesa* in Korean. These nine ancestral rites are still practiced in South Korea: 虞祭—rite that is practiced on the funeral day, and on the second and third day afterwards; 小祥—rite that is practiced on the first anniversary of a person’s death; 大祥—rite that is practiced on the second anniversary of a person’s death; 禫祭—rite that is practiced on the second month after the second anniversary of a person’s death; 吉祭—rite that is practiced on the twenty-seventh month after a person’s death; 時祭—ancestor memorial

services performed in each season of the year; 茶禮—rites that are practiced 4 times a year during the day on significant holidays like the lunar New Year (*Sul*) or the Autumn Harvest Festival on lunar August 15<sup>th</sup> (*Chusuk*); 忌祭—a memorial service held at home at midnight on the night before the death day of an ancestor (*Ki-il*). These rites are intended to commemorate four generations of ancestors. Lastly is 墓祭—a memorial service held before the grave.

### **3.2.2 CHRISTIAN WORSHIP**

Worship is intended to be the most honorable and glorious action toward God. The primary purpose of the church is to worship God. The Bible says clearly that the object of worship is God himself, and the purpose of worship is to glorify God, adore Him, and recognize what God has done for believers. Worship consists of words and actions for the service of almighty God. Words include prayer, praise, and the reading and preaching of God's Word. Actions include sacraments, humility, obedience, and submission. The English word "worship" is derived from the word "*weorthscipe*." "*Weorthscipe*" is a compound Anglo-Saxon word, "worth" and "ship," meaning one worthy of reverence and honor (Segler and Bradley 2006:3).

#### **3.2.2.1 The Old Testament**

Worship is to attribute worth to the Lord. This strong sentiment is described in

Psalm 96:7-8: “Ascribe to the Lord, O families of nations, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; ring an offering and come into his courts.” In Isaiah 48:11, God declares: “For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.” This passage says that God alone is worthy of worship. Translated into English, the Hebrew word “*shachah*” means “to bow down,” or “to bend down or prostrate oneself” (Gen 22:5; 1 Sam 1:3; 1 Chron 29:20; Ps 66:4, 99:9, 138:2; Isa 66:23) (Leonard 1993:3).<sup>7</sup>

The Old Testament term for worship conveys “the reverential attitude of mind or body, combined with the notions of religious adoration, obedience, and service” (Segler and Bradley 2006:5). When the Hebrew people heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped (Exod 4:31). Thus, this Hebrew word designates worship as expressing submission to the covenant of God.

Worship as described in the Old Testament was different from pagan worship in the ancient world. Old Testament worship was prescribed in God’s revelation to his chosen people. The worship of Israel in the Old Testament is distinguished from other Oriental cults in three ways. First, Israel’s God was the only God. Second, the God of Israel was a personal God who was the God of the covenant, intervening in history. Third, Israel in its worship had no images, as opposed to the practices of Oriental cults. Exodus 20:4 and

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<sup>7</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are taken from the New International Version (NIV).

Deuteronomy 5:8 prohibit the worship of images, a prohibition given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Both versions declare clearly that man must not worship cultic images. The prohibition of images protected the religion of Israel from compromising with cultic worship (Vaux 1961:271-73).

God desires for man to communicate with him. When God created man, God made conversation with Adam in the Garden of Eden. The first described act of worship appears in Genesis 4:2-5. The sons of Adam, Cain and Abel, worshiped God. Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord, and Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but he disfavored Cain and his offering. The Lord saw the motivations in their hearts. Several generations later Noah worshiped God. After the flood, Noah came out of the ark, and he built an altar to the Lord. Taking some of the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on this altar. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma.

In the patriarchal period, worship was performed at private and family altars. God appeared to Abraham and called him to leave his country and go to the land God would show him. God promised to bless Abraham, to make him into a great nation, and to make his name great. God promised him that he would give this land to Abraham's offspring. Abraham built an altar at that location to the Lord who had appeared to him, and then he called on the name of the Lord (Gen 12:1-8).

Abraham worshiped God when he showed his willingness to sacrifice his own son, Isaac, to the Lord (Gen 22:9-10). Later, Isaac built an altar where the Lord appeared to him and promised, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham,” and like his father, Isaac called on the name of the Lord (Gen 26:24-25). Jacob set up a stone for an altar, which he dedicated to the Lord and called it Bethel (Gen 28:16-17). Even before God gave the ritual law of Leviticus, the Old Testament emphasized the necessity of worship.

For the Mosaic period, Israel’s worship was observed in the wilderness under the direction of Moses. God instructed Moses to make the tabernacle. The tabernacle was to be a specific place to worship God. James Strong (1952:9) summarizes the important function of the tabernacle as follows:

It appears (Exodus 33:7) that the name “Tabernacle of the Congregation” was originally applied to an ordinary tent, probably the one officially occupied by Moses himself; and that this was first set apart by the token of the divine presence at its doorway as the regular place of public communication between Jehovah and the people. This was prior to the construction of what was afterwards technically known as the Tabernacle, which of course superseded such a temporary arrangement.

After Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem, Israel's worship reached its climax. The temple was elaborately built and dedicated to the Lord, and was the central worship place for Israel. With the building of the Temple, Israel's worship developed in various forms. According to Segler and Bradley (2006:16), the elements of the worship in the Temple included "music, solos, anthems, shouting, dancing, processions, playing of instruments, preaching (in elementary form), and sacred recitations of the stories of Israel." In addition, their acts of the worship "interspersed with petitions, prayers, vows, promises, spoken creeds and confessions, sacred meals, and washings" (2006:16). In the tabernacle and the Temple, the purpose of worship was glorifying God. The sacrificial system in Old Testament worship cannot be applied directly to present-day Christian worship. Many abiding principles, however, remain valid for Christian worship.

### **3.2.2.2 The New Testament**

A common New Testament term for worship is the verb "*proskuneom*," which means literally to "fall to the knee before" (Leonard 1993:15). Jesus uses this word when he talks to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well in Sychar, Samaria; God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). New Testament worship was performed in the Temple, the synagogue, and the homes, as well as other places where Christians gathered together for this purpose. Jesus held discussions with the religious

leaders and taught in the Temple and synagogue. In the New Testament period, Jewish worship in the synagogues differed from worship in the Temple. First, synagogue worship was less formal than the Temple. Second, teaching was a priority in the synagogue. Third, priestly duty was not required. Fourth, the teacher was the prime position in the synagogue. Fifth, laypeople participated in more prominent activities (Segler and Bradley 2006:21).

Many activities were practiced in the Temple and the synagogue in the New Testament. Segler and Bradley (2006:21) summarize the five main elements of synagogue worship: “Reading of the Scriptures and their interpretation; Recitation of the Jewish creed, the Shema (Deut. 6:4); The use of the Psalms, the Ten Commandments, the Benediction, and the Amen; The prayers; and The Jewish Kedushah, or prayer of sanctification, which became in the Christian tradition the *trisagion* (“Holy, Holy, Holy”).”

Acts 2:42 and 46-47 provide a brief summary of the main purpose of early Christian gatherings in Jerusalem: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.... Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.”

The place for meeting and worshipping God is no longer limited for

contemporary Christians. Matthews 18:20 says that the living Christ is present wherever two or three come together in his name; there is he with them. Ephesians 2:14 and 21 infer this: “For he himself is our peace, who has made two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility; in him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.” Colossians 3:16 supposes that worship is not only to glorify him, but also to enjoy him in his presence with our voices and hearts, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.” A New Testament passage of great worship of the living Christ, the Lamb who is worthy, is Revelation 5:12: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”

Jesus says that God is seeking true worshipers in John 4:23: “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.”

Williams (1992:90-101) designates the five characteristics of worship as follows: “Reverence and awe, praise and thanksgiving, humility and contrition, supplication and intercession and consecration and dedication.”

These five characteristics relate closely in worship.

Worship in a spirit of reverence and awe is the first attitude of the worshipers.

When the worshipers worship in a spirit of reverence and awe, praise and

thanksgiving should overflow from the hearts and mouths of the worshipers. Praise and thanksgiving are very important in worship. The book of Psalms is particularly full of these phrases: “give thanks to the Lord” and “praise the Lord.” Paul challenges the Ephesians, in worshiping God, to “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:19-10).

Christian worship is to praise and to give thanks for what the Lord has done for us, and what the Lord will be doing for us. True worship needs a heart of humility and contrition. The worshipers worship God with sorrow and repentance for sin. Psalm 51:17 says, “The sacrifices of God are a broken heart; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” Confession of sin and forgiveness of sin are the basic elements toward true worship. The experience of contrition and forgiveness prepares the worshipers for better worship. Prayer in worship includes both the one praying and others. Intercessory and petitionary prayers are essential in worship.

Paul urges Timothy to increasingly be a praying person in Timothy 2:1-2, urging that “Requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority.” Worship is consecration and dedication on the part of all the worshipers. Just as “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son” (John 3:16), worshipers should dedicate themselves, including their material possessions, talents, time, and honor.

### **3.2.3 SUMMARY**

Worship is not a begging action to God. Christian worship, therefore, has a very distinctive characteristic, as compared to Confucian rites. The ultimate object of worship in Christianity is God alone, not a saint, or a dead person as in Confucianism. In Confucian ancestor worship, worshipers are limited to the descendants of a third cousin. In Christian worship, anyone who believes in Jesus can participate.

## **3.3 CONFUCIAN SHRINE AND CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

### **3.3.1 CONFUCIAN SHRINE**

In Analects 3:15, Confucius answered someone's question about the temple: "The Master visited the grand temple of the Founder of the Dynasty. He enquired about everything. Someone said: 'Who said this fellow was expert on ritual?' When visiting the grand temple, he had to enquire about everything. Hearing of this, the Master said: 'Precisely, this is ritual'" (Leys 1997:12).

The Confucian temple is the primary ritual space where complex rites are conducted. Temples are monuments to human beings rather than for the purpose of serving gods, or Confucius, and for training in music and ritual.

Though many Confucian temples have decayed in use, some have been restored in Korea. In 1988, the newest Confucian temple was opened in Andong County in Korea. Korea's Seongkyunkwan University performs rites for Confucians twice yearly. The altar at the temple holds incense and family portraits, and the central inscription dedicates the shrine to heaven, earth, earthly rulers, ancestors, and teachers. At the ancestral rite, the kinship group places offerings of food and drink in front of the altar and recites prayers. Then, the family invites the ancestors to partake of the nourishment (Oldstone-Moore 2002:64-69). The family altar and the ancestral shrine are the most sacred places for ancestral rites.

### 3.3.2 CHRISTIAN CHURCH

A common Greek New Testament term for church, "*ekklesia*," derives from *ek* and *kaleo*. *Ek* means "out from or out of," and *kaleo* means "to call." Thus, *ekklesia* is "to call out from." In the New Testament, the word "*ekklesia*" indicates that the church consists of the community of the elect, and the community of believers called out from the human world (McGrath 1997:482-92). This term, "*ekklesia*," derives from the two Hebrew terms, "*qahal*," which is used for the general assembly of the people and "*edah*," which is used particularly for the congregation of unity and the congregation of Israel (Erickson 1985:1031-32). Lothar Coenen (1975:295) summarizes and comments on the distinction of the two Hebrew terms, "*edah*" and "*qahal*." "*Edah* is the unambiguous and permanent term for the covenant community

as a whole *and qahal* is the ceremonial expression for the assembly that results from the covenant, for the Sinai community and, in the deuteronomistic sense, for the community in its present form.”

The Septuagint translates the Hebrew term, “*qahal*,” at the Greek, “*ekklesia*,” “which is our major source of understanding the New Testament concept of the church” (Erickson 1985:1032). *Edah* is usually translated in the New Testament as a synagogue. Paul uses the word “*ekklesia*” many times in his letters. Ladd (1993:582) explains how Paul uses the word “*ekklesia*” in his letter as follows: “*Ekklesia* can designate a meeting of Christians for worship; *en ekkesia* (1 Cor. 11:18; 14:19, 28, 35) can best be rendered simply “in church.” This does not mean in a building called a church; *ekklesia* is never used of a building as is the English word “church.” It is the assembling of the saints for worship.” As Ladd explains, *ekklesia* can designate the all believers who gather in a particular home as a house-church in Pauline letters. Paul uses significantly it as the totality of all believers in twice in Colossians (1:18, 24), and nine times in Ephesians (1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32).

In addition, Paul uses the word “*ekklesia*” for specific local groups of believers “to the church of God which is at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1), to the churches of Galatia (Gal. 1:2), to the church of the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1:1)” (Erickson 1985:1032). Not only was this term used for the religious gatherings of people, but also for the place where Christians gather for worshiping God. According to Ladd (1993:388), “The earliest *ekklesia*

consisted of a free fellowship of Jewish believers who had in no way broken with Judaism, who continued in Jewish religious practices and worship.”

The New Testament uses several metaphors and images to explain what the church is like. Paul particularly likes to use metaphors to describe what the church is like. First, the church is like a family in 1 Timothy 5:1-2: “Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.” God is our heavenly Father (Eph 3:14). We are his sons and daughters (2 Cor 6:18). We are brothers and sisters in God’s family (Matt 12:49-50; 1 John 3:14-18). Second, the church is like the bride of Christ (Eph 5:32; 2 Cor. 11:2). Third, the church is like the pillar and foundation of the truth (1 Tim 3:15). Fourth, the church is like the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-27).

Paul speaks of the church using the example of the human body. As the human body consists of many parts, the church consists of many different people who have different talents and characteristics. These metaphors place emphasis on the richness of privilege by incorporating in the church. Furthermore, the apostle Paul speaks of believers as a temple of God, in which the Holy Spirit dwells, and in 1 Corinthians 3:16, as growing into a holy temple in the Lord, and as being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit in Ephesians 2:21-22.

The church has the various functions that connote the purpose of the church. Among them, Erickson (1985:1052-59) points out four main functions of the church: Evangelism, edification, worship, and social concern. Each function has its own significant function at the church. The church needs to keep practicing the functions of the church in balance.

The first function of the church is evangelism. The first activity of Jesus after his baptism in Mark 1:14-15 is preaching the Gospel: “After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come’. ‘The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!’” Matthew identifies the ministry of Jesus in Matthew 9:35: “Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.”

Furthermore, Jesus declares that the Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and the Gospel must first be preached to all nations before the end in Matthew 24:14 and Mark 13:10. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commends to his disciples in the mountain of Galilee where Jesus had told them to go after resurrection over death: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

The church has good news from Jesus to bring to the world. In Acts 1:8, Jesus says to his disciples at the final point before he was taken up: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Throughout the book of Acts the preaching and teaching of the word are the priority of the apostles.

Some examples are: “Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ” (Acts 5:42); and “Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord” (Acts 15:25). Proclaiming the Gospel is a command. The call to evangelize is not an option for his disciples, but is as the reason for their reality of life.

Evangelism is “the primary ministry that the church has toward the world” (Grudem 1994:868). It is not to say that evangelism is more important than other functions of the church, but it is the primary function of the church toward the world.

The second function of the church is to nurture believers and build them up to mature in Christ. The church helps its members grow in faith and love under the leadership of Christ. To nurture and mature believers, the church educates its members through teaching the Word and mutual fellowship (Erickson 1985:1055-56). In Colossians 1:28, Paul said that the goal of his ministry is to present every man mature in Christ: “We proclaim him,

admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.”

In Ephesians 4:11-13, Paul repeatedly said to the church at Ephesus that God has given the church gifted persons to equip the people of God for service to become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ as some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers. These gifts are for preparing God’s people for works of service, for building up the body of Christ, and for attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Among the gifts God has given, is the gift of teachers to the church. In the Great Commission, Jesus commands his disciples to teach people to obey everything he has commanded them (Matt 28:20). To equip its members by teaching is a mission of the church. Jesus says that the tool of teaching is the word that he has commanded believers.

On the Day of Pentecost, about three thousand were baptized. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship (Acts 2:42), showing that teaching is a very important essence of a founded church in Jerusalem. Paul knew the importance of teaching the truth of God, and he commands Timothy. Paul said, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach other” (2 Tim 2:2). Paul was dedicated to teach many people the Word of God for a year and a half in Corinth (Acts 18:11), and for two years

in Ephesus (Acts 19:10).

The third function of the church is worship. Grudem (1994:867) explains the importance of worship as a function of the church as follows: “Worship in the church is not merely a preparation for something else: it is in itself fulfilling the major purpose of the church with reference to its Lord.”

The fourth function of the church is social concern, which is to “perform acts of Christian love and compassion for both believers and non-Christians” (Erickson 1985:1057). God identifies himself in Deuteronomy 10:17-19: “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.” In Matthew 20:28, Jesus says that his purpose in coming is to serve, not to be served: “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

The church needs to engage in social concern to the needy and the suffering as Jesus did. Many biblical examples demonstrate that Jesus involves himself in the problems of the needy and the suffering. Jesus has participated in the sick, the suffering, the poor, the alienation, the brokenhearted, the lonely, the assaulted, and even the dead. Jesus shows

this by going into Zacchaeus's home (Luke 19) where the people criticize Jesus for going to be the guest of a sinner. Jesus says to him, and to the people, that he came to seek and to save what was lost.

