

**A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TIME OF
THE BELGIC CONFESSION AND THE KOREAN
CHURCH (WITH REFERENCE TO
MARTYRDOM AND PERSECUTION)**

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Summary

This study presents a comparative approach between the time of the Belgic Confession and of the Korean Church under Japanese rule. Both the early Low Countries and Korea received Protestantism through martyrdom and persecution.

During the sixteen century the Low Countries were under the Spanish rule. The Low Countries were deeply influenced by the Reformation. Many historians have noted that the people in the Low Countries suffered persecutions on the basis of their nationality and religious beliefs by the Roman Catholic Church and the Spanish government. The heroes of the Low Countries were William of Orange, the political leader of his native country, and Guido de Bres a religious leader. William of Orange, and his son, Maurice of Orange, accomplished their country's political independence with outstanding leadership. Guido de Bres was a travelling preacher who preached the gospel in the Low Countries. He drafted the Belgic Confession. It is authorized as one of the most wonderful Reformed confessions.

Korea received the gospel through the Western missionary R. J. Thmoas. Korea was under Japanese rule since the end of the nineteen century. Korean Christianity helped the Korean people when the Koreans were oppressed. From the late 1920s, the Japanese forced Koreans in Shinto Shrine Worship. Shinto Shrine Worship was the worship of the King of Japan. The Korean people could not accept Shinto Shrine Worship. Korean Christians judged Shinto Shrine Worship to be idol worship and opposed it. However, Korean Protestants abandoned their faith, due to the Japanese'

threat of military power. Some pastors resisted Shinto Shrine Worship. Pastor Joo Ki-Chul was a leader of the resistance and died for his faith.

There are similarities and differences between the struggle of the Low Countries and Korea. Both the early Low Countries and early Korean Church produced spiritual martyrs like Guido de Bres and Joo Ki-Chul. They were martyrs, patriots and preachers. In both countries Christians faced horrible persecutions by the ruling tyrants. But while the Low Countries struggled for their independence to the end, most Korean Christians had to desert their faith in the face of continued pressure from the Japanese. In spite of this some Korean Christians remained strong till the bitter end.

The Low Countries' religious persecution came to an end, but North Korea's Christians are still suffering under the communist regime. In spite of terrible persecution by the communist government, there are many Christians in underground churches who long for religious and political freedom.

Key terms: Belgic Confession, Guido de Bres, Joo Ki-Chul, Low Countries, Spain, John Calvin, William of Orange, Korean Church, North Korean underground church, Japan, Shinto Shrine Worship.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1. Problem statement

Following its arrival in the Korea peninsula in the late nineteenth century, Protestantism grew rapidly to be a formidable social force. The membership of the Protestant denominations developed to one quarter of the total population of South Korea within one century.

Underlying the remarkable growth of the new religion from the West was a new spirit of reform among feelings of frustration with the encroachment of Japan. Therefore during the early Japanese colonial period, the Protestant church grew rapidly to become the largest organized community of the colonized Koreans, as many frustrated Koreans joined the church to seek spiritual solace and an organizational base for their nationalist activity. In particular, during this period the church came to serve as a social and political community of Koreans, and the Japanese colonial government considered the religious community to be busy with anti-Japanese activities. The more the colonial government suppressed the Protestant Church, the more Koreans joined it, and the more influenced it had on Koreans.

After the liberation from Japan in 1945, church growth accelerated. Following the Korean War, along with the social and political unrest accompanying rapid economic growth and urbanization in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, the congregations continued to grow.¹ The growth of Protestantism in Korea has been

¹ Korean Overseas Culture and Information Service, *A handbook of Korea*, (1998) p.224.

historical phenomenon resulting from the many factors. The church's growth meant the expansion of membership as well as the enlargement of its influence in Korea. However, on account of industrialization, mega churches, mammonism, and the corrupt relationship between politics and the churches, the Korean church is blamed by non Christians. Prof. Park said:

The relationship between the Protestant community and this authoritarian regime was an amicable one that has generally been ignored by scholars. Several intriguing questions remain unanswered: Why did the Protestant church consistently support the regime? What specific form did this support take, and what in particular did the church support? Did the church undergo any change, politically or historically, by supporting his regime? These questions will be addressed by considering what brought the Protestant church into a leadership position in South Korea politics and society.²

Christians of today are characterized by an attitude of "Laziness" in the faith. It seems as if Christians keep their faith in times of persecution, and desert it in times of peace. To address this problem, a comparative approach to the analysis of the times of the Belgic Confession and the early Korean church could be illuminating. There are several points of similarity between these two events in history. In the Low Countries many Christians were martyred on account of the public confession of their faith under the Spanish regime.³ Since then the European Protestant church obtained and has maintained the Pax Christiana. Likewise, many early Korean Christians were killed under Japanese Imperialism, Confucianism and Shintoism for their beliefs, but has since enjoyed the Pax Christiana and in South Korea.