In John 4, Jesus engages the Samaritan woman in conversation. Verse 9 says that Jews do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus, however, talks to her first. The bewildered Samaritan woman says to Jesus that "you are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" In Luke 7, Jesus allows the sinful woman to wash his feet with her hair, to kiss them, and to pour perfume on them in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Simon, the inviter, says to himself that if this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is--that she is a sinner. Jesus knows what Simon thinks, then makes correction of his wrong thought with an illustration. On the contrary, Jesus praises her deed in verse 47: "Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

In Luke 10:25-37, Jesus gives one occasion as an expert in the law--the parable of the good Samaritan. Jesus explains to the lawyer what it is to love God with all one's heart, with all one's soul, with all one's strength, and with all one's mind and loving one's neighbor as oneself. In the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus explains what it means to love one's neighbor as oneself. When a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and left him

half dead. A priest was traveling down the same road and saw the man, and passed by on the other side. A Levite came to the place and saw him, and passed by on the other side also.

A Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn, and cared for him. The next day, he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. After this parable story, Jesus asks to the law, “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” In fact, a priest and a Levite are to be honored by others as a good religious man and a good religious leader. However, Jews evaluated Samaritans as like dogs. Jesus says the central point of this parable in verse 37 is, “Go and do likewise.” In this parable, Jesus says that concern for the needy and the suffering in the world is the ministry of the church.

The church as the body of Christ should be characterized by his manifested attributes. The church has the strong desires to follow the Lord’s example of service. Paul explains how Jesus showed himself in the form of a servant to serve the world in Philippians 2:6-8.

Jesus has lived as he says, and he shows it through the redemptive death on the cross. Caring for the needy and the suffering in the name of the Lord is part of the church ministry. In Luke 6:35-36, Jesus says that giving mercy to

people, even though they are not accepting of the Gospel: “But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

The Epistles emphasize social concern as well. James stresses practical faith particularly. James makes the definition of religion in James 1:27: “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” In James 2:15-17, James challenges unaccompanied by action: “Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” John points out in the same way in 1 John 3:17-18: “If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.” The church building is not the church; rather, doing and obeying of the commands of Jesus shows a loving God to others.

### **3.3.3 SUMMARY**

The Confucian shrine possesses a significant meaning. The shrine is the

primary ritual space where several rites are conducted, and the family altars are placed. The shrines are monuments to human beings, rather than have the purpose of serving gods or Confucius. Although the temple of Confucianism is a sacred place, the church of Christianity is not a place to worship ancestors or to place people's souls as sacred places in Confucianism. Rather, Christianity's church is for the believers' gatherings and for the place for public worship of God. The concept of the nature and purpose of Christianity's church distinguishes from the purpose of the temple in Confucianism. Church in Christianity is the community of the elect and the community of believers called out from the human world. The four main functions of the church, as shown above, show clearly the difference of the church from the temple in Confucianism.

### **3.4 CONFUCIAN CANON AND THE BIBLE IN CHRISTIANITY**

#### **3.4.1 CONFUCIAN CANON**

Confucianism has the Four Books and the Five Classics as its sacred books, and sometimes refers to them as the scriptures of Confucianism. Laurence G. Thompson (1975:123) observes the Confucian Canon<sup>8</sup> as follows:

The Confucian Canon occupies a position in Chinese comparable to that occupied in the West by the Bible plus the

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<sup>8</sup>The Four Books and the Five Classics are accepted as its sacred books to the Confucians, but Thompson uses the term, "The Canon" instead of the sacred books.

major works of Greek and Roman literature. From the mid-second century B.C. to the twentieth century, the Canon formed the minds of all educated Chinese, providing the content of the educational curriculum and the guiding principles of philosophy, statecraft, personal and social ethics, and religion. Those who mastered these works became the elite, the literati, eligible by virtue of this learning to be appointed as officials in the imperial government.

The Four books are the Analects (論語), the doctrine of the Mean (中庸), the Great Learning (大學), and Mencius (孟子). The Analects is the earliest and most reliable collection of the thoughts of Confucius, recorded by his disciples. The Analects is known as the Confucian Bible, and Confucianism has been known by the Analects to the West. The Doctrine of the Mean contains the religious aspects of Confucius's views. The Great Learning is a short treatise and textbook in the Confucian system of moral education. Mencius, compiled after his death by his pupils, is a collection of the teachings of Confucius's outstanding disciple (Oldstone-Moore 2002:36-39). These four books deal with the main ideas of the Confucian philosophy such as heaven, the goodness of human nature, the way, the nobleman, human-heartedness, justice, righteousness, filial piety and brotherly love, the rules of good behavior, concern for others, conscientiousness, the power of virtue, harmony, the mean, the rectification of names, worldly goods, government, the destiny of man, and yang and yin.

The Five Classics are the Classic of Change (易經), History (書經), Poetry (詩經), the Book of Ritual (禮記), and the Spring and Autumn Annals (春秋).

These five Classics provide a significant part of the background for the Confucian system. The Book of Change is a book of divination containing striking images. The Book of Change contains the basic principles of customs and life. Various ways exist to discover whether the gods and spirits look favorably upon an undertaking. The Book of History composes early historic documents, a record of works and deeds of ancient rulers, and is the most archaic in style of all the classics. Confucius reedited this for posterity. The Book of Poetry is a collection of some three hundred poems edited by Confucius. The Book of Rites is a textbook for rites, containing all outlines of the rites of passage and the ancestral rites and filial piety rite in detail. The main idea of this book is that man will prosper if he is in harmony with heaven and earth by carrying out the proper ritual. The Spring and Autumn Annals is a history book. This book contains the reigns of twelve successive Lu rulers. This is a bare chronicle of events of 722-481 B.C., written by Confucius with a view to restoring correct terminology (Chai and Chai 1973:9-18).

### **3.4.2 THE BIBLE IN CHRISTIANITY**

The answer to the question of what the Bible is and why the Bible should be made the primary source of understanding of Christianity helps to analyze closely the nature of Christianity. For Christians, the Bible is central as the

only legitimate creed. The purpose of the Bible is to warn against human sin, and to offer humanity God's salvation in Christ. The Bible teaches what God commanded of the people in biblical situations and times, and what God expects of Christians today. That Christians have traditionally located the pulpits in their churches in the center of the platform, symbolizing the priority given to the proclamation of God's Word is no surprise (Mickelson 1978:103).

The Bible has existed for long time. In the ancient world, although clay tablets were used as a writing material, people widely used a roll of papyrus as a writing material. The writers of the Bible used both materials for writing the Scriptures and a roll of papyrus was used as a main writing material. The term "Bible" is "derived from the Greek word *biblion* or *biblia*, which means scroll(s) or book(s). English-speaking Christians use three major titles to refer to this holy Book. We call it the Bible, the Scripture or Scriptures, and the Word of God" (Dockery 1991:20). Dockery (1991:20-21) summarizes the short history of the book named the Bible:

In Daniel 9:2 the Greek translation used *ta biblia* to refer to the prophetic writings. Paul used the word *biblia* when he wrote to Timothy and asked him to bring the books (see 2 Tim. 4:13), by which he probably referred to some scrolls containing the Hebrew Scriptures, which we usually call the Old Testament. This usage passed into the postapostolic church (see 2 Clement 14:2). Sometime during this period a significant change occurred

in the common usage of the plural *biblia* to the singular *biblion*.

This change reflected the growing conception of the Bible as one utterance of God rather than as a multitude of voices speaking for Him.

The Bible consists of the thirty-nine Old Testament books and the twenty-seven New Testament books. Together, the Old Testament and the New Testament contain sixty-six books. With the exception of some chapters written in Aramaic, the written language of the Old Testament was Hebrew. Again, with the exception of some spoken by Aramaic, the written language of the New Testament was Greek. As the Old Testament is the first part of the Bible, it is about three-fourth of the whole Bible, and the New Testament is about one-fourth of it. Several different genres or types of literature are found in the Bible, including poems, teachings, doctrines, parables, hymns, narratives, creeds, sermons, letters, and apocalypses.

The Jewish people call the Old Testament as the Hebrew Scriptures, and also classify the Old Testament in the threefold division called the Law or Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. Jesus refers to this in Luke 24:44: “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” Christians classify the Old Testament into four groups. The first group is called the Law or Pentateuch, Genesis through Deuteronomy; the second group is called the Historical books, Joshua through Ester; the third group is

called the Poetic or Wisdom books, Job through the Song of Solomon; the fourth group is called the Prophets, Isaiah through Malachi. The Prophets are divided into Major Prophets, Isaiah through Daniel and Minor Prophets, Hosea through Malachi (Walton 1981:13).

The first five books, called the Pentateuch, have been characterized “from the many references in the Bible to the ‘law of God’ (Neh. 10:28), the ‘book of Moses’ (Ez. 6:18; Neh. 13:1; Mark 12:26), the ‘Law’ (Josh. 8:34; Ez. 10:3; 2 Chron. 14:4; Luke 10:26), the ‘book of the law of Moses’ (Josh. 8:31; 23:6; 2 Kgs. 14:6; Neh. 8:1), and other analogous expressions” (Harrison 1991:495). The Pentateuch begins from the creation of God in Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” to the accession of Joshua and the Death of Moses in Deuteronomy 34. The Hebrew-speaking Jewish refers to the five books as the Torah.

According to Cate (1987:115), “the Jewish people apparently accepted these as having more authority than the rest of the canon. Furthermore, they were accepted as authoritative significantly earlier than other parts of the Old Testament.” The twelve historical books of the Old Testament record the history of Israel, which begins the entrance into the Promised Land. The five poetic books are written in Hebrew poetic style. The Prophets tend to be arrayed around times of crisis. These books had been recorded by the prophets who were called by God to give the messages of God to his people in afflicted times.

The New Testament is arranged into four groups. The first group, called the four Gospels, consists of Matthew through John that record the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ. Each book is written with different emphases about Jesus: Jesus as King in Matthew, Jesus as Servant in Mark, Jesus as the Son of Man in Luke, and Jesus as the Son of God in John (House 1981:19). Among the four Gospels, the first three books are called the Synoptic Gospels. Gromacki (1974:54) explains about the Synoptics: “The word ‘synoptic’ comes from two Greek words: *sun*, meaning ‘with’ or ‘together’, and *optanomai*, meaning ‘to see’. The word is applied to the first three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) because they present a common approach to the life of Christ.”

The second group is called the Historical book, Acts, which describes the birth of the church and acts of the Holy Spirit through the church.

The third group is called the epistles, Romans through Jude. There are twenty-one epistles. The first thirteen epistles, Romans through Philemon, are called the Pauline epistles. Among the thirteen Pauline epistles, two epistles (Romans and Galatians) emphasize the doctrine of salvation; five epistles (1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus) emphasize the doctrine of the church; three epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians) emphasize the doctrine of Christ; two epistles (1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians) emphasize the doctrine of the Second

Coming of Christ; one epistle (Philemon) is a personal note to Philemon. The other eight are referred to as general epistles, Hebrews through Jude.

Among the eight epistles, Hebrews emphasizes the superiority of the priesthood of Christ and the work of Christ to the Old Testament sacrificial system for salvation from sins; James emphasizes the practical outworking of salvation and the faithful actions as a saved person; 1 Peter and 2 Peter emphasize the Christian response to suffering in anticipation of Christ's coming and Day of the Lord; 1 John and 2 John emphasize the way of fellowship and genuine faith; 3 John is a personal note to Gaius; and Jude emphasizes a warning concerning false teachers in the end of the world.

The fourth group is called the Apocalyptic book, Revelation. The book of Revelation emphasizes the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ through disclosures of the future (House 1981:19-21). The writers of the New Testament had various occupations such as fisherman, doctor, religious leader, and tax collector.

#### **3.4.2.1 Authority of the Bible in Christianity**

Every organization has its own goals, philosophies, or forms, and has some requirements for membership. Christianity is not an organization as such. Rather, Christianity is a community that follows Jesus Christ and the written words of God as we call the Bible.

Two Greek words in the New Testament help to understand the authority and the power of the Bible. According to Hatchett (1998:194), *exousia* refers to the right to exercise control, authority. *Dynamis* describes raw, intrinsic power. According to the LXX, “*exousia* first means right, authority, permission or freedom in the legal or political sense, and it is then used for the right or permission given by God, or for the permission granted or withheld by the Jewish Law” (Kittel 1987:2:564).

*Exousia* was used to speak of the power granted by a higher criterion or instance, and along with it the right to do something or the right over something, and it also came to mean “power and authority,” “permission,” and “freedom” to act. Therefore, it must be distinguished from *duvnami*, which simply means “power” in the sense of “the indwelling ability to act” (Kittel 1987:2:564). *Exousia* is used especially of the possibility of action given authoritatively by the king, government, or laws of a state and conferring authority, permission or freedom on corporations or in many instances, in legal matters, on individuals. *Exousia* is used of any right in the various relationships similar to and guaranteed by national institutions, of the rights of parents in relation to children, of masters in relation to slaves, of owners in relation to property, and of individuals in respect of personal liberty (Kittel 1987:2:564).

Paul refers to the power of the Bible in 2 Tim 3:15: “And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” The Bible contains the highest point in the history of salvation and the representative moral and spiritual materials fundamental for the needs of believers of all ages. Hobbs (1971:20) emphasizes the authority of the Bible in these words that “Baptists have been called a people of the Book. The Book is the Bible.”

According to Lemke (2002:177), “In Scripture, God both reveals essential information about himself and provides the opportunity for persons to come into a personal relationship with him.” As the Word of God, the Bible has the only authority and power for the life and faith of a Christian. Additionally, Dockery (Dockery 1991:127) describes what the Bible is that “the Bible is the primary means of God’s authoritative self-disclosure for people today.”

Newport (1958:1:162) points out that this authority is both objective and subjective. This authority is objective in that “it is a divinely inspired and authoritative historical record and interpretation of God’s revelation in history.” This authority is subjective in that “the authority of the Bible is not rigid and mechanical. It is a living and pulsating Book, which is used by the Holy Spirit to constrain without compelling and to lead without forcing.” It means that the Bible, as the works of the Holy Spirit, shows the God’s desires and leads people to the living Christ.

Protestants in the tradition of the Reformation affirm that Scripture exercises delegated divine authority. *Sola scriptura* is a phrase from the Reformation. *Sola scriptura* means that the canon of Scripture is the final authority in the church (Ramm 1978:116). The Reformation called the church back to its biblical roots. The authority of the Bible is God's own authority, because the Bible is the Word of God. Second Timothy 3:16-17 proves this: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." The Bible bears on the integrity of the practice of good works.

The Bible is the written Word of God, and is given by the special revelation of God. The special revelation is "God's manifestation of himself to particular persons at definite times and places, enabling those persons to enter into a redemptive relationship with him" (Erickson 1985:175). God expresses his authority in revelation. The object of religion is God and, in religion, the knowledge of the object is presented to the subject of religion by revelation. In Christianity, authority derives from the Triune God, who has revealed Himself (Ramm 1953:20-21). Ramm (1953:37) explains that the authority of the Bible always relates to the Triune God. The authority of the Bible is "the correlate of revelation, and Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Scriptures all fit into the organism of revelation. Authority is personal, and the authority for the Christian is the person of the Holy Spirit speaking in the

Scriptures.” Therefore, the author of Christian revelation is almighty God and the authority of the Bible is veracious.

The Bible is authoritative, because it is the Word of God and for no other reason. The Bible presents internal evidence for its authority. The Scriptures themselves claim that authority. The Scriptures are found in the fact that Jesus recognized the Old Testament Scriptures as the Word of God and upheld their authority. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:16 in Matthew 4:7 and Isaiah 61:1-2 in Luke 4:18-19. Then Jesus gave the credit and confirms it as the Word of God (Luke 4:21). Jesus said in John 10:35, “The scripture cannot be broken.” The phrases “the Lord said,” “the Lord speaks,” and “the word of the Lord came,” are actually used 3,808 times in Old Testament (Lloyd-Jones 1958:50). It means that the content of the Bible is given by the double action of special revelation and divine inspiration. Ramm (1953:37) points out that “The primary principle of authority (God in self-revelation) has produced the immediate or material principle of authority (the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures).”

The Old Testament is the product of the revelation of God to Israel, and the New Testament is the product of the revelation in Jesus Christ to the New Testament world people. Conner (1936:96) said that “the authority of the Bible is the authority of the grace of God as mediated to us in Christ, the grace that delivers from guilt and bondage of sin.” God reveals himself in many ways such as through nature, historical events, the Word, and Jesus

Christ. John refers to Jesus Christ as the Word of God in John 1:1 and explains clearly in verse 14: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Donald Miller (1983:106) elaborates about the authority of Scripture as follows, “Our concern with the Bible should be more with its function than with self... The worth of Scripture is determined by their power to convey the voice of God. It is not the Bible, which speaks, but God who speaks through the Bible.”

That the Bible speaks a significant message for contemporary believers’ lives is true. The Scriptures have authoritative value as instruments of God’s continuing disclosure of his nature and ongoing purpose (Cox 1983:13). The Bible is not a book of good stories or maxims of honorable people that someone collected; rather, the Bible is the Word of God. Thus, the Bible possesses the absolute power and authority in Christianity.

### **3.4.3 SUMMARY**

Confucianism has the Four Books and the Five Classics as its sacred books, referred to as the Scriptures of Confucianism or the Confucian Canon. The Four Books deal with the main ideas of the Confucian philosophy.

Additionally, the Five Classics provide a significant part of the background for the Confucian system. Christianity’s Bible is placed in a special position. The Bible consists of the Old Testament, with thirty-nine books, and the New

Testament with twenty-seven books. God is the ultimate authority in religious matters so that the Bible carries the same weight as God, because the Bible is the Word of God.

### **3.5 CONFUCIAN VIEW AND CHRISTIAN ESCHATOLOGY ON THE AFTERLIFE**

The doctrines of the death of both Confucianism and Christianity are the most significant theological foundation of this thesis. Because of the differences of the doctrine of the afterlife, Confucianism has practiced ancestor worship and Korean Christianity had rejected ancestor worship. What are they believe the doctrines of the afterlife?

#### **3.5.1 CONFUCIAN VIEW ON THE AFTERLIFE**

Confucianism believes in the existence of the soul after death, and that ancestors are watching over the living descendants. Confucianism practices ancestral rites and worships dead ancestors, because ancestor worship is based on the belief that the immortal souls of men after death continue living. Confucians believe that “the spirit leaves the body behind and melts away into space,” and “although the spirit leaves the body on the physical plane, one’s life continues on through one’s descendants” (Keum 2000:13).

Because they believe that the process of the spirit’s decomposition after leaving the body requires three-to-five generations, ancestral rites should be

practiced for the three-to-five previous generations. Therefore, the ancestral rite is very important to Confucians. Oldstone-Moore (2002:90-91) explains clearly the relationships of death and ancestral rites in Confucianism:

Ancestors are propitiated family spirits. Those who are not properly cared for after death--through neglect or a lack of descendants--and those who die prematurely or by violence, become ghosts; they are likened to bandits and vagrants of the spirit world and are considered to be dangerous, malevolent forces that need to be placated. An ancestor may become a troublesome spirit if the burial is not performed correctly, or if the death was irregular, or if the spirit is not propitiated, preventing the *hun* soul from rising to reside in the ancestral tablets and the *po* soul from descending into the grave. The spirit of the deceased will haunt the living as a ghost until appropriate measures have been taken.

When ancestral rites are practiced, the belief is that the dead ancestors return to eat what descendants prepare and leave on the table. They believe that when they honor their dead ancestors, their ancestors bless and prosper their descendants. Keum (2000:13) explains the perspective of Confucianism about death: "the Confucian philosophical view sees death as the process of returning to a state of blissful peace." The concept of death, and the afterlife of Confucianism, consequently conflicts with the Christian doctrine of heaven

and hell.

### 3.5.2 CHRISTIAN ESCHATOLOGY ON THE AFTERLIFE

What does the Bible say about the afterlife? Death is one of the realities of life. Hebrews 9:27 asserts this fact: “Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.” Everyone is going to grow old and die. Life must include acceptance of the fact of death. Erickson (1985:1169) explains the reality of death as “death is not something that comes upon us suddenly. It is the end of the process of decay of our mortal, corruptible bodies. We reach our physical peak and then deterioration begins. In little ways we find our strength ebbing from us, until finally the organism can no longer function.”

Death is simply the final stage of life. Man consists of a material side and an immaterial side. The material side is his body, and the immaterial side is his spirit. Death is the separation of the material side from the immaterial side (Morey 1984:38-44). James 2:26 says: “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.” Death is the departure of the spirit from the body. Death is the separation of body and spirit, in which the individual spirit lives eternally. Various passages in the Bible speak of life and physical death.

The verb *mut*, “to die,” and the noun *mawet*, “death,” are used more than nine hundred times in the Old Testament to refer to physical death as “the

common lot of humankind” (Smith 1958:32). Genesis 2:7 says of the origin of life: “The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”

Genesis 3:19 describes physical death: “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

On the other hand, Ecclesiastes 12:7 says of the last of life: “And the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.”

This passage summarizes two passages, Genesis 2:7 and Genesis 3:19.

This passage speaks a very important truth. God breathed the breath of life into dust from the ground, and man shall return to dust. This passage points out that, after death, humans returns to the place where they remain until the time of resurrection. Sometimes, death is referred to in terms of sleep.

According to Garrett (1995:2:663), “The verbs *yasan*, ‘to fall asleep,’ and *sakab*, ‘to lie down,’ are so employed.” Therefore, dead people cannot do anything after death. Smith (1958:42) indicates this fact very well: “under the word ‘sleep’ the Hebrews united two beliefs, that a dead man was at rest, body and *nephesh*; and that it was the Lord’s will that he should never do anything more. He had passed out of history.”

In the New Testament, “the verb *apothneskein*, ‘to die,’ is used 75 times and the verb *teleutoun*, ‘to end life,’ seven times. The noun *thanatos*, ‘death,’ appears 115 times” (Garrett 1995:2:664). Berkhof (1953:668) indicates that

“life and death are not to be thought of as existence and nonexistence, but as two different states of existence.” Jesus contrasts the death of body and soul in Matthew 10:28: “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Death has two faces, that of destruction and that of departure. In 2 Corinthians 5:1, Paul depicts the body as the earthly tent and the death as the destruction of the body: “Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.”

In 2 Timothy 4:6, Paul writes at the end of his life: “For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure.” Destruction is not a means of total annihilation, but rather, a means of physical death, while departure refers to going into an intermediate state. According to Erickson (1985:1184), “There is between death and resurrection an intermediate state in which believers and unbelievers experience, respectively, the presence and absence of God.”

The unrighteous ones stay in Hades for the period between death and the resurrection, while the righteous ones stay in paradise (Erickson 1985:1183). In the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, in Luke 16:19-31, Jesus describes the intermediate states. Hades is too far from paradise, so that no comings and goings can occur between the two, no conversation between the two places, and no fellowship between the dead and the living family

members. The conversation between Abraham and the rich man demonstrates this fact clearly (vv. 22-26). The time came when Lazarus died, and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. Additionally, the rich man died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. Therefore, he called to him, "Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire." Abraham replied, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us."

Contrarily in the conversation with the penitent thief in Luke 23:42-43, Jesus says to him that he would share joy in paradise with Christ immediately after his death: "Then he said, 'Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom'. Jesus answered him, 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise'." Paradise is shown to be the state of a believer when he dies. In Revelation 14:13, "therefore, the Lord says that death is blessedness for believers: 'Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on'. 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them'." For believers, death is the gateway to eternal life, and is a homecoming.

Furthermore, the Bible speaks of eternal death. Revelation 21:8 calls that it is the second death: “But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.” This second death is separate from the first physical death. Further, the second death is spoken of as “eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46), torment (Rev. 14:10-11), the bottomless pit (Rev. 9:1-2, 11), the wrath of God (Rom. 2:5), eternal destruction and exclusion from the face of the Lord (2 Thess. 1:9).” (Erickson 1985:1148) However, Revelation 20:6 says that believers do not apply the second death: “Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.”

Physical death is the separation of body and spirit, and eternal death, named the second death, is the final state of the unrighteous. In John 8:51, Jesus taught his disciples that they will not encounter eternal death: “I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” Eternal death is the ultimate stage of sinful human beings. The final state for the unrighteous commonly is referred to as “hell.” Grudem (1994:1148) defines hell as “a place of eternal conscious punishment for the wicked.” Eternal death for the unrighteous will be without end just as eternal life for the righteous. The suffering in hell is described in the New Testament as the several different expressions. Matthew describes it as everlasting fire (18:8), and everlasting punishment (25:46). Mark describes it as everlasting the fire that never shall

be quenched (9:45) and the worm that dies not (9:46). Paul describes it as flaming fire (2 Thess. 1:8). Jude describes it as flaming everlasting chains (Jude 6), eternal fire (Jude 7), and the blackness of darkness forever (Jude 13). John describes it in Revelation as the smoke of torment ascending up forever and ever (14:11; 19:3), and the lake of fire and brimstone in which the devil, the beast, and the false prophet shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever (20:10).

At the same time, the Bible speaks of the final state of the righteous. The final stage of the righteous commonly is called “heaven.” Grudem (1994:1159) defines heaven as “the place where God most fully makes known his presence to bless.” Heaven is a real place, not a state of mind. Heaven is “the eternal dwelling and fellowship with the triune God and the company of those who are believers in Jesus Christ or redeemed of God” (Garrett 1995:2:808).

Revelation 21:1 calls this as a new heaven and a new earth. Peter says in 2 Peter 3:13: “In keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.” In Matthew 6:9, Jesus says that heaven is a place where God, the Father, abides: “Our Father who art in heaven.” In John 3:13, Jesus says that he comes from heaven: “No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven, ‘the Son of Man’.” In John 14:2-3, Jesus promises that he will come again from heaven where he is readying a place for believers: “In my Father’s house are

many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

In 1 Peter 3:22, Peter says that now “Jesus has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.” In 1 Thessalonians 4:17, Paul says that heaven is a place where believers will live in the presence of God forever: “After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.” John depicts the state of heaven in Revelation 22:3-5 that no longer will there be any curse and will there be more night, the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. Furthermore, they will see his face, his name will be on their foreheads, and they will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun because the Lord God will give them light.

### **3.5.3 SUMMARY**

Confucianism believes that, after death, the spirits of men continue living through their descendants. When descendants practice ancestor worship, the dead person’s soul returns to the ritual place and eats the sacrifices at the spot where one’s children prepare foods for the dead parent. Thus, Confucianism teaches that ancestor worship is the continuation of filial piety and they practice it following its doctrine of afterlife. The Bible teaches clearly

that the spirit of the dead person cannot come back to the earth, family, or ancestor worship place after death.

### **3.6 CONFUCIAN GODS AND THE CHRISTIAN GOD**

#### **3.6.1 CONFUCIAN GODS**

Various kinds of gods exist in Confucianism, such as the gods of heaven, the sun, the moon, the stars, time, soil, grain, rivers, mountains, and of wind and rain. These are divided into three categories: the gods of heaven, earth, and humans. Keum (2000:160) explains the characters of the main gods in Confucianism: “*shangdi* (the ruler of Heaven) corresponds to universal ideas such as *Dao* (the Way), *Taiji* (Supreme ultimate), and *li* (the principle), which contrast the emotional and physical person and *shangdi*’s immanence was the basis of a relationship between Heaven and humanity.” Specifically, the god of humans is the origin of ancestral worship. Because of the existence of the god of humans, Confucianism practices ancestral rites. Confucianism believes that the spirit of the ancestral ruler not only ascended to heaven as a *shen* (god), but also became a god. The belief is that, after death, the ancestors of a family ascend to heaven as good spirits, remain an integral part of the family, bring success in the hunt, and protect their descendants against harm (Keum 1997:181-98). Thus, if a descendant buries his or her ancestor’s corpse in an ideal location, he/she will prosper and receive blessings. While ancestral rites are practiced, the gods descend at earth

altars in the open air.

### 3.6.2 THE CHRISTIAN GOD

Garrett (1995:1:61) makes an assertion regarding the difference between Christianity and other religions.

Even idolatrous paganism, to say nothing of the more sophisticated or secular paganisms, affords an indirect witness to the existence of the true God as the proper object of human worship and allegiance. God does not reveal himself as the gods of various non-Christian religions, but the allegiance of human beings to these gods points to their own basic nature as worshiping beings and to the existence of One who is both the Author of such a worshiping or idolatrous humanity and the proper recipient of the worship and obedient service of human beings.

Christianity is the revelation religion. The term “revelation” is “derived from the Latin noun “*revelatio*,” which is a translation of the Greek noun “*apokalypsis*.” Etymologically, the term means an “unveiling” and hence a disclosure” (Garrett 1995:1:43). By this definition, revelation is to unveil, reveal, or uncover that which was concealed. Christianity begins by God disclosing himself to man in such a way that man can know him. God reveals

himself to man through two revelations: general revelation and special revelation. General revelation is “God’s self-manifestation through nature, history, and the inner being of the human person” (Erickson 1985:54) at all times and in all places. The psalmist says this, “The heaven declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Ps 19:1). Paul describes this fact in Romans 1:20, “For since the creation of the world god’s invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

Special revelation “involves God’s particular communications and manifestations of himself to particular persons at particular times, communications and manifestations which are available now only by consultation of certain sacred writings” (Erickson 1985:153-54). Erickson (1985:177) explains the relationship between two revelations: “without the general revelation, man would not possess the concepts regarding God which enable him to know and understand the God of the special revelation and special revelation builds upon general revelation.” God voluntarily presents himself to man, but not by compelling man. Brunner (1946:224) clarifies the revelation religion to compare with ethnic religions, Confucianism and Shintoism, and the mystic religion, Buddhism that the mystical and ethnic experiences are described but the revelation itself is inexpressible.

The subject of special revelation is God himself. Exodus 3:13-14 show this fact as well. Moses asked God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to

them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them? (v. 3:13)" God said to Moses: "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you' (v. 14)." The answer to Moses, as to who God is, is ambiguous, but one distinct fact is that, in Christianity, God is not made by humans as gods of Confucianism. God is the one who created the heavens and the earth. Psalm 90:2 says this: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." The Old Testament uses frequently two names for God, *EI* and Yahweh, and in the New Testament the name "God" prevails. The name "God" is called in the analogical names as Father, Shepherd, Redeemer or Savior, Judge, King, and Lord (Garrett 1995:192).

The Bible describes who God is in many different ways. Garrett (1995:204-06) classifies seven patterns of the attributes of God in many different attributes: (1) negative, positive, and causative attributes; (2) incommunicable and communicable attributes; (3) absolute and relative attributes; (4) natural and moral attributes; (5) attributes of mystery, overwhelmingness, dynamism, and holiness; (6) bipolar attachment to leading attributes; and (7) rejection of classifications in favor of stress on one central. These of the primary attributes of God are omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. Grudem (1994:173) defines God's omnipresence as follows: "God does not have size or spatial dimensions and is present at every point of space with his whole being, yet God acts

differently in different places.”

Deuteronomy 10:14 declares that God is everywhere, “To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it.” God created the heavens and the earth, and God cannot be limited or contained by any space. Because man is infinite, man is “not to understand God as spatially spread throughout the universe, so that a part of Him is here, another part there. God’s filling heaven and earth means rather that He is totally and equally presented everywhere” (Williams 1992:77). David expresses beautifully God’s omnipresence in Psalm 139:7-10: “Where can I go you’re your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.”

God’s omniscience is that “God fully knows himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act” (Grudem 1994:190). All things actual and possible mean “all things that exist and all things that happen and might happen but that do not actually come to pass” (Grudem 1994:90-91). God’s knowledge of all things actually applies to the entire creation. The many Scriptures verify God’s omniscience. Some are here: God knows everything (1 John 3:20); He is perfect in knowledge (Job 37:16); His understanding has no limit (Ps. 147:5); the Lord is a God who knows (1 Sam. 2:3); the Lord sees everywhere and keeps watching on the evil and the good (Prov. 15:3); Father

knows that you need them (Matt. 6:32); and God numbers all hairs the of our heads (Matt. 10:30).

The many Scriptures attest to God's omnipotence: God shows his almighty in creation (Jer 32:17), in redemption of Israel (Exod 15:6), in the salvation of believers by the Gospel (Rom 1:16), in the life of the believer (Eph 1:19), in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ (Eph 1:20), and in the coming age (Rev 1:8) (Williams 1992:70-71). God's omnipotence is that "God is able to do all his holy will. The word "omnipotence" is derived from two Latin words, "*omni* (all)," and "*potens* (powerful)," meaning "all-powerful" (Grudem 1994:216). God is not limited to do anything that he wants to decide.

God declares about himself in Genesis 18:14, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" The angel Gabriel said to Mary, "For nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37). Jesus himself said to his disciples, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matt 19:26). Ephesians 3:20 says, "God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine." God has some special characters. Although God is absolutely able to do everything, some exceptions exist. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), he cannot deny himself (2 Tim 2:13), and he cannot be tempted with evil (James 1:13). Williams (1992:73) explains that God's omnipotence is working in the lives of faith of believers in five ways:

First, there is the assurance that nothing is beyond the power

and control of Almighty God. Second, no matter how weary or distraught we may become, God's vast power is always available to those who look to Him. Third, since believers have experienced the mighty power of God in the new birth, formerly "dead through our trespasses" but now "made. . . alive together with Christ" (Eph. 2:5), we can with great anticipation look daily to God for victory over the remnants of sin and the flesh in our life. Fourth, the most extraordinary fact about believers is that Almighty God has taken up residence within them. Fifth, we can expect God to be powerfully at work not only in the ordinary events of daily life but also in the performing of mighty works.

These three attributes of God respect "the outward revelation of God's being, involve in God's relation to the creation, and exercise in consequence of the existence of the universe and dependence upon him" (Garrett 1995:205). In Revelation 1:8, the Lord God says: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." This means that God is the first and the last. Before God began to create the universe, nothing else existed except God. Therefore, Creatures should only worship him, honor him, obey him, and glorify him forever. Nothing is higher than God and his Word among creatures. God is continually involved with all created things to fulfill his own purposes.