² Chung-Shin Park, *Protestantism and politics in Korea*, (University of Washington press, 2003), p.174.

³ T.C. Grattan, *History of the Netherlands*, (Longman, 1830), p.130.

At present religious persecution is not the problem of the church in South Korea, but the tendency among Christians to desert their faith in favor of secularization and pluralism. While Europeans are attracted to new religions such as Islam, Buddhism and other oriental religions,⁴ Koreans turn to exorcism and superstition. This is not just a corrupted religion, it signifies Christianity's doom. Whereas medieval and earlier Christians at least held the title of Christian and confessed their faith publicly, Christians these days rather hide or deny the fact that they are Christians.

This is not a fight with liberalism. It is a battle between Christianity and unbelief, between truth and superstition. What is the reason for this? Is it just the result of mammonism? Or does time erode Christianity naturally? The reason for these new tendencies is probably a complex, spiritual issue. Therefore, the theme of this research will be the link between spiritual maturity in times of trial in the church, and spiritual depravity in times of peace for the church. These paradoxes will be researched in the context of the time of the Belgic Confession and the persecution of the early Korean church.

2. The purpose of this study

As I have already mentioned, in many countries churches are encountering serious problems. European Churches are encountering lots of difficulties due to the secularization of religion⁵ and the Intrusion of Islam.

The Korean church is also experiencing difficult problems. The Korean Church

⁴ Frank Whaling ed., *Religion in today's world: the religious situation of the world from 1945 to the present age*, (T&T Clark, 1987), p.34.

⁵ Jakob Balling, *the story of Christianity: from birth to global presence*, (WM. B. Eerdmans, 2003), p.242.

has been seriously criticized by the Korean people because of its aggressive mission to Afghanistan.⁶ The patrimony of the families of mega churches and the commercialization of mega churches has also been criticized by the people. Pastors are for example sometimes called predators and Christianity as the religion of the “dog”.⁷ Even though many pastors keep their faith and devote their lives to Christ and the Korean society.

Sometimes non-Christians in Korea ridicule Christianity and hope for its disappearance from society. The Korean media sometimes show Christianity as covetous and selfish religion which blinds with avarice. In short, the Korean Protestant Church is encountering a total crisis. It is in the same situation as the Roman Catholic Church before the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The Roman Catholic Church became a laughingstock in the book of Erasmus, “Encomium Moriae (Laus Stultitiae)”.⁸

In this respect and in the similar dilemma of the Korean church the thoughts and theology of the churches of the Belgic Confession that risked their lives for their faith and of the Korean church that played an important role under the Japanese colonialism could be a guide to be studied. History gives an indication of how to solve our problems through reflection on the past, and it cultivates a critical mind.

⁶ South Korea’s Saemul community church was behind the volunteer project that sent 23 of its South Korean missionaries to Afghanistan, where they were later abducted on a road to Kabul on July 20, 2007. One of the members, Bae Hyung-Kyu, a Christian pastor who was the leader of the group, was killed by Talleban. The Saemmul church was criticized for having a naive evangelical worldview and knowingly sending a group of mostly young, overzealous Christians believers to obvious danger zone in spite of South Korea Government’s constant warning. As a result, South Korea’s government had to pay a huge amount ransom for them.

⁷ Christian Today, 2006. 1. 13.

⁸ Originally it was published in 1511; cf. Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*. Second Edition, tr. Miller Clarence, (Yale Nota Bene, 2003)

Thus, this study could give direction to Korean Christians who are going aimlessly astray and it will suggest an important alternative idea. This is the purpose of this study.

In addition, the characteristic of this study is an attempt to compare the Western Church with the Korean Church on the theme of Martyrdom. In Church history many countries have conducted researches vivaciously into the history of martyrdom, but only in rare cases the comparison has been made on the history of martyrdom between western church and Korean Church. However the studies on Westminster Confession and Heidelberg Catechism have been conducted lively. It is however, very difficult to find a study on the background and value of Belgic Confession. This study takes a unique approach on martyrdom by comparing the European church with the Korean church.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection

In this paper, the data considered derives from literature study, journals, personal interviews, and internet websites. These sources of information were critically analyzed in order to substantiate the arguments raised in this paper. Primary and secondary sources and other sources were used in this paper.

The letters from of Guido de Bres plays a critical role in presenting a realistic picture of what had transpired during his time. Letters that he had written to friends and family members, as well as to the church was considered as a valuable contribution to this paper. A book on contemporary Protestant theology by Martin Bucer (1491-1551) provides a clear study on the issues and challenges of the time. Books by

John Calvin (1509-1564), have formed the basis of the protestant literature. Books about the history of the Netherlands forms an important and integral part of the paper

Furthermore, letters written by Korean martyrs especially those written by Pastor Joo Ki-Chul is an important source of reference for this paper. These letters together with writings by other martyrs will be considered. Another important primary source is the testimonies from An I-Sook. An I-Sook's testimonies are of particular importance because of the terrible circumstances which they both suffered in prison.