### **3.6.3 SUMMARY**

In Confucianism, the spirit of the dead becomes a god. Dead ancestors, who become gods, remain an integral part of the family, bring success in the hunt, and protect their descendants against harm. However, humans do not make Christianity's God to be as gods of Confucianism. The Christian God is who he says he is, and he is the one who created the heavens and the earth. This is the difference of the Christian God and the Confucian gods.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONFUCIAN AND BIBLICAL TEACHINGS ON FILIAL PIETY

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Filial piety refers to young children serving or honoring their fathers and mothers through the principles of both Confucianism and the Bible. According to Confucianism, filial piety is a central virtue and also mankind's highest virtue. The Bible says that filial piety is the first commandment with a promise that it may go well with us and that we may enjoy long life on the earth (Eph. 6:2). Traditionally in Korean history, the idea of Confucian filial piety has yielded great influence on Korean lifestyles and culture. Confucianism teaches that the respect of parents and elders is the root of humanity.

However, filial piety creates a contradiction and causes a problem with Korean Christians in that Confucian filial piety includes not only honoring parents while they are alive, but also practicing ancestral rites for deceased parents (Oldstone-Moore 2002:55-56). Thus, people in Korea have historically practiced ancestor worship as the expression of filial piety, since Confucianism was accepted as a national religion and as the center of ethical standard for the Chosun dynasty. Many Koreans currently practice the annual traditional custom of ancestor worship during the festive days as an expression of filial piety to them.

On the other hand, filial piety is an important biblical teaching, but scriptural filial piety is directed toward living parents versus deceased parents. The fifth commandment states that one should honor one's mother and father. To honor means to have filial piety. The main conflict of Confucian filial piety with Korean Christianity is that Confucianism teaches that the worship of dead ancestors is filial piety and the rite of dead ancestors is a significant attitude and familial ritual toward death and the afterlife. In the Bible, to honor parents is not to worship dead ancestors through Confucian rites, but rather to show respect for one's living parents. According to Ryoo (2000:114-19), the ideal in Confucianism that worship of the dead is filial piety has led to confusion and syncretism among modern Korean Christians.

If so, what similarities of filial piety exist between Confucianism and Christianity, and what differences of filial piety exist between Confucianism and Christianity?

#### **4.2 CONFUCIAN TEACHING ON FILIAL PIETY**

Confucians believe that the dead are actually present at the sacrifices of ancestor worship; the dead enjoy the offerings and are dependent upon posterity for their fortunes; ancestor worship is prompted by a sense of filial piety; ancestor worship is the most fundamental expression of filial piety; ancestor worship is regarded as a form of filial piety and expression in continued affection for one's dead parents; and ancestor worship is regarded

as the extension of filial piety beyond the grave. This conception becomes a part of culture and a basic affair of the family in the land of Korea. Thus, what does Confucianism say about filial piety?

Confucianism observes the five Confucian principles. Filial piety is one of them. The five principles are *Li*, *Ren*, *Xiao*, *Shu*, and *Chung*. The meanings of the five principles are as follows: *Li* “禮” means appropriate behavior in all situations, obligatory manners or customs, ceremony, ritual, and propriety; *Ren* “仁” means humaneness, humanity, love to others, human-heartedness, or virtue; *Xiao/Hsiao* “孝” means filial piety or filiality; *Shu* “恕” means the principle of mutuality or reciprocity and consideration for others; and *Chung* “忠” means loyalty, especially loyalty along with reciprocity, filial piety, and humaneness (Lewis and Travis 1991:299-304).

Filial piety is one further teaching of Confucius and is given an important emphasis in the decidedly Confucianism schools. Two main Chinese classics mainly deal with filial piety among the Collection of Confucius' Thirteen Classical Books. *Hsiao Ching*, The Book of Filial Duty, is the book of short conversations on filial piety as the eleventh classical book and *Confucian Analects* is the book of the sayings of Confucius as the tenth classical book. These books not only teach the doctrines and principles of filial piety, but also teach what real filial piety and the lack of filial piety are.

#### 4.2.1 HSIAO CHING

*Hsiao Ching*, *The Book of Filial Duty* (piety) or *The Book on Filiality*, reveals very well what filial piety is in Confucianism and how filial piety is practiced in one's life through twenty-four exemplary stories. This book offers the most important aspect of the relationship between filial piety and ancestor worship, and further reveals the reality of how important ancestor worship is on filial piety. The name, Filiality or Filial Piety, came from Confucius's words inside the book. In chapter 7, to the question of Tseng Tzu "How great is the use of filial duty," Confucius said, "Filial duty is the constant doctrine of Heaven, the natural righteousness of Earth, and the practical duty of man. Every member of the community ought to observe it with the greatest care" (Chen 1908:20). "The constant doctrine of Heaven" means that filial piety is the heavenly filial piety.

The beginning of this book states that the purpose of filial piety is not only to be the most important virtue of all ethical standards, but also to accomplish the aim of governing the state as follows:

Confucius was sitting in his study, having his disciple Tseng Ts'an to attend upon him. He asked: "Do you know by what virtue and power the good emperors of old made the world peaceful, the people to live in harmony with one another, and the inferior contented under the control of their superiors?" To this Tseng Ts'an, rising from his seat, replied: "I do not know

this, for I am not clever.” Then Confucius said: “filial piety is the foundation of virtue and the root of civilization” (Chen 1908:16).

At the beginning of this book, Confucius divided filial piety into two stages. The first stage is the duty to their parents. The duty is that “Our body and hair and skin are all derived from our parents, and therefore we have no right to injure any of them in the least” (Chen 1908:16). The second stage is the duty to others. The duty is “to live an upright life and to spread the great doctrines of humanity must win good reputation after death, and reflect great honor upon our parents” (Chen 1908:16). Eventually the two stages produce three results: the first is to pay a careful attention to every want of his parents, the second is to serve his government loyally and the third is to establish a good name for oneself (Chen 1908:17).

These statements bear significant meaning, because Confucius placed it in the very beginning of his writings as the basic premise for the understanding of ancestor worship. The second stage means that one of the ultimate purposes of filial piety is to govern the nation. It may be said that filial piety for parents transfers to government loyalty. As a result of his teaching, filial piety connected to ancestor worship. Chapter 14 states this very clearly as follows:

Confucius said: “A true gentleman is always filial to his parents, and in order to fulfill his duty to them to the fullest extent, he also

serves his August Master with patriotism. He always shows reverence to his elder brothers, and in order to fulfill his duty to them to the fullest extent, he does the same towards everyone who is older than he. As he can maintain order in his family affairs, so he can do the same in the government. He bases the principle of the government of a State upon that of a ruling family, and the consequent success will make his name to be remembered throughout generations to come” (Chen 1908:28).

Five important principles of filial piety exist toward performing to the parents as a son in *Hsiao Ching*:

A filial son has five duties to perform to his parents: (1) He must venerate them in daily life. (2) He must try to make them happy in every possible way, especially when the meal is served. (3) He must take extra care of them when they are sick. (4) He ought to show great sorrow for them when they are dead. (5) He must offer sacrifices to his deceased parents with the utmost solemnity. If he fulfills these duties, then he can be considered as having done what ought to be done by a son (Chen 1908:25).

These five principles are the requirements to be a filial son, but in order not to fail as a filial son, one needs to avoid three things:

If he is proud and haughty when he is a high official, he will soon bring ruin upon himself and his family; if he feels dissatisfied with his lower position, he may be led to do illegal acts; and if he does anything contrary to the public feeling, he will probably be the object of attacks. Having thus wronged himself, he cannot be considered as a filial son, although he treats his parents every day to luxurious meals (Chen 1908:25-26).

The fifth principle to be a filial son says that to sacrifice to the dead parents with the utmost solemnity is one of a filial son's five requirements. In chapter 16, Confucius explained the reason and the result of sacrificing to the deceased ancestors as follows:

Why do we offer sacrifices to our ancestors in our family shrine? Because we ought not to forget them. Why must we cultivate our minds and be circumspect in our actions? Because we do not wish to bring disgrace upon the name of our ancestors. If we can show respect to them when we offer them sacrifices in our family shrine, we shall be blessed by the Supreme Father and Mother. Filiality to parents and reverence to elders will be known to the Supreme Being, and will be followed by the people in every part of the world; no place can remain unaffected by their influence (Chen 1908:30).

According to the teaching of Confucius, performing sacrifices to one's dead parents after their parents' death was the action of filial piety. Furthermore, in *Hsiao Ching*, Confucius taught that mourning for the dead parent was an expression of filial piety:

When a filial son loses his parent, he, of course, cannot help crying piteously. He cannot feel happy when he hears music. He will have no appetite for food, however tempting a savory. He will greet no visitor, have no regard for elegance of speech, and will put on a mourning-dress instead of a beautiful one. All these tell us the extent of his sorrow for his lost parent... This is the doctrine laid down by good men of old. That mourning, which only extends to the period of three years, shows that there is a limit for our sorrow. . . . When our parents are alive, we should treat them with love and respect. When they are dead, we should have sorrow for them. By doing so we shall have performed the duty of mankind, and have done what ought to be done by a filial son, and by the living to the dead (Chen 31-32).

By the teaching of Confucius, offering sacrifices to dead ancestors is a requirement that is a part of filial piety. Here are two stories from *Hsiao Ching* given as examples of Confucian filial piety. In the first story of the Book of Filial Piety, *the filial piety that influenced heaven*, Confucius encouraged the

young that if the young kept performing, the heavens shall be moved:

Yu Shen, the son of Ku Sou, had an exceedingly filial disposition; his father, however, was stupid, his mother perverse, and his younger brother, Hsiang, very conceited. His actions are related in the Shang Shu, in the Chung Yung, and in the works of Mencius. Those who speak of him say that Shun cultivated the hills of *Li* (in the province of Shansi), where he had elephants to plough his fields and birds to weed the grain. So widespread was the renown of his virtue that the Emperor Yao heard of him, and sent his nine sons to verve him, and gave to him two of his daughters in marriage, and afterwards resigned to him the imperial dignity.

Of all whose virtues and filial duties deserve to be illustrated, Shun is pre-eminent; and his example, in obeying his parents, is worthy of being handed down to posterity, through myriads of ages. Once he was in great danger in a well, into which he was commanded by his father to descend, and his brother cast down stones upon him; again, he was in a granary, when it was set on fire; but from these, as well as from many other dangers, he escaped unhurt. He fished, burned pottery, ploughed and sowed, with great toil on the hills of *Li*. He laboriously performed all these duties, but his parents were not affected, while his

brother Hsiang became more insolent and overbearing. His parents alleged crimes against him, but Shun could not find that he had done wrong; he loved and revered them, though they did not requite him with affection. His feelings were grieved at these manifold troubles, and with strong crying and tears, he invoked Heaven.

His perfect sincerity was effectual to renovate his family; his parents became pleasant, and his brother more conciliatory and virtuous. Heaven also considered his Excellency to be great, and regarded him as truly good, thus establishing his reputation so firmly that it was perpetuated to, and influenced, succeeding ages. Even Confucius is regarded as elevated but a little above Shun, and I would praise and extol them both to coming generations (Chen 1908:33-34).

The seventeenth story of the Book of Filial Piety, *On Hearing the Thunder He Wept at the Tomb*, records a very impressive filial disposition by a son:

In the country of Wei lived Wang P'ou, a very dutiful child, whose mother, when alive, was much afraid of thunder. After her death her grave was dug in the hilly forest; and whenever it blew and rained furiously, and Wang heard the sound of the chariot of the Thunder-goddess rolling along, he hastened immediately to

the grave, and, reverently kneeling, besought her with tears, saying: "I am here, dear mother; do not be alarmed." And afterwards, whenever he read in The Book of Odes (Poetry) this sentence, "Children should have deep and ardent affection for their parents, who have endured so much anxiety in nourishing them," the tears flowed abundantly at the recollection of his mother.

Suddenly the black clouds arise from the wilderness, whirled by the wind; he hears the distant mutter of thunder from the southern hills. Heedless of the rain, hastily he speeds over the rugged path leading to the tomb, and as he goes round the grave his tones of grief and entreaty are heard. The roaring of the dreadful thunder affrights the ears of men, one clap following another in quick succession. If his kind mother, when alive, always dreaded the voice of Heaven's majesty, how much more will she now, when lying alone in the depths of the wild forest! If P'ou was with his mother, he knew she would be comforted; and he thinks that if in the green hills she has a companion, she will not be terrified. Afterwards, being successful, he refused to take the duties of an officer under the Emperor Ssu-ma, because he wished to go frequently to visit the grave of his parent. And when he was going and returning from it, he would weep at the recollection of his mother, and ask himself: "If I have not yet

recompensed the care and trouble my mother endured for me, what more can I do?” and to this day, whenever scholars read the pages of the Liu O, they remember how tears bedewed the cheeks of Wang P’ou (Chen 53-54).

#### **4.2.2 THE BOOK OF THE *ANALECTS OF CONFUCIUS***

The Book of *the Analects of Confucius* records mainly the statements or conversations between Confucius and his disciples. This book contains a large number of his brief passages and arranges them in twenty chapters. The *Analects of Confucius* is a collection book that is the most important source of information about Confucius, his disciples, and his thought. His disciples wrote this book was over seventy-five years after his death around 400 B.C. This book has read and influenced over many centuries on the history and culture of Chinese people. In addition, the teachings of Confucius on the book have influenced other countries as a key role for developing the culture, education, and moral standards such as Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

It is no wonder that this book places much emphasis on filial piety, sacrifices, and rites for the deceased ancestors. Many passages about filial piety relate to ancestor worship. The emphasis on ancestor worship accompanies the term “filial piety.” Many passages relate to filial piety. Following are some of them:

1:2 Master You said: A man who respects his parents and his elders would hardly be inclined to defy his superiors. A man who is not inclined to defy his superiors will never foment a rebellion. A gentleman works at the root. Once the root is secured, the Way unfolds. To respect parents and elders is the root of humanity (Leys 1997:3).

Leys (1997:108) who is the translator of *the Analects of Confucius*, explains this verse as follows:

*A man who respects his parents and his elders would hardly be inclined to defy his superiors:* filial piety at home is a guarantee of docility in public life—dutiful sons are unlikely to become rebellious subjects. “State Confucianism” (the imperial manipulation of Confucian thought for political purposes, which was eventually to give such a bad name to Confucianism in modern times) focused on passages such as this and extolled them out of context. Although filial piety is indeed a very important precept, one cannot reduce the ethics and politics of Confucius to this sole notion without committing a gross distortion.

1:6 The master said: “At home, a young man must respect his

parents; abroad, he must respect his elders. He should talk little, but with good faith; love all people, but associate with the virtuous. Having done this, if he still has energy to spare, let him study literature” (Leys 1997:4).

1:11 The Master said: “When the father is alive, watch the son’s aspirations. When the father is dead, watch the son’s actions. If three years later, the son has not veered from the father’s way, he may be called a dutiful son indeed” (Leys 1997:5).

2:5 Lord Meng Yi<sup>9</sup> asked about filial piety. The Master said: “Never disobey.” As Fan Chi was driving him in his chariot, the Master told him: “Meng Yi asked me about filial piety and I replied: ‘Never disobey’.” Fan Chi said: “What does that mean?” The Master said: “When your parents are alive, serve them according to the ritual. When they die, bury them according to the ritual, make sacrifices to them according to the ritual” (Leys 1997:6-7).

2:6 Lord Meng Wu<sup>10</sup> asked about filial piety. The Master said: “The only time a dutiful son ever makes his parents worry is when he is sick.” 2:7 Ziyou<sup>11</sup> asked about filial piety. The Master said: “Nowadays people think they are dutiful sons when they feed their parents. Yet they also feed their dogs and horses.

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<sup>9</sup>*Meng Yi* belonged to one of the great families of the dukedom of Lu.

<sup>10</sup>*Meng Wu* was a son of Meng Yi.

<sup>11</sup>*Ziyou* is the courtesy name of *Yan*, disciple of Confucius.

Unless there is respect, where is the difference?” 2:8 Zixia asked about filial piety. The Master said: “It is the attitude that matters. If young people merely offer their services when there is work to do, or let their elders drink and eat when there is wine and food, how could this ever pass as filial piety?” (Leys 1997:7).

In regard to the phrase, “*it is the attitude that matters*,” Leys (1997:114) notes:

“Literally, it is ‘what is difficult is the expression’—which can be understood in two different ways: either that the dutiful son must manage a kind and respectful expression when he attends to his parents’ needs; or that he must be capable of interpreting his parents’ expression in order to guess whether they are pleased with his service.”

4:18 The Master said: “when you serve your parents, you may gently remonstrate with them. If you see that they do not take your advice, be all the more respectful and do not contradict them. Let not your efforts turn to bitterness” (Leys 1997:17).

4:19 The Master said: “While your parents are alive, do not travel afar. If you have to travel, you must leave an address” (Leys 1997:17).

4:20 The Master said: “If three years after his father’s death, the son does not alter his father’s ways, he is a good son indeed” (Leys 1997:17).

Leys (1997:134) gives an explanation of “*a good son*” as follows:

*A good son* is a son who practices “filial piety.” Although Confucius repeatedly praised filial piety, it was imperial Confucianism which eventually extolled it as its cardinal virtue (let us not forget that Confucius died 350 years before Confucianism became the state ideology!). In later centuries, moral treatises and exemplary tales further developed this theme, pushing it sometimes to distasteful and gruesome extremes—while Confucianism was turned into a doctrine of submissiveness, thus acquiring the oppressive and obscurantist features that made it odious to modern generations and provoked the virulent anti-Confucian movements of the twentieth century. (What these movements completely overlooked, however, was that imperial Confucianism had arbitrarily isolated the precept of obedience, while obliterating the symmetrical duty of disobedience that originally complemented it.)