Pastor Kim Ha-Chul's (nick name)⁹ testimonies about North Korea regime will be considered as an important primary source with regard to his works in that country. He has been help to many refugees who have escaped from North Korea for their political and religious freedom. The son of Kim Il-Sung¹⁰'s, Pastor Kim Chang-Il's testimony will also be considered. He was exiled from North Korea for his religious belief. All the above primary sources were considered in this paper.

3.2 Data analysis

The method of this study will be to carry out a historical an investigation on a comparative basis. At this point the main focus will be to compare the characteristics of the time of the Belgic Confession and of the Early Korean Church, capturing in the core an evaluation of its importance for this paper. An attempt will be made at identifying the similarities and differences and drawing a meaningful conclusion from the two periods. This will form to a large extent an integral basis for this argument. The study will further expand on this point the importance of the days of struggle in encouraging Christians of today.

⁹ His real name cannot be used due to his security status in China.

¹⁰ He was North Korean dictator who ruled from 1945 to 1994.

4. The period covered by this thesis

Firstly, the history of the Low Countries' persecution for their faith will be studied, beginning from 1523. Then it will deal with the main events, the pacification of Ghent (1576), the declaration of independence (1581), and the truce between Spain and the Netherlands (1608). It will be called 'the period of the long walk to freedom.' The draft of the Belgic Confession (1561), its authorization at the conference of Wesel (1568), the synod of Emden (1571), and the great synod of Dort (1618-1619) will be discussed.

Secondly, the 's history since its inception in 1866 up to the present will be considered, focusing on its persecution under Japanese rule from 1910-1945 and after that North Korea Christians' suffering under the communists. It will be called 'the period of the persecution of the Korean church.'

5. Chapter outline

Firstly, Chapter one will be an introduction. Chapter two will deal with the characteristics of the time of the Belgic Confession (The historical background of the confession, its authors and its influence on the history of the church). Chapter three will investigate the Korean church under the Japanese colonialism (the reaction of pastor Joo Ki-Chul and representatives of the Korean churches against Shinto Shrine Worship). Chapter four will show the true conditions of the underground church in North Korea and their faith. Chapter five will compare the characteristics of the time of the Belgic Confession and of the early Korean church with an evaluation of its significance. Lastly, the conclusion of this thesis will have suggestions and the application of it for the present day church in Korean.

6. Definition of the key words

The Greek word *martyr* and related terms mean ‘witness.’¹¹ In the New Testament the word appears quite frequently with the generic meaning of one who testifies to facts. But in Luke and Acts it takes on the more specific meaning of those who bear witness to the deeds of Jesus in their experience. Jesus said, ‘You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon and you will be my witness in Jerusalem...’¹² By the second century the term ‘martyr’ slowly took on the special meaning of one who died or suffered for the public confession of the Christian faith.¹³

In addition to that, the Wycliffe dictionary of theology defined the word persecution as: the systematic attempt to suppress or to exterminate Christianity by social pressure to the point of violence.¹⁴ This study will explore these terms by researching the history of the Low Countries, Korea’s history and religious experience. Lastly, chapter 6 will be the conclusion to this study.

¹¹ F.L. Cross ed., *the Oxford dictionary of the Christian church*, (Oxford university press, 1997), p.1046.

¹² Acts 1:8.

¹³ Alan Richardson & John Bowden ed., *A new dictionary of Christian theology*, (Scm press ltd, 1983), p.348.

¹⁴ Everett F. Harrison, Geoffrey W. Bromiley & Carl F. Henry ed., *Wycliffe dictionary of theology*, (Hendrickson publishers, 1999), p.403.

Chapter 2. The Belgic Confession and its historical background

2.1 The historical background of the Low Countries' revolution and its Reformation

Key figures 1.

King Charles V	1500-1558	Emperor
King Philip II	1527-1598	Emperor
Margaret	1522-1586	Governor
Bishop Granvelle	1517-1586	Priest
William of Orange	1533-1584	Politician
The duke of Alva	1507-1582	Governor
Requesens	1528-1576	Governor
Maurice of Nassau	1567-1625	Politician

2.1.1 The revolution of the Low Countries

In the Low countries Protestantism gained adherents as early as 1540s. From that time onwards there are clear indications that Protestantism made progress in a variety of areas. R. Tudor Jones noted the beginning of Protestantism in Low Countries:

In 1540 the Pole, John a Lasco (1499-1560), started work as pastor at Emden in East Friesland. Three years later he became superintendent of the churches in the

territory of Countess Anna of Oldenburg, the patroness of Anabaptists and other radicals, and introduced a form of organization which had affinities with the Reformed pattern. This impressed the many refugees who had sought a haven in East Friesland. Calvin soon showed a highly personal interest in these developments. His successor at Strasbourg, Pierre Brully, migrated to Valenciennes and Tournai and exercised a fruitful ministry which culminated in his martyrdom on 19 February 1545. Streams of young men flowed to Geneva to be instructed in the new theology with the result that Calvinism began to spread with remarkable speed in the fifteen-fifties.¹⁵

But the political circumstances were of such a nature that Protestantism soon became involved in the long and bitter struggle for independence. In order to follow the historical background of Protestantism in the Low Countries, it is essential to understand the political situation in which it developed.

King Charles V (1500-1558)¹⁶ had been raised in the Low Countries, and spoke poor Spanish.¹⁷ In addition, he partly admitted that self rule of the Low Countries excluded the religious sphere.¹⁸ But his son Philip (1527-1598) was different. He just spoke Spanish as he was brought up in Spain. He did not keep to the promise of self rule for the Low Countries. Therefore, they regarded Philip II as an invader. In fact, he regarded himself as the great protector of Catholicism.¹⁹ He assumed the

¹⁵ R. Tudor Jones, *The Great Reformation*, (Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), pp.199-201.

¹⁶ He was Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire from 1519 and, as Carlos I of Spain, King of the Spanish Empire from 1516 until his abdication in 1566.

¹⁷ Edward R. Tannenbaum, *European civilization since the middle age*, (New York University, 1965), p.105.

¹⁸ Philip Benedict, *Christ's churches purely reformed: A social history of Calvinism*, (Yale University press, 2002), p.177.

¹⁹ Louis Bertrand, *the history of Spain*, (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1945), p.226.

Spanish throne in 1556.²⁰ Inevitably, Philip II's plan of re-establishing Catholicism in Europe met with the most serious resistance in the Low Countries. Their political and religious motives were both opposed to his policies, especially after 1559, when he left his Burgundian lands for Spain.²¹ Catholics as well as Protestants resented his encroachments upon their ancient "liberties," his attempts to centralize the government, the presence of Spanish troops in their lands, his heavy taxation planned to support his European plans, and his policies which would unavoidably make the Low Countries the battleground in his wars with France.²²

What they required above all was the preservation of their traditional right as a province, which Philip had sworn to observe, and peace, which would enable them to make the most of their growing importance as a commercial people. Added to the particularistic benefit of the provinces and the economic interests of the townsmen, was the hard-line spirit of Calvinism, which had been embraced not only by large numbers of the bourgeoisie, but also by a number of significant nobles. Religious unity of the Calvinists had been secured by the adoption of the Belgic Confession as early as 1566.²³

Philip's plan to make the Low Countries support his Spanish and Catholic interests became clear in the provision which he made to rule them from Spain. He made his half-sister Margaret, duchess of Parma, his regent.²⁴ In spite of the fact that she was an illegitimate daughter of Charles V and a woman of Ghent, she was

²⁰ Father Michael Collins & Matthew A. Price *The story of Christianity*, (Dorling Kindersley Book, 1999), p.140.

²¹ Emile G. Leonard, *A history of Protestantism*, (Nelson, 1964), p.84.

²² Erwin Iserloh, Joseph Glazik, Hubert Jedin, *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, (Burns & Oates, 1980), p.401.

²³ Choi Byung-Seop, *Theology of Reformed creeds*, (Saesoon, 1998), p.72.

²⁴ H.G Koenigsberger & George L. Osse, *Europe in the sixteenth century*, (Longmans, 1968), p.256.

fairly well liked by the people, for they considered her a Fleming. But what harmed her in the long run was that Philip made her a simple tool, giving her no final power in important matters. He also made her accept the advice of his faithful favorite, Antonie Perronet de Granvelle (1517-1586), bishop of Arras and, after 1561, archbishop of Malines and a cardinal.²⁵

The main instruments which Margaret had agreed to use in carrying out the policies of Philip II were the three councils previously established. The Council of State, which considered questions concerning foreign affairs, relations among the provinces, and all other significant matters, overshadowed the other councils. At first it consisted of five councilors, the chief of who was Granvelle. Two of these supported Granvelle in his policy of centralization and, together with him, constituted a secret cabinet. The remaining two, the count of Egmont and the prince of Orange, became the leaders of all those who resented Philip's attempts to govern through his favorites.

2.1.2 William of Orange

William of Nassau, prince of Orange (1533-1584), was later known as William the Silent because of his diplomatic insight and discretion. However he was also an experienced and capable military leader.²⁶ In addition, he exerted a great influence because of his vast possession in Germany and France as well as in the Low Countries. He had become a favorite of Charles V, but he almost immediately got into difficulties with Philip II. When he knew that Philip was preparing to root out

²⁵ Ibid, p.256.

²⁶ Emile G. Leonard, *op. cit.*, p.85.

heresy with fire, he became his chief opponent and, as early as 1559, urged the Estates-General to demand the withdrawal of the detested Spanish troops.