Confucius spoke about practicing filial piety while the parents are alive in 4:21, “Always keep in mind the age of your parents. Let this thought

be both your joy and your worry” (Leys 1997:17).

### **4.3 BIBLICAL TEACHING ON FILIAL PIETY**

The Bible observes and emphasizes filial piety as much as does Confucianism. How does the Bible teach about filial piety, and how does biblical filial piety differ from that of Confucianism?

#### **4.3.1 THE OLD TESTAMENT**

The Bible says that the way of filial piety to one’s parents is to honor or to respect. The words “honor” or “respect” in Hebrew “כבוד–*kabod*” originally meant “to be heavy, to be precious or to be important” in the physical and spiritual sense. In Aramaic, *kabod* further connotes the double meanings of “heavy, difficult” and “respected, honored.” According to Botterweck (1995:16-17), the verb occurs 114 times in the Old Testament with all the stems: the qal 23 times, the hiphil 17 times, the piel 38 times, the niphal 30 times, the pual 3 times, and the hithpael 3 times. Among these forms, the piel form is in relation to filial piety. The piel form primarily is a declarative meaning of “honor or approve.” The secondary meaning is more clearly used for filial piety. Botterweck (1995:16) explains that “the secondary meaning deriving from the basic meaning ‘be heavy’ has a broader range than the abstract English term ‘honor’: it extends from simple ‘recognize, respect’ through ‘esteem, consider competent or expert (in something)’ to ‘honor,

venerate'. With respect to Yahweh, in the sense of 'revere', it denotes a concrete religious attitude."

The noun form "*kabed* (liver)," derives from "*kabod* (heavy)," and can denote the liver as a bodily organ. *Kabed* was developed in considering heavy, important, and precious, and then finally became the meaning of honor or respect. In Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Hebrew, the words "*libbu* (heart)" and "*kabattu* (liver)" are exchangeable. There is a special reason that the noun *Kabed* means "liver," because in these languages, the liver was considered the most heavy and important bodily organ (Botterweck 1995:13-24). To the Hebrew parents, it meant that filial piety is considered the most important or heavy-duty. It intimates that the Hebrew language emphasizes primarily filial piety in order to set a basis for the evaluation of the value of a person. The quality and quantity of filial piety are in relation to the maturity of a person.

According to Barth (1961:243-244), the verb "*kabod*," which used intransitively, "means to be heavy, to have weight and gravity. Thus to honour some one really means to ascribe to him the dignity which is his due. It would also appear that the first important subordinate meaning of the word *ab* (father) is that of teacher and counselor, and that this connotation is not foreign to the word *em* (mother) either. To honour one's father and mother thus means to give them their due importance as teachers and counselors." To honor father and mother is the command of God and requires of the children. Proverbs 23:25 says the aim and end of filial piety, "May your father

and mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice!”

#### **4.3.1.1 The Pentateuch**

Numerous times, the Pentateuch mentions filial piety and presents very detailed ways to accomplish filial piety.

##### **4.3.1.1.1 Genesis 9:20-27**

The first story is about the impressive filial disposition of sons in Genesis 9:20-27. Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. When Noah drank and lay uncovered inside his tent, Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backwards and covered their father’s nakedness. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father’s nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine, he blessed his two sons, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem! May God extend the territory of Japheth, may Japheth live in the tents of Shem.”

##### **4.3.1.1.2 Exodus 20:12**

The clearest mention about filial piety among the Old Testament is the fifth of the Ten Commandments. The first four commandments set forth the relationship to God, and the next six commandments set forth the human relationship in the Ten Commandments. To honor your father and mother is

the first one of the second table. “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you” (Exod 20:12). Bruckner (2008:186) says that the mention of both father and mother has an important meaning, “the Akkadian Code of Hammurabi (1750B.C.) that only expressed concern for the father.”

Parents have the authoritative role in the family to demonstrate God’s way to their children. Parents should give their children opportunities to receive the promise of God that they may live long in the promised land God is giving them by honoring their parents. Honoring parents is not an option for children, but rather an obligation. Honoring parents is to obey to the Word of God. Obedience to the commandment is to exhibit respect for God. Used here, the word “honor” in Hebrew is a piel imperative singular form, “*kabed*.” This word means literally “to be weighty, heavy, of great value and worth” (Currid 2001:44). To honor your father and mother means “more than to be subject to them, or respectful of their wishes: they are to be given precedence by the recognition of the importance which is theirs by right, esteemed for their priority, and loved for it as well. As Yahweh is honored for his priority to all life, so father and mother must be honored for their priority, as Yahweh’s instruments, to the lives of their children” (Durham 1987:3:291). The command to honor one’s father and mother is a command to practice respect for one’s parents in obvious ways. This commandment is focusing upon “those who are responsible and in charge, those who follow their parents and precede their children in shaping Israel’s responsibility in

covenant” (Durham 1987:3:291).

Children must care for their parents with great seriousness and consider them as being of great value. The promise refers to God’s preservation of his covenant people who keep God’s covenant. Durham (1987:3:290) describes this verse that “the fifth commandment is thus both as foundational to commandments six through ten as the first commandment is to commandments two through four, and also is the logical link from the relationship of Israel to Yahweh to the relationship of Israel to humankind.”

The fifth commandment to honor your father and mother is the most fundamental of human relationships. The fifth commandment is in relation to God and Israelites, the Father and children, beyond the physical relationship between parents and children. Thus, God promises highly a reward to those who obey God’s command to honor their father and mother that they may live long in the Land the Lord God is giving.

#### **4.3.1.1.3 Leviticus 19:3a**

Leviticus 19:3a says: “Each of you must respect his mother and father.” The verb “*yare*” in Hebrew, literally “to fear,” is used regarding respect for parents rather than *kabed*, “to honor.” According to Rooker (2000:253), “the verb ‘*yare*’ normally has God as its object, which underlines the devotion and reverence to be demonstrated to one’s parents. The fact that the first

admonition regarding holiness entails how to treat one's parents indicates that holiness begins in the home." This verse does not mention earning the respect. Rather, it says that respecting parents is an obligation of children. Respecting parents is an essence of God's covenant people.

#### **4.3.1.1.4 Deuteronomy 5:16**

Deuteronomy 5:16 says: "Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you." Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy nearly thirty-eight years later than he wrote the book of Exodus at Sinai. The Sinai generation realized the importance of the Ten Commandments, and the generation had followed them for nearly thirty-eight years. Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy for the new generation, which did not understand very well how God led Israel from Egypt (Merrill 1994:26-27).

The Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy are explained more so than the Exodus. In the same way, Moses describes and expands the concept of honoring parents more than does the passage of Exodus 20:12.

Deuteronomy adds the words "as the Lord your God has commanded you." Furthermore, here the passage contains two positive blessings when one obeys this commandment: long life and prosperity in the land. It is the promise that God blesses someone who keeps God's law. Merrill (1994:153)

explains the reason why Deuteronomy adds these phrases, “this is an unmistakable reference to the initial disclosure of the covenant at Sinai, and no doubt the warning was added because of some infraction of the statute in the interim.” The attached promises of long life and prosperity in the land the Lord your God is giving you “demonstrate the central value God placed on extended families for the health of the community” (Bruckner 2008:186).

According to the traditional Jewish interpretation, “the law of parental respect has been applied to a wide range of duties and responsibilities, including obedience to parents, following their teachings, use of their property, and the prohibition of such disrespectful acts as hitting and insulting them. Another aspect of particular importance in the modern setting is that of caring for parents in their need” (Christensen 2001:124).

#### **4.3.1.1.5 Deuteronomy 21:18-21**

Deuteronomy 21:18-21 describes the penalties of disobedience to this commandment in detail. According to the penalties of disobedience to this commandment, if a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother, they shall bring him to the elder at the gate of his town and they confront it before the elders. Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. This refers to the boundaries of the law on the punishment of an insubordinate son. As Christensen (2001:485) interprets these verses, “Like disrespect for parents, disrespect for the law breeds

contempt for discipline in general, whether divine or human, and the ultimate breakdown of society itself.” And also Christensen (2001:485) urges the application and action to modern Christians, “we do well to remember that the restraint of laws can never be so effective in the inculcation of parental respect as conversion of the heart, and the loving kindness that comes from the enabling Spirit of God within.”

The penalties of dishonoring the living parent demonstrate distinctively how much Christianity emphasizes filial piety in these verses. Following are additional passages that enlighten the importance of filial piety by giving specific punishments for nonfilial children. Exodus 21:15 says about the penalty of hitting the parent, “Anyone who attacks his father or his mother must be put to death.” In regard to the penalty of cursing the parent, Exodus 21:17 states that “anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death”; Leviticus 20:9 states, “If anyone curses his father or mother, he must be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother, and his blood will be on his own head”; and Proverbs 20:20 states, “If man curses his father or mother, his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness.” In regard to the penalty of mockery of the parent, Proverbs 30:17 says, “the eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures.” These passages are an application of the fifth commandment. These are pointing out the importance of honoring parents. These actions, attacks, and curses are the opposite of honoring parents. In a strong tone of voice, Deuteronomy 27:16 declares, “Cursed is

the man who dishonors his father or his mother. Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’”

#### **4.3.1.2 The Book of Ruth**

The narrative of Ruth illustrates exactly what the real biblical filial piety is through the relationships between Ruth and Naomi, her mother-in-law in modern times. The Book of Ruth is setting out the obligations of filial piety to the parents. The story is very impressive. In the days when the judges ruled, famine existed in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah— together with his wife and two sons—went to live for a while in the country of Moab. The man’s name was Elimelech, his wife’s name Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. Her two sons married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. Unfortunately, Elimelech died, and after marrying, both sons died also, and Naomi was left husbandless and childless. One day, Naomi set out to return home from there. Then Naomi spoke words of advice and blessings to her two daughters-in-law, instructing them to “go back, each of you, to your mother’s home.” She spoke the following words of blessing, “may the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband.” Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud and said to her, “We will go back with you to your people.” However, Naomi persisted strongly that they return to their homes. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-by, but Ruth clung

to her. When Naomi urged her again to return to her home, Ruth replied to her. Her statement shows clearly the real meaning of filial piety. In Ruth 1:16-17, Ruth says, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.” Then Naomi stopped urging her when she realized that Ruth was determined to go with her. Farmer (1998:908) points out that “her speech in vv. 16-17 must be understood as an act of *hesed*, showing love and loyalty over and beyond what is considered normal or expected.” To return to her mother’s home would have been a better life for her at that time, but Ruth realized how Naomi lived as an aging widow alone in her land. Ruth’s answer was a classic expression of devotion and loyalty. Rather than searching for a new husband, Ruth committed herself to the life of her elderly mother-in-law.

Finally, the two women returned to Bethlehem empty. Ruth was the Moabitess, and she did not know how to live in Bethlehem. However, she knew that she should support her mother-in-law. Thus, she went to the fields and harvested the leftover grain for supporting her mother-in-law. She ended up in a field belonging to Boaz. In the field, God showed her favor before Boaz who was one of her kinsman-redeemers. Ruth 2:11 explains why Boaz gave her favor, “I’ve been

told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before.” The statement of Boaz said that the favor of Boaz to Ruth was the result of Ruth’s filial piety to her mother-in-law. Boaz was impressed with Ruth’s filial piety in leaving her parents and her native land. Boaz’s solicitous kindness to Ruth resulted from his desire to indemnify her faithfulness and devotion to Naomi. Boaz emphasized that his favor to Ruth was not from himself, but rather was a result of the Lord’s intervention. Verse 12 says, “May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.” Boaz blesses her with a little prayer that the Lord will recompense Ruth as she showed kindness and filial piety to Naomi.

Consequently, the narrative of Ruth finished in a happy ending in that she became a wife of Boaz. Further, Ruth 4:13 says that “the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.” Ruth conceived a son by the grace of God. Further, by God’s grace, she became an ancestor of King David. The book of Ruth ends with the genealogy of David. Ruth 4:18-22 says, “This, then, is the family line of Perez: Perez was the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Hahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, Boaz the father of Obed, Obed the

father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David.” Ruth received a reward exactly according to the promise of God in the fifth commandment—to “honor your father and mother so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”

#### **4.3.1.3 The Book of Proverbs**

The book of Proverbs contains many passages with an emphasis on filial piety. Following are some passages in Proverbs: 1:8, “Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching”; 4:1, “Listen, my sons, to a father’s instruction; pay attention and gain understanding”; 6:20, “My son, keep your father’s commands and do not forsake your mother’s teaching”; 10:1, “A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother”; 17:25, “A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him”; and 23:22-25, “Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old. Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline, and understanding. The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him. May your father and mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice!” In Proverbs, parents are regarded as both a mark of wise living and a motive for right living, and the honoring of father and mother is the highest virtue among human values.

#### **4.3.2 THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The New Testament refers to the Ten Commandments for practicing filial piety to the parents as the words of “honor your father and mother.” Generally, the Greek term for meaning of “to honor” is the verb form “τιμάω.” This term is translated in the LXX with the Hebrew “כבד–*kabod*.” This term includes practically providing food, drink, and even clean clothing for the parents. It connotes the meanings of “worth,” “satisfaction,” “compensation,” “evaluation,” “respect,” and “honor.” When τιμάω ascribes to an exalted person, it means “to honor or to respect.”

Jesus quotes the Ten Commandments in the four Gospels, and Jesus emphasizes the commandment to honor parents as a commandment which demands unconditional obedience (Matthew 15:4 19:19; Mark 7:10, 10:19; Luke 18:20) by using this term “τιμάω.” The Apostle Paul quotes the Ten Commandments in his letters. Additionally, several times Paul uses this term “τιμάω” to refer to the concept of “to honor” in his letters, Ephesians 6:2; 1 Timothy 5:3; Colossians 3:20; and Acts 28:10. Jesus and Paul emphasize that the new people of God are called on to keep these commandments. Additionally, Peter uses this term “τιμάω” to show proper respect to everyone and honor the king in 1 Peter 2:17 (Kittel 1987:8:178-79).

Paul uses a special term “*ευσεβέω*,” as depicting filial piety in 1 Timothy 5:4. The Korean Bible translates this word precisely as “filial piety,” meaning to be “reverent,” “respectful,” or “piety” in relation to God. It refers to the relation of

man to others or relatives and men to God. The duty of piety is obligatory as a virtue for the entire people. This word emphasizes the conduct of man as a particular manner of life. Especially, 1 Timothy 5:4 reveals clearly this meaning as representing filial piety, “If a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.”

“Religious duty (*ευσεβειν*)” comes from the verb form. The verb form “*ευσεβέω*” means “both to honor the deity appropriately, that is, ‘to worship’, and, in an ethical sense, to fulfill one’s obligations to the deity. In this case, the religious obligation is to the family, and it is of ‘first’ importance. It should include ‘some repayment to their parents’” (Gloer 2010:182). It refers to God requiring filial piety as religious duty or duty to show loyalty to the families, including parents. Paul emphasizes that fulfilling their obligation to their parents is pleasing to God as a part of fulfilling their obligation to God.

#### **4.3.2.1 The Four Gospels**

The command to honor father and mother is quoted in five different places by Jesus in the New Testament.

##### **4.3.2.1.1 Matthew 15:4-6**

The first quotation is in Matthew 15:4-6 is, “For God said, Honor your father and mother, and anyone who speaks evil of their father or mother is to be put to death. But you say that if anyone says to their father or mother, any help you might have expected from me has been set apart, they are not to honor their parent.”

Jesus rebukes the hypocrisy of scribes and Pharisees who do not obey the command of God in which children should honor their parents. Jesus points out that the laws, which honor one’s father and mother, come from God rather than from Moses. This is one of the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16. Jesus emphasizes the fifth commandment by referring to the punishment for anyone who disobeys the commandment. Jesus quotes the punishment found in Exodus 21:17 and Leviticus 20:9. Jesus says that God gave the fifth commandment to children for obeying their parents. Jesus points out that the fifth commandment includes financial support of parents in need. Jesus points out the error of the Scribes and Pharisees who practiced the righteousness of the Torah. The Scribes and Pharisees oppose and invalidate a commandment of God through that tradition. Jesus gives a vivid example of how they break God’s command by performing their traditions in Mark 7:9-13, with which this writer will deal. Filial piety is not just words, but rather the duty to fulfill one’s responsibility toward one’s parents. Filial piety is not an ideal, but rather a practical principle for children. Christian filial piety is that children honor their fathers and mothers not by their own ways or tradition, but by the ways of the

Lord.

#### **4.3.2.1.2 Mark 7:9-13**

The second quotation is in Mark 7:9-13. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law so that they have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men. Their tradition was that anyone should eat food with washed hands, but the disciples ate food with unwashed hands. Jesus emphasized that the commandment to honor father and mother is more important than to hold on to the traditions of men, which is that everyone should eat food with washed hands. A son should evade unfilial piety by appealing to the *Corban* legislation.