The Spanish troops were withdrawn after about a year, but the oppressive taxation and religious persecution continued. Matters were made worse by the fact that Granvelle was compelled to carry out the plan of reorganizing the bishoprics of the Low Countries, begun by Charles V.²⁷ Granvelle, made archbishop of Malines, thus became the primate of the church of the Low Countries. There followed a more inflexible enforcement of the decrees against heresy. The Inquisition, which had been revived in 1559, began to function with atrocious precision. William of Orange and the other stadholders, wherever possible, declined to execute the sentences of the Inquisition. He and Egmont had in 1560 resigned their joint command of the Spanish regiments in the Low Countries and had requested the king to relieve them of their obligations in the Council of State. Intent upon enforcing their policy of providing peace and religious toleration for the Low Countries, William and Egmont united with another noble, Philip of Montmorency (1520-1568), who was count of Hoorn in forming a league against de Granvelle.

In the meantime, the lesser nobility, Louis of Nassau, a younger brother of William and a strict Calvinist, met in 1566 and took the first step toward revolt by obtaining hundreds of signatures to a document called the Compromise, which denounced these royal edicts.²⁸ This group consisted largely of lesser nobles, men who had embraced Calvinism or were Catholics with Erasmian leanings. They pledged themselves to protect the persecuted and resist the Inquisition, although professing to be loyal to the king. In short, the fact that many Walloons, Flemings, and Dutch had become Calvinists and achieved religious solidarity by adopting the

²⁷ H.G Koenigsberger & George L. Mosse, op. cit., p.258.

²⁸ Emile G. Leonard, op. cit., p.85.

Belgic Confession in 1566 made them doubly determined to resist such pressure. Philip II could not tolerate this situation any more.

2.1.3 Terror of the duke of Alva

Philip's solution was to send to the Low Countries his able general, the duke of Alva, as the chief of ten thousand veteran troops, and to attempt to suppress the revolt by a bloody reign of terror. It is possible that Philip could have won the upper nobility and well-to-do merchants to his side by attacking only the leaders of the revolt and granting pardon to others, as Pope Pius V advised him to do. But the king, who would not compromise in such matters, was determined to shatter the backbone of resistance once and for all. Alva, who had been given full civil and military authority, carried out his orders with the utmost brutality. Margaret, seeing that she had lost complete control of the situation, resigned.

Protestants were condemned for their heresy and Catholics for not having been sufficiently firm in resisting heresy. Even to express a doubt as to the authority of the Council of Disturbances was high treason.²⁹ Those put to death under such ordinances were so many that chroniclers of the time speak of the stench in the air, and of hundreds of bodies hanging from trees along the wayside. In the terror that followed, Egmont and Hoorn, despite their loyalty to Philip and refusal to join William, were beheaded in the market-place in Brussels³⁰, thereby becoming martyrs in the eyes of their countrymen. Between six and eight thousand people, suspected of heresy, were tried by the newly created tribunal, called "Council of Blood" by the Low

²⁹ R Tudor Jone, op. cit., p.204.

³⁰ Pieter Geyl, *History of the Low Countries*, (Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1964), p.7.

Country people, and were executed.

Meanwhile William had great difficulty in obtaining money and military support for his attack upon Alva. The Huguenots, who were willing to help as long as Coligny was in favor of the French court, were helpless after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572.³¹ The Protestant princes of Germany, most of whom detested Calvinism or did not wish to put in danger the peace signed at Augsburg in 1555, rendered little or no aid. Therefore the small number of troops which William could muster was no match for the many veterans commanded by Alva and his expedition into the Low Countries from Germany and it ended in failure. It was then that William learned that the most reliable support was to be found in those Northern provinces of which he was stadholder, Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht, and in which Calvinism was making great gains.³² Although Alva regained most of the towns seized by “the beggars of the sea,” the people of the Northern provinces fought back with such heroic vigor and determination that he was compelled to admit the failure of his efforts. Gonzalez noted:

It was only on the sea that the rebels were still strong. The beggars continually defeated the Spanish, and even captured their admiral. This in turn made it very difficult for Alva to receive supplies and funds for his troops, who therefore began showing signs of mutiny.³³

³¹ Robert M. Kingdon, *Myths about the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacres 1572-1576*, (Massachusetts and London:Harvard University press Cambridge, 1988), p.5. Massacres in France of Protestants by Roman Catholics. The violence began in Paris on August 23 and 24, spreading to the provinces of Bordeaux,Boruges, and Rouden. It is estimated that 3,000 Huguenots were killed in Paris, and thousands more in the Province.

³² J.A. Kossmann-Putto & E.H. Kossmann, *the Low Countries*, (Flemish-Netherlands Foundation, 1997), p.25.

³³ Justo L. Gonzalez, op. cit., p.99.

As noted above, he could get no more financial support from Philip, who realized that the religious struggles in France, and the ominous threat of England required many more resources than he had at his disposal.³⁴ He removed Alva at the latter's own request in December, 1573 and replaced him with Don Luis de Requesens, one of his dependable favorites, who was loathed by the proud nobles of the Low Countries.³⁵

The effort of Philip II to carry to an end the bloody struggle by offering to negotiate was doomed to failure, to a large degree because this had become a religious struggle, especially in the Northern provinces. William now demanded, through the Estates-General, not only the ancient privileges and the removal of Spanish troops, but also religious freedom. This the king could not grant. The Calvinist went much further by demanding the establishment of their church as the only true one. Calvinism and Dutch patriotism thus merged. This was illustrated by the fact that the University of Leyden, founded in 1575, that is, a year after the brave rescue of that city following a siege of nine months, became an important center of Calvinism.³⁶ In the meantime the Spanish troops at Antwerp, who had for a long time not received their pay, mutinied, seized everything of value, set fire to public buildings, raped the women, and murdered about six or seven thousand of the citizens.³⁷

³⁴ H.G Koenigsberger & George L.Mosse, op. cit., p.261.

³⁵ Ibid, p.261.

³⁶ Philip Benedict, op. cit., p.195.

³⁷ Justo L. Gonzalez, *The story of Christianity*, Vol. 2, The Reformation to the Present day, (HarperSanFrancisco, 1984), p.100.

2.1.4 The pacification of Ghent (1576)

“The Spanish Fury” of November, 1576, as the mutiny at Antwerp was called, finally electrified all the provinces to united action. Holland and Zeeland succeeded, under the leadership of William, in bringing the southern provinces into a confederation by means of a treaty called the Pacification of Ghent.³⁸ The thirteen signatory provinces gave William virtually sovereign authority for the duration of the war and were granted to turn over the solution of the religious problems to the Estates-General which should meet later.

William had reached the height of his career, with the prospect in sight of uniting all the provinces into a national state. But appearances were deceptive, for behind the enthusiasm over the temporary success against the Spanish lay the age-old particularism of the provinces; the strong racial differences among the Dutch, Flemings, and Wallons and more important still, the great cleavage between the Catholics in the southern and the Calvinists in the northern provinces. These tensions reached breaking point in the spring of 1578, when the masses, which disliked the Catholic clergy as much as the nobility and upper bourgeoisie, again broke out in an iconoclastic fury.

In the summer of 1580, Philip II declared that William an outlaw, and offered a handsome reward to anyone who would hand him over dead or alive.³⁹ This personal attack upon William endeared him to the people even more. Using this swell of dedication to political advantage, he presented the Estate-General, which opened at Delft in December, 1580, with his famous *Apology*, in which he vindicated his honor against the attack of Philip, and for the first time publicly renounced Philip,

³⁸ Edward R. Tannenbaum, op. cit., p.144.

³⁹ Justo L. Gonzalez, op. cit., p.101.

as having failed in his responsibility for the Low Countries.

2.1.5 Declaration of independence (1581)

The presentation of the *Apology* was followed by the declaration of independence of the Estate-General, meeting at the Hague in July, 1581.⁴⁰ There the representative of the provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Gelderland, Friesland, Groningen, Overijssel, Malines, Flanders, and Barbant chose William as head of the government until a new sovereign could be selected, and then, in the famous Act of Abjuration, declared Philip II deposed.⁴¹

William continued the unequal struggle until a second assassin, a Burgundian supporter of Philip, gained access to his home in July, 1584, and in the presence of his family shot and killed him.⁴² But the work of “the father of his country,” as he was called, had been accomplished. Even more important, the truthful followers of William, now reduced to a small but more homogeneous part of the Low Countries, had the heroism, tenacity, and religious motivation which enabled them to take advantage of the increasingly favorable European situation.

After the assassination of William, it was necessary for the Estates-General to select another ruler. Maurice of Nassau (1567-1625), William’s seventeen-year-old son, was made captain-general and admiral of the United Provinces, as the provinces in revolt were now called, while the Council of State of eighteen members

⁴⁰ W. Stanford Reid ed., *John Calvin: His influence in the western world*, (Michigan Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), p.102.

⁴¹ Batholomew Landheer ed., *The Netherlands*, (University of California press, 1944), p.38.

⁴² Edward R. Tannenbaum, op. cit., p.144.

was entrusted with administrative affairs.⁴³ Maurice of Nassau was ably assisted by his cousin William Louis of Nassau, a thorough student of military science. Devoting much of his time to the reorganization and equipment of his army, Maurice shaped a fighting machine which enabled him to assume the offensive and, by 1593, drive the Spaniards out of almost all the lands and cities of the Northern provinces.

Finally, soon after Henry of Navarre became Henry IV of France, that country joined England in forming an alliance with the United Provinces (1596), whose independence they recognized. Although France made peace with Spain in 1598, the war, in which the Dutch were even more successful on sea than on land, dragged on until 1608, when the Twelve Year's Truce gave the United Provinces virtual independence.⁴⁴

2.2 The life of Guido de Bres-Author of the Belgic Confession

Key figures 2.

Guido de Bres	1522-1567	Travelling preacher
William Tyndale	1494-1536	Scholar and translator
Thomas Cranmer	1489-1556	Archbishop of Canterbury
John Calvin	1509-1564	Theologian
Theodore Beza	1519-1605	Theologian

⁴³ J.A. Kossmann-Putto & E.H. Kossmann, op. cit., p.29.