Jesus quoted the fifth commandment found in Exodus 20:12 and Exodus 21:17. A specific point in these passages is that Jesus mentions the *Corban* for emphasizing the filial duty of children. The *Corban* is a Hebrew word, transliterated from the Greek to the English, meaning a gift dedicated to God (Brooks 1991:116). Jesus explained the importance of the filial piety of children by taking one instance of the *Corban*. At the same time, Jesus referred to the practice of allowing the *Corban* to vow to take precedence over the fifth commandment as wrong. The Pharisees broke the command of God through the *Corban*, vow and by reason of the *Corban* vow, they did not practice filial piety to their parents.

The *Corban* is a human tradition, which Jews keep from generation to generation, but it is a serious problem that a good human tradition takes precedence over the Word of God. This tradition, *Corban*, causes people to abandon the commandment of God in order to keep their tradition. Jesus is not criticizing an offering to God, but rather the abuse of the *Corban* vow. Jesus' request of the children is that they should honor and perform their obligation to their parents. This is the practice of biblical filial piety.

#### **4.3.2.1.3 Matthew 19:19, Mark 10:19 and Luke 18:20**

The third, fourth, and fifth quotations are for the answer to the question of a certain rich ruler about to inherit eternal life and what he must do in Matthew 19:19, Mark 10:19, and Luke 18:20: "You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother'." When Jesus talks with the young man, Jesus requests that the young man obey the commandments. The young man questions in return, "What sort of commandments?" Jesus responds by quoting respectively the commandments of the second table, found in Exodus 20:12-16 and Leviticus 19:18. Jesus affirms the importance of three of its commandments. This statement connotes that if anyone fails to observe the second table, he/she fails to observe the first table either.

#### **4.3.2.2 The Pauline Epistles**

Paul quotes the fifth commandment in his letters, and two specific verses are given here. Paul reiterates the fifth commandment in Deuteronomy 5:16 in the New Testament perspective in Ephesians 6:1-3: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother which is the first commandment with a promise that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Paul adds the specific phrase in here, “the first commandment with a promise,” which is an applicable translation of Exodus 20:12. The apostle emphasizes the fact that the obedience to parents is right to express divine command. To obey one’s parents in the Lord is the relation to the Lord to which Paul is referring in chapter 5. Children should obey their parents, because God commands it. The Apostle gives children two motivations to obey their parents: “it is part of their Christian commitment, in the Lord, and it is generally the right and proper thing to do” (Lincoln 1990:404).

Obedience to parents is to practice obedience to Christ. Obedience or disobedience to parents is not the only factor that determines a person’s prosperity, but God promises to children who obey their parents in the Lord that they may go well and they may enjoy long life on the earth. Children respect and love their parents by obedience within the pattern of their commitment to Christ. The blessing to be given by the Lord to children “is based on the presumption that obedience to parents leads to order and stability” (Snodgrass 1996:322).

The second is in Colossians 3:20, “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.” This Scripture says that total obedience to parents is a Christian duty. Paul emphasizes as the model that obedience to their parents is to please the Lord such as Christ obeys the Father in all things. The command, obedience to the parents in everything, assumes that children should give heart-felt consideration to their parents. The absolute authority of the father over his children ended “when the father emancipated his son or he died” (Garland 1998:247).

A very difficult command is that children should obey parents who oppose Christianity or who are involved in an emotional conflict. Nevertheless, children need to obey and honor their parents in serious situations. That Christian filial piety is related to God is very important. Obedience to parents is to commit submission to Christ as the following words, for this pleases the Lord. Martin (1972:131) interprets filial obedience of children in this passage thusly: it “is part and parcel of the total response which believers of all ages and position make to the will of God which is noble, we-pleasing and ideal.”

#### **4.4 SUMMARY**

As we observe from the study of the Book on Filiality and the Analects of Confucius on the Confucian perspective, filial piety clearly has three purposes: the first, filial piety is to rule the government; the second, filial piety

is to revere both the living and the dead parents; and the third is to build one's own personality. On the other hand, Christian filial piety is to respect one's living parents. Thus, Christians need to preserve the spirit of Confucian filial piety and nonbelievers need to stop criticizing the fact that Christians do not know and practice filial piety, because Christians do not follow the way of Confucian teaching.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONFUCIAN AND BIBLICAL TEACHINGS ON ANCESTOR WORSHIP

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

As demonstrated by the name “ancestor worship,” ancestor worship refers to direct or indirect worship directed toward dead parents or persons and other ancestors. Ancestor worship is currently practiced in various forms around the world. According to Brown (1969:98), ancestor worship is “simply acts of propitiation and sacrifice of atonement, which are intended to reconcile, and to bring back into harmonious fellowship the severed kinship.”

*Lutheran Cyclopedia* (1954:30-31) explains ancestor worship as follows:

The deceased is believed to have the same kindly interest in the affairs of the living as when alive and to interfere in the course of events for the welfare of the family or clan. It is believed that the deceased is able to protect his or her relatives, help them in war, give them success in their undertakings, and, therefore, demand their continued service, reverence, and sacrifice. But if the worship of the deceased is neglected, the spirit may bring sickness, storms, calamities, or other misfortunes upon the living relatives.

The *Encyclopedia Americana* defines ancestor worship that “ancestor worship is a form of religion emphasizing the influence of deceased kindred on the living. It is not a complete religious system in itself but one phrasing of relations beyond human control, and thus but a facet of religious expression” (Spier 1999:800).

The main concept of ancestor worship that is practiced around the world today is the almost same; however, as I mention in chapter two, this chapter will deal specifically with the meaning of Confucian ancestor worship practiced in Asian countries that are under the influence of Confucianism. Confucian ancestor worship is classified with two faces among ancestor worship observers: one group includes Confucians, non-Christians, and some Christians, who believe that ancestor worship that worships dead people embraces the meaning of honor or veneration. Another group includes Christians who believe that ancestor worship is a contravening of the first and second commandment. Confucianism believes that when ancestor worship is practiced, the dead person’s soul returns to the ritual place, and eats the sacrifices at that spot. However, the Bible teaches that the dead person cannot return to the ritual place where their descents prepare for the foods. By this reason, in the eyes of Koreans, Korean Christianity has been viewed as being in opposition to filial piety. Why do Confucians emphasize and practice ancestor worship, and why do Korean Christians disagree with Confucian ancestor worship?

## 5.2 CONFUCIAN TEACHING ON ANCESTOR WORSHIP

In ancestor worship, Confucian worshipers presume that dead ancestors are able to protect their own families, receive the sacrifices from the descendants, watch over their own families, bring fortunes to the descendants, help friends and harm enemies, and reward the right and punish the wrong.

Ancestor worship was popularized by Confucius (551-479 BC), who made efforts toward filial piety decreeing that parents should be honored while they are alive. The enforcement of this teaching continued after their deaths. Confucius said about ancestor worship as filial piety in the Analects of Confucius 2:5 that “when their parents die, bury them according to the ritual; and they should be sacrificed according to the ritual” (Leys 1997:7).

Confucius emphasizes the ritual in the Analects of Confucius 8:2, “Without ritual, courtesy is tiresome; without ritual, prudence is timid; without ritual, bravery is quarrelsome; without ritual, frankness is hurtful. When gentlemen treat their kin generously, common people are attracted to goodness; when old ties are not forgotten, common people are not fickle” (Leys 1997:35). Confucius says that even the right power should be worked with the ritual in 15:33, “The power that is attained through knowledge, retained through goodness, and exerted with dignity, if it is not wielded in accordance with the ritual, is still not the right sort of power” (Leys 1997:78).

Ancestor worship holds two important functions in Confucianism: (1) to bind the dead ancestors and living descendants of a family; and (2) to bind the living family members. In Confucianism, the dead parents and the living descendant are inseparable (Lee 1988:17). Thus, when a person dies, he does not lose contact with the lineage, but rather remains as a household deity. In Confucianism, ancestors are usually considered to require continuous attention, and neglecting one's ancestors brings misfortune for the family. Ancestor worship is to fulfill the filial duties by remembering ancestors and their favors. Confucians believe not only that the soul of the dead ancestor exists after death, but further that their personal success brings honor to the dead ancestors.

Oldstone-Moore (2002:90-91) points out the importance of ancestor worship in Confucianism:

Ancestors are propitiated family spirits. Those who are not properly cared for after death and those who die prematurely or by violence, become ghosts; they are likened to bandits and vagrants of the spirit world and are considered to be dangerous, malevolent forces that need to be placated. An ancestor may become a troublesome spirit if the burial is not performed correctly, or if the death was irregular, or if the spirit is not propitiated, preventing the *hun* soul from rising to reside in the

ancestral tablets and the *po* soul from descending into the grave. The spirit of the deceased will haunt the living as a ghost until appropriate measures have been taken.

Yulgok Yi (1536-1583), a saintly Korean Confucian scholar, emphasized the importance of ancestor worship on the basis of a religious belief:

When a man dies, his soul (*hon*, 魂) might be said [to be] either existing or non-existing. It is because a soul exists with sincere devotion (*sung*, 誠) and a soul dissolves without devotion. . . .

When a man's soul (*jungki*, 精氣) is separate after death and has not yet dissolved, it could be moved and elevated (*jamkyek*, 感格) and united (*yunhab*, 聯合) through my sincere devotion (*sung*, 誠) . . . Even after a man's soul has dissolved, his reason (*li*, 理) does not dissolve, and his reason could be moved and elevated (*jamkyek*, 感格) . . . This is why descendants remember their ancestors and perform ceremonies in an utmost devoted manner (Choi 1979:129).

Confucian ancestor worship requires ten steps in procedure as follows: first, the Master of a house bows down to an ancestral table, which is taken out of the shrine. The ancestor wood tablet has twofold meanings as the image of invisible soul and the resting place of the soul so that ancestor worship is not

a just veneration action to the dead ancestors, rather to encounter with the spirit of the dead ancestors; second, he invokes the ancestor's soul by burning incense and pouring liquor into a bowl. This is an invitation for the soul of the dead to come; third, he offers liquor and food in a respect motion with feeling the presence of the soul at the spot. This is a symbolic gesture of sincerity and respect; and fourth, he reads a ritual prayer in which the soul enjoys the sacrifices offered as a means of expressing affection. The reading of a ritual prayer is read in a manner of conversing with him while the ancestor was alive; fifth, bowls are filled with liquor for the second and third time while the prayer is being read. This is an expression of the wish that the ancestor appreciate their sincerity and devotion; sixth, all family members leave the room to give the ancestor's soul a time to enjoy the sacrifices; seventh, after a while, the family members enter the room again to take away bowls and serve tea; eighth, the family members bid the soul depart by bowing; ninth, someone returns the ancestral tablet to the shrine and burns the paper which made a table. This is the closure of the ancestral ritual; and tenth, family members and relatives share the liquor and food used for the ancestor worship. The tenth rite means to share identity with the soul of the dead and make improvement harmony among family members and relatives (Choi 1988:38-39). The significance of Confucian ancestor worship remains in "fulfilling one's filial duties by remembering one's ancestors, rewarding the origin, and repaying favors given by ancestors, and not in the enjoyment of a rite by the soul" (Choi 1988:39).

### **5.3 BIBLICAL TEACHING ON ANCESTOR WORSHIP**

The Bible emphasizes filial piety more so than Confucianism, but prohibits ancestor worship. Most of all, Korean Christians consider that ancestor worship is not just a performance of filial piety, but is idolatry, demonic, or superstitious. In the Confucian perspective, ancestor worship is to obey the fifth commandment, “Honor your father and mother,” but the Bible ascribes that ancestor worship is idolatry as taught in the second commandment. Veneration of the dead father and mother is not a sin against God in the Confucian perspective, but ancestor worship is not just the memory of the dead father and mother because ancestor worshipers believe that dead people return to the ritual place to partake of the food prepared for them by their descendants. Especially, the “*chesa*” for “ancestor worship,” translated in English, contains factors of idolatry as pointed out in the part of Confucian ancestor worship as mentioned in a previous section. Ancestor worship is not simply a memorial service in honor of the dead. Rather, their sacrifices are offered to the spirits of the dead ancestors. If so, how does the Bible define ancestor worship in the Old and New Testaments? How do Christians consider ancestor worship which is accepted as an ethical expression of filial piety or merely a form of veneration by Confucianism?

#### **5.3.1 THE OLD TESTAMENT**

##### **5.3.1.1 The Book of the Pentateuch**

Ancestor worship is standing between the second commandment and the fifth commandment. Stuart (2006:450) points out that “idolatry was not merely the practice of worshiping by means of statues and/or pictures as focal points for worship; it was rather an entire, elaborate religious system and lifestyle, all of it running counter to what God desired and desires true worship to be.”

The fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12) makes a clear admonition to honor the living. Deuteronomy 18:9-14 not only clearly forbids ancestor worship as filial piety in Confucianism, but also judges the worship of the dead as necromancy and contacts with evil spirits. God warns Israelites who enter the land of Canaan for the detestable ways of the nations. Detestable ways refer to religious objects within a religious context. Merrill (1994:270) explains, “it is a context in which divination and other occult means of ascertaining the will of the gods and either encouraging or averting its implications are at the forefront.” The medium is a necromancer who initiates communication with the dead. Further, the spiritist is associated with necromancy. He/she who consults the dead is also associated with necromancy. Such practices are detestable before the Lord, and anyone who engages in them would be expelled from the land (Merrill 1994:272). Worshiping the dead or necromancy is detestable before the Lord, because God has not permitted this activity.

Idolatry is contrary to the first and second of the Ten Commandments.

Ancestor worship breaks the first commandment, as declared in Exodus 20:3: “You shall have no other gods before me.” The second commandment relates to the first commandment. God completely prohibits idolatry in Exodus 20:4-6. Verse 4-5a says that “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them.” The Lord promises to the disobedience and obedience in verse 5b-6. If anyone worships idol, the Lord will punish the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation, but if anyone loves and keeps the commandments of God, the Lord shows love to a thousand generations.

The second commandment expands the first. This commandment means that one should not worship anything that is an idol. God prohibits making an idol in the form of anything in heaven above, earth beneath, or waters below, and “nothing from anywhere can be copied and used as an object of veneration” (Stuart 2006:450). God punishes those who disobey, and likewise, the promise remains to those who obey. The idol usually refers to an image made of wood, chiseled out of stone, gold, or silver, depicting some attributes of gods or goddesses (Mackay 2001:344).

The Lord says that no one should bow down or worship them. The tablets of ancestors for ancestor worship are put into the category of idols. The Lord strictly says to the Israelite who comes into the nation, which worships many gods, “Whoever sacrifices to any god other than the Lord must be destroyed”

(Exodus 22:20). If they disobey this commandment not to make any idols, or bow down before them, or worship them, God will punish generation after generation, meaning that “if the children continue to do the sins their parents did, they will receive the same punishments as their parents” (Stuart 2006:454).

In contrast, if they love God and keep his commandments, God will bless a thousand generations. Loving God is “the steadfast loyalty to the covenant relationship that is always realized by the divine partner” (Mackay 2001:347). Thus, when the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the religious leaders rebuked them on the subject of idolatry. In Deuteronomy 4:25-28, God had promised blessings to those who keep his commandments and warned them not to worship other gods.

Numbers 25:1-9 says that God hates worshiping and giving the sacrifices to other gods. While the Israelites were staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality, ate the sacrifices to their gods, and bowed down before their gods. Israel joined in worshiping the Baal of Peor. The Lord’s anger burned against Israelites. God sent a plague against the Israelites, and they died in the plague numbering 24,000.

The Lord’s anger burning against them is not simply because of their sexual immorality. Indulging in sexual immorality is “often used in religious sexual immorality connected with the worship of other gods” (Noordtjij 1983:238).

Sexual deviation was an essential part of that worship. The Lord's anger against Israel is that Israel joined in the worship of the Baal of Peor, the fertility god in Canaan. God strictly prohibits many of the rites connected with his worship (Budd 1984:279). However, Israel joined forces "in the formal cultic ritual with the Moabites and Midianites in the worship of Baal and Beth Peor" (Cole 2000:437).

By engaging in worship practices, they violated the second commandment that one should not bow down to idols or worship them in a cult (Exodus 20:4). The plague against the Israelites was stopped because of the action of Aaron's grandson, Phinehas. He observed that an Israelite man brought to his family a Midianite woman and entered into the tent with her. He took a spear in his hand and followed them, driving the spear through the Israelite and into the woman's body. Then, God stopped the plague against the Israelites (Numbers 25:1-13).

### **5.3.1.2 The Book of the Prophet**

The Old Testament repeatedly espouses the prohibition of making idols and to worship other gods. Through the prophet Zephaniah, the Lord said against Judah, who worshiped other gods in Zephaniah 1:4-6, "I will cut off from this place every remnant of Baal, the names of the pagan and the idolatrous priests—those who bow down on the roofs to worship the starry host, those who bow down and swear by the Lord and who also swear by Molech, those

who turn back from following the Lord and neither seek the Lord nor inquire of him.”