⁴⁴ W. Stanford Reid, op. cit., p.102.

Early on the morning of 2 November 1561 a sealed parcel was found within the walls of the castle at Tournay, situated in present-day Belgium. The parcel contained a letter on behalf of the citizens, addressed to the city authorities, as well as a printed booklet entitled *Confession de foy* (Confession of faith).⁴⁵ The reason for this public defense of their belief was the persecution to which the Reformation-oriented local population had been exposed for decades. Since as early as 1528 and thereafter, many of them had been tried and executed in Tournay for their religious convictions. These Protestants, who made no secret of being Calvinistic, already constituted half of the population of Tournay by 1561.

2.2.1 Birth and early life

Guido de Bres was the most important Calvinist in the Low Countries, a wonderful preacher,⁴⁶ and regarded as the “Reformer of the Low Countries.” Guido was born at Mons in 1522, and was brought up in the Roman Catholic Church.⁴⁷ He was the fifth child of a family of glass painters. In Mons the art of glass painting had been highly developed, and Mons deservedly had an international status for the skill of its artists. Guido himself was educated for this work.⁴⁸ Guido’s family carried on the traditions of the guilds in Mons, although the children were spilt on the Reformation doctrine. John, the oldest, while remaining Roman Catholic all his life, helped Protestants in times of persecutions. Christophe was a merchant of glassware, but spent his total life distributing Bibles and Protestant literature, often at

⁴⁵ Henry Beets, *The Reformed Confession Explained*, (WM. B. Eerdmans, 1929), p.9.

⁴⁶ Erwin Iserloh, op. cit., p.400.

⁴⁷ S.A. Strauss, “John Calvin and the Belgic Confession,” *In die Skriflig* 27.4 (1993): p.503.

⁴⁸ Henry Beets, op. cit., p.8.

great risk to his life.⁴⁹ Jerome became a cloth dyer and remained within the Roman Catholic Church. Marlette, the only girl, married a Protestant in Valenciennes and, with her husband, was extremely involved in Protestant affairs.

The city of Mons was on the border of France and the Lowlands, that part of the Lowlands which is now Belgium. Lutheranism arrived first and had been eagerly studied by the citizens; but the Huguenots from France soon followed with the purer Reformation doctrines of John Calvin.⁵⁰ Guido, already in his teens, heard of the Reformation truth from others and could not help but listen to the stories of those who have been killed for the sake of the gospel. He was only 14 when the news of William Tyndale's (1494-1536) cruel martyrdom reached him. It may have been Tyndale's willingness to die for the sake of translating the Bible into the language of the people that led Guido to study the Scriptures.⁵¹ Through this study God led him to true faith in Jesus Christ.

In 1548 Guido decided, possibly because of the persecution in the Lowlands, to go to London and join the refugee Church in East London.⁵² East London was a haven for refugees from many different countries in Europe who were forced to flee persecution. In that part of London a Wallon congregation was established composed of French-speaking citizens from the Lowlands, to which Guido joined himself. The refugees had peace in England because of the rule of Edward VI who, though young, preferred Protestantism.

Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556), Archbishop of Canterbury, influenced Reformation leaders to come to England. This brought along the great Polish John a

⁴⁹ Thea B. Van Halsema, *Glorious heretic*, (Baker Book house, 1961), p.102.

⁵⁰ W. Stanford Reid, op. cit., p.97.

⁵¹ Tim Dowley, *The story of Christianity*, (Lion Book, 1981), p.40.

⁵² Thea B. Van Halsema, op. cit., p.104.

Lasco (1499-1560)⁵³ as well as Martin Bucer (1491-1551)⁵⁴, Calvin's minister-friend in Strassburg, and others. These men instructed classes in theology. Guido learned under them. He heard them preach in the chapel on Threadneedle Street which was one of the churches with foreign language services. Fifteen thousand refugees from many countries were in England at that time. For four years de Bres lived and was educated in this calm settlement of Protestants.

2.2.2 Ministry in the Low Countries

But Guido's love was for his native land, and in 1552 at the age of 30, he returned as an evangelist and travelling preacher.⁵⁵ From that moment on his life was in almost continuous danger. His first field of work was the city of Lille, in which a large underground Protestant community had been established under the name, the Church of the Rose. From Lille he went to Ghent, where his first book was published, called "the staff of the Christian faith", an inspiring defense of the Reformed faith.

Guido enjoyed a short interval at this time. Traveling to Frankfurt in Germany, Guido met John Calvin (1509-1564)⁵⁶ and was persuaded to come to Geneva. In the

⁵³ Philip Benedict, *Christ's churches purely reformed: A social history of Calvinism*, (Yale University press, 2002), p.179.