The judgment of God reaches every remnant of Baal, the pagan and idolatrous priest, those who bow down to worship the starry host, those who swear by the Lord and by Molech, and those who turn back from following the Lord, neither seeking the Lord, nor inquiring of him. Zephaniah mentions the judgment of the remnant of Baal that plagued Judah first. Baal was the chief deity of ancient Canaan, and “fascination with Baal had been a prime reason for the fall of the Northern Kingdom” (Patterson 1991:304). A long time after that, God gave the commandments to Israel by Moses to worship no other gods, but the Israelites continued to worship Baal. These verses show that “the list of offenses moves from the obvious worship of other gods to syncretistic worship of Yahweh, to the very heart of the matter, a lack of trust in and ignoring Yahweh” (Bruckner 2004:286).

Further, God said through the prophet Jeremiah, who followed the Lord and also created idols out of wood and stone, “They say to wood, ‘You are my father,’ and to stone, ‘You gave me birth.’ They have turned their backs to me and not their faces; yet when they are in trouble, they say, ‘Come and save us!’” (Jeremiah 2:27). God gives a warning to Israelites who blend their beliefs and practices with that of the dominant culture.

Judah embraced many gods, “at least 258 gods in the pantheon of neighboring Ugarit” (Huey 1993:67), and requested the gods to deliver them from trouble. This verse clearly reveals the Canaanite worship practices. Idols made of wood and stone are worshiped as the gods. According to Mackay (2004:161), “the wood found at Canaanite shrines refers to a wooden pole or Asherah used to represent the female deity, and the stone to a standing stone associated with the male deity.” God rebukes their religious devotion.

Christians hear and confess just like the prophet Jonah confesses his faith to the Lord inside the fish: “Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the Lord” (Jonah 2:8-9). The Old Testament prohibits ancestor worship completely. Furthermore, God hates syncretistic faith and worship.

### **5.3.2 THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The New Testament affirms the teachings of the Old Testament. The New Testament extends the view of idolatry, and condemns every object as idolatry, invisible as well as visible.

Paul evaluates idolaters in Romans 1:22-23 and 25, “Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God

for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. . . . They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised.”

These verses describe “the folly of idolatry that lies at the heart of all religions that are not based on a reverent response to the revelation of the one true God” (Moo 1996:108). Paul affirms that “the typical association between pagan idolatry and sexual license was no accident: the more base the perception of God, the more base the worship and corresponding conduct appropriate to it” (Dunn 1988:63).

Colossians 3:5 says: “Put the death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.” Paul identified five sins in two groups: one is associated with immorality and another is greed, which is idolatry. In summary, Paul identified greed or covetousness as idolatry. Melick (1991:291) points out how idolatry is important in the Pauline perspective:

While writing this list, he seems to have had the Ten Commandments in mind, mentioning most of the last five. Covetousness is number ten. Significantly, number ten equals number one, having no other gods beside God. Although the ten are divided into love for God and love for neighbor, little distinction can be made between the two lists. If number ten, covetousness, is actually a violation of number one, idolatry,

they are all of the same character.

Garland (1998:204) explains how greed becomes idolatry: “Greed refers to the haughty and the ruthless belief that everything, including other persons, exists for one’s own personal amusement and purpose. Essentially it turns our own desires into idols.” Paul demands Colossians not to practice these sins, because they bring the wrath of God, and they are the characters of the former life.

Paul encourages Corinthians to flee from idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14) and not to participate in the sacrifices of pagans: “No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord’s table and the table of demons” (1 Cor. 10:20-21). To flee from idolatry means that Corinthians participate in pagan religious activities. Paul urged Corinthians to flee from idolatry, because several realities exist. Paul gave five realities in 1 Corinthians: Idolatry is dangerous (1 Cor. 10:12); Idolatry is demonic (1 Cor. 10:20); When we take the Lord’s Supper, we are communing with Christ (1 Cor. 10:20); We cannot commune with Christ and demons (1 Cor. 10:16); and We are in relationship with one another (1 Cor. 10:17).

These verses explicitly forbid partaking of the sacrifices of pagans because they have been offered to demons. The sacrifices are different from the

public market meat and food that ordinary people eat at home. Paul expresses one central truth in these verses that “Christian and pagan worship are fundamentally incompatible with each other because of the diametrically opposite spiritual beings worshiped in each setting” (Blomberg 1994:197). Verse 21 reflects the religious syncretism. It points out “the absolute incompatibility of the two actions. One is not merely eating with friends at the pagan temples; one is engaged in idolatry, idolatry that involves the worship of demons” (Fee 1987:473). The Corinthians were drinking the cup of the Lord and also the cup of demons. Paul warns and prohibits mutually sharing at the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

After the Council at Jerusalem, the Apostle Paul sent Judas and Silas with a letter to Gentile believers who were practicing idolatry in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Paul gave instructions to them in Acts 15:28-29, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.” These instructions were a solution of the Jerusalem Council in a controversy by the apostles and elders. The Council prohibits taking food sacrificed to idols. The term, “food sacrificed to idols,” appears in Acts 15:29 and Revelation 2:14, 20, meaning that this action was seriously prevailing in a large segment of the church (Polhill 1992:335). As the same reason as that of the Corinthian church, sacrificed food is not just food. This solution encourages Christians to be willing to submit to the

guidance of the Holy Spirit (Williams 1990:270).

Paul and John encourage Christians to be set free from idols. Paul thanks God that the Thessalonians turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thess 1:9). The Apostle John closes his letter to Christians with encouraging words in 1 John 5:21, “Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.” Revelation 21:8 says that the final destination of idolaters “will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.”

### **5.3.3 IDOLATRY**

Idolatry has been practiced since early human history. Idols and images were used in various ways throughout the ancient world. Joshua 24:2 clarifies that the near ancestors of Abraham worshiped other gods, “Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and worshiped other gods.” The Mesopotamians had as their gods many statues made of a wooden core overlaid with metal and precious stones. The statues were a center of various cult festivals, a part of which was presenting hymns and prayers before these images and statues. The Egyptians made images of the gods to serve as objects of worship and lay the symbol of a god in their temples. The Egyptians had thousands of deities. Ancient Egyptians were polytheistic. Ancient Egyptians served the numerous deities depicting animal form and cosmic deities. The forms of nature—both animate and inanimate— were worshiped as their gods. The Canaanite

nations had many idols which God commanded Israelites to destroy on succeeding to the land. The gods worshiped by Canaanites were particularly dangerous for the Israelites associated with the sexual aspects (Gehman 1970:416).

Halbertal and Margalit (1992:1) address the central question, “What is idolatry and why is it viewed as an unspeakable sin?” The term of Idolatry in the Bible means “the worship of other gods.” The Hebrew term *avodah zarah* is generally translated as “idolatry,” “idol worship” or “false worship.”

Halbertal and Margalit translate (1992:3) *avodah zarah* as “strange worship” and say that “the adjective in ‘strange worship’ possesses two senses. One is the strangeness of the object toward which the worship is directed, not the ‘proper’ God but other gods. The other refers to the method of worship.”

Halbertal and Margalit classify idolatry in two broad categories, the worship of other gods or alien cult (1992:11-23), and misrepresenting or dishonoring God (1992:38-66).

### **5.3.3.1 The Old Testament**

In the Old Testament, idolatry is the worship of gods or images and idols representing the gods and carving from wood, clay, stone, or metal. The gods were considered “as essentially invisible and immortal beings often associated with various natural forces” (Myers 1987:513) at more sophisticated levels of pagan religion. Myers (1987:513) points out that

“pagan sacrificial rites bore a superficial resemblance to the sacrificial system of Israel; they included burnt offerings, food and drink offerings, and incense offerings. Such cultic similarities may have been influential in the Israelites’ frequent lapses into pagan worship, even leading at times to human sacrifice.”

Etymology of words as idol or image in the Old Testament reveals toward idolatry. Tenny (1975:245) refers to five Old Testament words which expressed “the lifelessness and absence of true deity in an idol or image”:

“גלזים” means something that can be rolled about, used in Ezekiel 20:31; “אימים” means trouble, sorrow, used in Isaiah 66:3; “אליל” means weak, nothingness, feeble, used in Leviticus 19:4; “מפלצת” means a horrible thing, a cause of trembling, used in 1 Kings 15:13; and “עצבים” means cause of sorrow, something shaped, used in 1 Samuel 31:9.

The worship of gods or idols was prohibited by the Law. God commanded to prohibit idolatry at the first and second commandments: “You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them” (Exodus 20:3-5a). These commandments prohibited Israelites to bow down to images, sculptures, statues, and pictures. In addition, God promises rewards and curses to those who keep the commandments in vv. 5b-6, “for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and

fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

Deuteronomy 31:16, Judges 2:17 and Hosea 1:2 point out that practicing act of idolatry constitutes a form of spiritual adultery, including both meanings. Idolatry takes place when Israel turns away from God to other gods just as an unfaithful wife turns away from her husband to other men. God calls Israel or his people as the wife and God himself as the husband. The Bible defines unfaithfulness to God as a form of betrayal. Furthermore, treating the gods or demons as if they were the true God is idolatry. The epitome of idolatry in the Bible is shown in Exodus 32, when the Israelites worshiped the golden calf as their god. In combining these two concepts, if one intends the right kind of worship to the wrong god or alien cults, it is considered idolatry, and also when one intends the wrong kind of worship to the true God, it is considered idolatry. In addition, the Old Testament describes sexual immorality as one of the main attractions of idolatry (1 Kings 14:23; and Amos 2:7-8).

Israelites continued to worship the gods which they brought from Egypt and the gods of the Canaanites after they settled down in the Promised Land (Joshua 24:14, 15, 23; Judges 2:11-13, 6:25-32). Samuel declared to the entirety of Israel, “If you are returning to the Lord with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the Lord and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines (1 Sam. 7:3). The statement of Samuel means that Israelites

worshiped the other gods at the time of Samuel. Prophets had struggled against the widespread idolatry that filled the land in the period before the end of the kingdom of Judah (Zeph. 1:2-9; Hab. 2:18-19; Jer. 2:23-25; 1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 23:13; and Ezek. 8:7-16). During the period of the Babylonian captivity, Israelites were forced to worship their gods, and Daniel's three friends refused to worship the idol (Daniel 3). In the postexilic period, the prophets—Malachi, Ezra, and Nehemiah—warned the idolatrous practices that God forbade (Tenney 1975:246-48).

### **5.3.3.2 The New Testament**

The New Testament mentions idolatry less than the Old Testament, but the New Testament extends the concept of the idols in the first and second commandments. The New Testament defines idolatry as the worship of other gods rather than the true God. Idolatry was practiced widely in the pagan world. The Council of Jerusalem refrained from the flesh of animals that was sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:19). Paul gave the same injunction of the concept of idolatry, echoing many Old Testament themes that idolatry is earthly (Col. 3:5; Phil. 3:19) and immoral (1 Cor. 5:10-11); sexual and social disorder follow from it, and it brings judgment and death (Rom. 1:18-32). Idolatry is frequently identified with admonitions against immorality (1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:20; Eph. 5:5; 1 Pet. 4:3; Rev. 21:8). In Acts 15:20, Paul urges Christians to keep away from idols. Early Christians had a problem with eating the meat that was offered to idols. Paul suggests that eating meat sacrificed to idols is

not impure, but rather is a practice that would not build up the body of Christ (Acts 15:29; 1 Corinthians 8, 10:14-30). However, for Paul, “idolatry is only symptomatic of the deeper disease of human alienation from God, and so he speaks figuratively of idolatry as any allegiance to something other than God. In most cases, that allegiance is ultimately to oneself; it is making an idol of oneself and one’s desires (Rom. 1:18-32; Gal. 5:19-21)” (Myers 1987:514). The book of Revelation warns against the danger of idolatry (2:14, 20), affirms the powerlessness of idols (Rev. 9:20), and promises the exaltation of those who reject worshiping the beast or his image (Rev. 20:4).

#### **5.4 SUMMARY**

In Confucianism, ancestor worship is the practice of making offerings to the dead spirits and the communication with them through rituals. Ancestor worship is the expression of filial piety toward the dead parents, and ancestor worship underlines the continuation of filial piety in Confucianism. On the other hand, the Bible teaches that ancestor worship is to worship the gods which is an action against God and, in addition, ancestor worship is idolatry.

## CHAPTER 6

### PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS OF FILIAL PIETY AND ANCESTOR WORSHIP

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Among Asian countries that are under the influence of Confucianism, ancestor worship not only has been accepted and customized as a culture, but also has been considered to be filial piety. Korean people especially think that ancestor worship is a very important expression of filial piety to the dead parents, and is one which they practice regularly during festive days. Furthermore, in Korea, Roman Catholics accept and practice ancestor worship, and Korean non-Christians consider Roman Catholicism to be the same religion as Protestant Christianity. Thus, Korean Protestant Christians are severely in conflict and struggle with non-Christians who are under the influence of Confucian ancestor worship.

Then, should Christians attempt to resolve this issue without compromise in the circumstance of the acceptance of ancestor worship as a culture meant as a filial piety by Koreans? In this chapter, I will present the proper practical theological applications for Korean Christians to practice, based on the knowledge which I have researched in the first three movements of fundamental practical theology proposed by Browning, show previously in chapters one to five.

Browning (1996:7) proposes that “theology can be practical and moves from practice to theory and back to practice.” As mentioned in chapter one, Browning divides fundamental practical theology into four movements of descriptive theology, historical theology, systematic theology, and strategic practical theology. The first three movements assist how to move practice to theory, and the fourth movement assists how to return to practice and move forward to the future with new formulations. Browning (1996:9) emphasizes that these four movements are composed of “theological reflection in practical religious activities.” The first three movements of fundamental practical theology merge in strategic practical theology for new meanings and practices (Browning 1996:57).

I have applied the first three movements through chapters one to five, to move from practice to theory by giving questions like Browning. Browning starts explaining with questions to guide each movement as follows: For descriptive theology, “what reasons, ideals, and symbols do we use to interpret what we are doing? (Browning 1996:48).” For historical theology, “what do the normative texts that are already part of our effective history really imply for our praxis when they are confronted as honestly as possible? (Browning 1996:49).” Two questions for systematic theology are: “What new horizon of meaning is fused when questions from present practices are brought to the central Christian witness? And what reasons can be advanced to support the validity claims of this new fusion of meaning?” (Browning

1996:51-52).

This chapter reveals the ways of practical theological applications of filial piety and ancestor worship by applying the fourth movement, strategic practical theology, which is “the church disciplines of religious education, pastoral care, preaching, liturgy, and social ministries, and so forth (Browning 1996:8).” As Browning gives four basic questions to guide strategic practical theological thinking quoted in chapter one, this chapter is going to move from revealed knowledge to practical theological applications in the church disciplines of Christian education, Christian life, biblical filial piety, and a new formulation of the Christian memorial service.

The following questions guide Korean Christians to identifying ways of practical theological applications: Does Confucian filial piety and ancestor worship have any good practical and theological elements that can be accepted and applied to the Christian life? What are the elements with which Christianity disagrees and contradicts practically and theologically with Confucian filial piety and ancestor worship? How can preachers teach practically and theologically the real and biblical filial piety toward living parents beyond a praxis of Confucian filial piety and ancestor worship in Korean society? How do preachers create an acceptable method of substitution for Confucian filial piety and ancestor worship which create conflict and controversy among Korean people?

## **6.2 TWO DIMENSIONS OF ANCESTOR WORSHIP AS FILIAL PIETY IN CONFUCIANISM**

After researching, I now set forth the reason Christians reject, and the Bible prohibits, ancestor worship, which Confucianism accepts as an expression of filial piety as shown throughout this thesis. Filial piety is emphasized in both Confucianism and Christianity, but understanding and accepting ancestor worship is in opposition within the two religions. Even so, the teachings of Confucianism are not to be entirely wrong or bad. Although almost all Korean Christians are not accepting of ancestor worship, Confucianism possesses some good elements that can be applied to our lives. Two dimensions of ancestor worship as filial piety exist—positive and negative. I propose three elements in each dimension. These may help Christians who are struggling with non-Christian family members because of ancestor worship to make peace with family members and to share the love of God.

### **6.2.1 THE ELEMENTS THAT CHRISTIANS ARE UNABLE TO ACCEPT IN THE TEACHINGS OF CONFUCIANISM ON ANCESTOR WORSHIP AS FILIAL PIETY IN CONFUCIANISM**

First, Christians do not accept that the spirits of dead parents have the power to bless and curse their descendants. Rather, Christians believe that only one God exists, and it is he whom we worship; worshipping other gods is idolatry. Exodus 20:3-5 say, “You shall have no other gods before me. You

shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate.” Furthermore Christians believe that God is the Lord and no other god exists. The Lord declares, “I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things” (Isaiah 45:5-7).

Second, Christians are unaccepting of considering dead parents as reconcilers between gods and people or descendants. Rather, Christians believe that they have only one reconciler, Jesus Christ, between God and people. The dead exist in a totally different earthly existence and have no power in the world. Acts 4:12 says clearly that “salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Third, Christians are unaccepting of the spirit of dead parents making communication with living family members or descendants. Ancestors cannot fulfill the intermediary role reserved for the Holy Spirit. Rather, Christians believe if anyone makes communication with spiritual beings, including dead

parents—except angels from God, he/she is defiled by them. Leviticus 19:31 says, “Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.” Deuteronomy 18:10-12 warns, “Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you.”

### **6.2.2 THE ELEMENTS OF CONFUCIANISM ON THE TEACHINGS OF ANCESTOR WORSHIP AS FILIAL PIETY THAT CHRISTIANS MAY EMBRACE**

First, filial piety for living parents: Filial piety is not only the highest virtue of Confucianism, but also a strong commandment of God. Christians reject ancestor worship, but they do not reject the deed of filial piety for living parents.

Second, memory of dead parents: Confucians believe that when they practice ancestor worship, the spirits of dead ancestors descend on the place to eat the food on the table prepared by their families. Preparing food and drinks on their memorial day is good, but it is for living family members—not for the dead ancestors. The basic mind and purpose of a memorial service in

Christianity is for honoring and memorializing ancestors. Memorializing ancestors' teachings, along with loving and caring ways, is a good way to make peace with family members without losing the mind and purpose of ancestor worship. Christians memorialize their lives and give thanks for their love. They were those loved ones whom God sent as our ancestors.

Third, visit the ancestors' graves: Christians may receive positive benefits from visiting ancestral graves with family members for the purpose of remembering the hope of resurrection. Christians, however, do not need to bring food and drinks for the dead persons or bow down to the graves.

### **6.3 APPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATING HARMONY AMONG FAMILY MEMBERS WITH REGARD TO FILIAL PIETY AND ANCESTOR WORSHIP**

My research, ministry, counseling, and interviews have confirmed that many Korean parents and Christians attempt to escape conflicts among family members and their children due to ancestor worship at the present time. Korean Christians attempt to identify ways to resolve family conflicts and matters due to ancestor worship among non-Christian family members. According to Ryoo's (2000:152) survey, 11 percent of Korean Christians responded that Confucian ancestor worship and Christian memorial service should be merged, 45 percent responded they should strive for merging, and 42 percent responded that they absolutely should not merge, revealing that,

although many attempt to reduce family conflicts due to ancestor worship, they do not possess a perfect solution, and the matter of ancestor worship still creates problems among family members. Thus, my practical theological applications and suggestions may be limited, but still may present good ideas to nonbelievers on how to escape and reduce conflicts due to ancestor worship among family members and to Christians on how to apply biblical filial piety and plan a Christian memorial service for the purpose of creating harmony with non-Christian family members.

### **6.3.1 COUNSELING AND INTERVIEWS**

Through counseling and interviews, I discovered that many Koreans have attempted various ways of resolving conflicts among family members due to ancestor worship. They use the typical means to reduce the times of ancestor worship, to make simple preparation for ancestor worship, and to buy foods at the store for ancestor worship. This tendency is to reveal that many Koreans desire to remember and keep the real meaning of filial piety instead of practicing ancestor worship as an expression of filial piety.

Three examples demonstrate how they attempt to keep the real meaning of filial piety without practicing Confucian ancestor worship and to reduce family conflicts due to ancestor worship. The first two are non-Christians, and the third is Christian as follows:

This is the first example. As the only son, Mr. Joo (age 55) has been responsible for all dead ancestors' memorial rituals, and has prepared for ancestor worship at least once a month. When his son married two years ago, his wife was very happy that she was expected to be set free from the preparation of ancestor worship, but Mr. Joo worried about his daughter-in-law, because she was weak and had a job. Thus, he feared that preparing for many ancestor rituals would be too heavy a responsibility for her. At the first ancestor worship day, his daughter-in-law bled from her nose. After this happened, Mr. Joo had a family meeting for discussing ancestor worship. Then, his family made the decision to reduce the kinds of foods served, and further that they would buy some foods from the store. Mr. Joo said that outward appearance is unimportant, but rather it is more important that they remember and keep the meaning of ancestor worship as an expression of filial piety.

This is the second example. Mrs. J Choi (age 65) lived separately from her son's family. Eight times a year, she prepared for ancestor worship, and her daughter-in-law traveled to her mother-in-law's house to help her prepare for ancestor worship every time. Jennifer thanked her daughter-in-law for serving her well every time, although she herself had a job and was busy caring for her children. However, she changed her mind regarding ancestor worship, because she knew that her young daughter-in-law preparing for ancestor worship caused her to have a heavy heart. Thus, Jennifer decided to reduce the kinds of foods served and to order some foods from the market.

Even though the younger generation thinks that practicing ancestor worship for dead ancestors is important, they feel that serving living parents is more important. In fact, many young Koreans tend to exhibit awkwardness with regard to ancestor worship. The foods and fruits on the offering table should be arranged in a particular order, but it is a current problem, because many young Koreans do not know the order.

This is the third example. Mr. M C Park (age 62), his wife, and mother are Christians, but the head of his family (Jakeunabuji—younger brother of his father) is not a Christian. After his father passed away, family members gathered to discuss the memorial rites—whether to do a Christian service or practice Confucian rites. Then, the head of the family understood the position of Christian family members gave approval that their family does not need to follow Confucian rites, and that a Christian memorial service with some words would not matter as long as it is in keeping with the real meaning of filial piety. He felt that was more important than performing Confucian ancestor worship; the primary ideal of ancestor worship is filial piety directed toward the dead forefathers, remembering the love and grace of the dead parents and uniting family members. The form of the memorial service does not matter—either Confucian or Christian style is acceptable if family members meet together in happiness, remembering the meaning of filial piety, and extolling their favor. Thus, Mr. Park followed a specific order, referred to as Choodoyeebae, as suggested below for a Christian memorial

service for the family members. This service was successful in satisfying the entire family.

### **6.3.2 TWO CATEGORIES FOR THE PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL APPLICATION OF BIBLICAL FILIAL PIETY TOWARD THE LIVING PARENTS**

The Bible emphasizes filial piety which should be practiced by children in various ways. Botterweck (1995:16) reveals that the word “honor” or “respect” in Hebrew “כבוד–*kabod*” occurs 114 times in the Old Testament as the verb forms, and the piel form occurs 38 times in relation to filial piety. Jesus emphasizes the importance of filial piety more than the emphasis of the Old Testament in the four Gospels. The distinction of the teaching of Jesus about filial piety is that filial piety is not just words, but rather refers to performing their responsibility to their parents, and filial piety is not an ideal, but rather a practical principle for children. Paul expands the meaning of filial piety in that fulfilling their obligation to their parents is pleasing to God as a part of fulfilling their obligation to God in Ephesians 6:2; 1 Timothy 5:3-4; Colossians 3:20; and Acts 28:10. These passages were explained in chapter four.

Chang (1975:839) proposes to possess a positive attitude of showing filial piety to modern Christians: “Filial piety is the root of all virtues. It only commences with the respect of parents; it should be culminated in the fear of

the Lord, our Father in heaven.” Additionally, Chang (1975:839) encourages Christians to practice biblical filial piety that “faith in God is not in contradiction with, but is rather the ultimate fulfillment of true piety in its fullest sense. Strictly speaking, only a Christian can really know and practice filial piety.”

Two categories exist with which to practice biblical filial piety to living parents. One is the active principle, while another is the passive principle. I suggest to Christians each of the ten fundamental principles of both as practical theological applications from the passages of the Old and New Testaments.

Active ten principles to practice filial piety toward the living parents are as follows: (1) support them on adversities (Gen. 47:12; Ruth 1:16-17; John 19:27); (2) respect them (Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; Eph. 6:2); (3) listen to their instructions (Prov. 4:1, 4:13, 6:20-23, 15:5); (4) become proud of them (Prov. 10:1, 15:20, 23:24); (5) bring joy and happiness to them (Prov. 23:25; 3 John 1:4); (6) honor them with both word and action (Matt. 21:28-31; Luke 2:51); (7) confess and restart when sinning against them (Luke 15:18-20a); (8) thank them for living under their supervision (Luke 15:28-32); (9) obey them in the Lord (Eph. 6:1); and (10) succeed to a legacy of their faith (2 Tim. 1:5, 3:15).

The passive ten principles of filial piety to practice toward living parents are as follows: (1) do not reveal their weak points (Gen. 9:18-27); (2) do not

deceive them like Jacob (Gen. 27:1-29); (3) do not curse them (Exod. 21:17; Lev. 20:9) (4) do not disgrace their names and family by entering into evil conduct (1 Sam. 8:1-3); (5) do not revolt against them (2 Sam. 15:1-6); (6) do not have rancor toward them when they forsake us (Psa. 27:10; Isa. 49:15); (7) do not forget their precepts (Prov. 4:6); (8) do not cause them anxiety and uneasiness (Prov. 17:25); (9) do not despise them when they are old (Prov. 23:22); and (10) do not steal from their possessions (Prov. 28:24).

To practice biblical filial piety toward one's living parents instead of rejecting ancestor worship as an expression of filial piety to the dead parents in Confucianism, I propose the five practical applications to Korean Christians: (1) loving God (Deut. 6:5); (2) honoring parents and elders (Exod. 20:12); (3) loving family (1 Tim. 5:8); (4) loving nation (Rom. 9:1-5); (5) loving neighbor and humankind (Matt. 22:39). In order for biblical filial piety in Korean society to take root in, Korean Christians continually demonstrate these biblical teachings of the Old and New Testaments to their living parents and to nonbelievers.

### **6.3.3 CHRISTIAN MEMORIAL SERVICE AS A SOLUTION**

According to Ryoo's (2000:152) survey, although many attempt to reduce family conflicts due to ancestor worship, they do not find a perfect solution, and it still creates problems among family members. As the Bible teaches that filial piety is to be directed toward living parents, Christians need to

practice biblical filial piety as a solution to achieving mutual peace beyond a sense of incongruity of religious ideals and conflicts between regions, generations, or social classes in Korean society.

Many Korean churches are currently practicing a Christian memorial service as biblical filial piety to substitute ancestor worship as filial piety in Confucianism and also Korean churches use several different forms and elements to practice a Christian memorial service. Among them, I adopt and integrate forms and elements from Ryoo's (2000:206-08) suggestions into the forms and elements which I have practiced in my ministry at the church. The Christian memorial service is not a new proposal, but my suggestion is a form to foster intentional peace and harmony with Christians and non-Christians. My experience has been that nonbelievers participate well in this service without exhibiting symptoms of rejection.

To transplant a Christian memorial service into Korean society, Christian family members should be thoroughly prepared. I suggest four steps for a Christian memorial service. The first step is the intimate preparation. The participant prepares a photograph of the deceased. The photograph is placed on the table or on a high place which allows everyone in the room to view it. A family member may draft a short biography of the deceased or recount an anecdotal story about the deceased. The family of the deceased and those who attend the memorial service must wear simple clothes. This is an essential attitude in order to separate from the ostentation of the typical

ancestor worship. Either the preacher or Christian family member prepares an insightful message about filial piety or perfect mutual harmony. This provides an opportunity to share the Gospel with nonbelievers.

The second step is to choose an appropriate time and place for the memorial service. The family member's home, a cemetery, or a churchyard can all be appropriate venues. The convenient time may be selected for all those who would like to attend. Confucian ancestor worship demands a specific time at 12:00 a.m., because it is the best time for the souls of the dead ancestors to return to the home, but Christian memorial services do not dictate any specific time and place.

The third step is to make an arrangement of the seats according to Korean manner and custom. The seating arrangement is usually done according to the degree of kinship. In other words, those who were closely related to the deceased will be placed toward the front together with any persons who perform parts of the program, such as the prayer and person delivering the memorial address.

The fourth step is to proceed with a service as arranged. The following program outline is the suggested structure of a Christian memorial service.

1. The presider gives an opening address something to the effect that we will now commence a memorial service for the beloved Mr. or Mrs.
2. Confession of faith with the Apostles' Creed

3. Chanting of hymns. Choosing hymns should be given thoughtful consideration with regard for nonbelievers. This means the preparation of copies or easy hymns which nonbelievers can hear once, such as “Amazing Grace” and “Nearer my God to Thee.”
4. Prayer for the service by a person who is designated among family members or church leaders if possible.
5. Reading of Scriptures by the presider.
6. Sermon by the presider or pastor.
7. Prayer by the presider or pastor.
8. Reading of memorial writing, which is the last injunction of the deceased or a tribute to the memory of the deceased by a family member or a designated person.
9. Chanting of hymns. If the deceased was a Christian, all the participants sing a favorite hymn of the deceased. Otherwise, they can sing any other appropriate hymn.
10. Benediction by the pastor. If no pastor is present, the service is concluded with the Lord’s Prayer.

After the conclusion of the service, if any non-Christian members or Catholics desire to bow down to the deceased picture, allow them the opportunity whether or not it is an acceptable element, because this bow holds a different meaning from that of the Confucian rite. Rather, this bow represents respect and honor to the dead parents. Then, all the participants mutually share the

food which has been prepared by the family and partake of fraternal communion in the name of God.

My suggestion as a practical application is not meant as a compromise with Confucian ancestor worship. If that were the case, Korean churches would continually confront the challenges of Confucian ancestor worship. Rather, I propose that emphasis should be placed on filial piety, but syncretism should be avoided in these matters.

Ancestor worship is practiced around the world today, but where Confucian ancestor worship creates conflict among the Korean people is where Confucianism teaches that “ancestor worship is the result of extending filial piety to the dead” (Paik 1929:21). The context of countries under the influence of Confucianism is very different from that of other countries. Thus, Korean churches attempt to contextualize this matter for creating harmony in keeping clear of compromise and syncretism. For attempting contextualization, the preachers should remember that “the Bible must be the final authority in the contextualization process and not merely a partner, or a subservient source in the development of human ideologies or syncretistic doctrines” (Sanchez 1996:332). A very helpful principle to Korean Christianity for observing ancestor worship and filial piety is that culture and cultural factors should be evaluated by Scriptures. At the same time, the preachers need to recognize a warning of contextualization that “syncretism needs to be avoided in the process of local theological reflection. The starting point,

perhaps, needs to be the recognition that contextualization can result in syncretism” (Sanchez 1996:332).

To avoid the syncretistic problem of ancestor worship as a deed of filial piety in Confucianism, Korean Christians should have a Christ-centered faith in the Word of God; Korean Christians need to identify creative ways to honor living parents; Korean Christians perform the memory of their dead parents without compromising and syncretism by worshiping creatures other than God alone; and Korean Christians apply the teachings of the Bible to the church, ministry, and personal lives without compromise. Thus, Korean Christians should be free from the severe criticism from non-Christians that Christianity is a religion that does not teach filial piety.

#### **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

During the research process, I have found that many Korean Christians hesitate to deal with the matter of Confucian ancestor worship, which has been firm in Korean society as a traditional custom for over six hundred years. Especially, I could locate hardly any studies concerning the relationship between Confucian filial piety and Confucian ancestor worship. Thus, I have researched many materials which aid people’s understanding of the teachings of Confucianism and the Bible about filial piety and ancestor worship in relation to this thesis. Additionally, I suggest some ways as practical theological applications to reconcile family conflicts due to ancestor

worship. Ancestor worship is currently practiced in various forms around the world, but the essence and practice of Confucian ancestor worship is not the same in Africa, Oceania, Latin America, and North America. Confucian ancestor worship especially is a significant problem for Christians in the Eastern Asian countries like China, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea, which are under the influence of Confucianism. Because the issue of ancestor worship in Korea is related to Confucian ancestor worship, I have researched the influence of Confucian ancestor worship in these Asian countries.

Consequently, I did not deal with other continents. Therefore, I present for further study that a researcher investigates a different phase of ancestor worship and filial piety between the Asian continent and other continents in practical areas and develop creative ways to practice biblical filial piety rather than through ancestor worship.

## **6.5 SUMMARY**

As Son (1988:61) describes the history of ancestor worship in Korea as the “shedding of blood,” both the early Korean Roman Catholic Church and the early Korean Protestant Church shed much blood due to the matter of ancestor worship, which I mentioned in chapter two. Confucian ancestor worship is currently not a popular or joyful subject for preachers who are ministers in countries like China, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea that have adapted as a culture and as a social custom to be under the influence of Confucianism.

To resolve the conflict and the matter of Confucian ancestor worship, and to practice biblical filial piety in Korean society, preachers should be standing at the center of the reconciliation and the education. Robinson (1980:77) points out that “the expositor must also be aware of the currents swirling across his own times, for each generation develops out of its own history and culture and speaks its own language.” To teach and to proclaim a clear message wisely, preachers study the difficulties and conflicts which their audiences confront as well as the Bible in contemporary times and grasp the correct meaning of ancestor worship and filial piety of both Confucianism and Christianity. Robinson (1980:77) emphasizes that if preachers “ignore the life-wrenching problems and questions of his hearers,” the messages become powerless and dead.

Preachers are concerned with both the Bible and the needs of their audiences for guiding, protecting, and saving them as Jesus says in John 10 that a good shepherd knows his flock. As Reu (1967:129) points out, “preaching is fundamentally a part of the care of souls, and the care of souls involves a thorough understanding of the congregation.” Their messages are based on the Bible and need to relate to the situations of their audiences and cultures in order to gain lost souls. As Kaiser (Shaddix & Vines 1999:20) defines preaching as “the biblical emphasis on the practical application of God’s Word to the lives of contemporary listeners,” preachers have a sense of obligation for teaching and preaching correct truth to their congregations

and guide them to apply the truth of the Bible to their lives. Preachers inquire continually how to make an effort to aid biblical filial piety taking root in Korean society as a traditional Korean heritage. This is a possible future assignment.