⁵⁴ Protestant reformer in Strassburg. He was attracted to the work of Erasmus and became an adherent of Martin Luther. He was an international figure who frequently participated in colloquia and diets, beginning with the Marburg Colloquy in 1529. He worked diligently to try to overcome the Lutheran-Swiss controversies on the Lord's Supper. Bucer's opposition to the Augsburg Interim of 1548 led to his exile to England. His *The Kingdom of Christ* (1557), presented to King Edward VI, contained a plan for national reform to produce a Christian society.

⁵⁵ Henry Beets, op. cit., p.8.

⁵⁶ French Protestant Reformer, pastor, and theologian in Geneva. He studied literary and was

three years he spent in Geneva, Guido was trained in the Reformed faith more thoroughly, mastered Greek and Hebrew under Theodore Beza (1519-1605)⁵⁷ and Calvin, and was better prepared for the gospel ministry. During this period (1556-1559), he also married Catherine Ramon. With her had four or five children, the oldest was named Israel.⁵⁸

While Guido was in Geneva, Charles V resigned, and was succeeded by his cruel son Philip II.⁵⁹ Philip was determined to clean up all “heresy,” especially in the Lowlands. Up to this time persecution had been irregular and relatively light. It now became more brutal and severe.⁶⁰ Therefore, he was compelled to wander in disguise and under the pseudonym of Jerome. Although he worked in the cities of southern Belgium and northern France (Lille, Antwerp, Mons), his headquarters was in Doornik where he ministered to the congregation which had chosen as its name, the Church of the Palm.

Here two former ministers had been martyred at the stake for their faith,

influenced by the leading humanist teacher. It was as a humanist scholar himself. However, Calvin experienced a “sudden conversion” and quickly became a leader of the Protestant movement in Paris. In 1536 William Farel, the leader of the Protestant Reform in Geneva, prevailed upon Calvin to join him. In 1541, when Geneva was under considerable pressure to revert to Roman Catholicism, Calvin was induced to return to the city and undertook sweeping ecclesiastical and civil reforms. Through his preaching, teaching, counseling, and international leadership, Calvin became the leading voice of Reformed Protestantism.

⁵⁷ Reformed theologian and successor to John Calvin in Geneva. He identified with the Reformation movement, taught Greek at the Academy of Lausanne from 1549 to 1559, and then was called to the newly opened Academy of Geneva. In 1559 he became rector and assumed an increasingly active role in representing Geneva Protestantism throughout Europe. After Calvin’s death in 1564, Beza became head of the Academy and moderator of the Company of Pastors.

⁵⁸ Thea B. Van Halsema, op. cit., p.108.

⁵⁹ J.A. Kossmann-Putto & E.H. Kossmann, op. cit., p.21.

⁶⁰ Philip Benedict, Guido Marnef, Henk van Nierop and Marc Venard ed., *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands 1555-1585*, (Amsterdam, 1999), p.83.

therefore meetings of the congregation were always held in secret and at night, with a small group of not more than 12 attending at one time. Despite this problem which the congregation faced, Guido organized the church with elders and deacons and sincerely administered the sacraments.

But even this situation did not last. A fundamental group of the believers, under the leadership of Robert du Four, thought it craven and faithless to Christ to keep their faith secret.⁶¹ The group, several hundred strong, moved in a public march through the city, singing Psalms in open disobedience of the authorities. The next night, September 30, 1561, 500 Protestants gathered for the same purpose. Then Roman Catholic investigators were sent with orders to suppress Protestantism in the city.⁶²

Guido had to leave the Low Countries soon after the 1561 synod which had promulgated his Belgic Confession.⁶³ Although he managed to hide until December and fled to safety, all the information of the secret congregation was discovered, Guido's true identity was discovered, the people of the church were forced to flee or be killed, Guido's rooms were ransacked, his writings (including letters from Calvin) were burned, and an effigy of Guido was hanged. In 1562, he took refuge with the prince of Sedan. There he did splendid work for the Reformation, comparable to Calvin's in Geneva, but he was also active in effecting an agreement between Calvinists and Lutherans.⁶⁴

For several years Guido concentrated his work in northern France, perhaps some of the quietest years of his ministerial career. Although persecution raged

⁶¹ Thea B. Van halsema, op. cit., p.112.

⁶² Ibid., p.132.

⁶³ Emile G. Leonard, op. cit., p.87.

⁶⁴ R. Tudor Jones, op. cit., p.201.

against the Huguenots in France, northern France where Guido worked had peace. He worked in Amiens, Montdidier, and Sedan, building up the congregations and preaching the gospel faithfully.⁶⁵

But he could not refrain from making intervallic trips into his own country. He traveled three times to Doornik, his old congregation, once to Brussels to meet William of Orange concerning the union between Calvinists and Lutherans⁶⁶, once to a secret Synod of the Reformed Churches held in Antwerp where Guido's Belgic Confession was adopted as the official confession of the Reformed Churches.⁶⁷

In 1566 Guido went to Valenciennes to become a preacher in the church, a congregation which called itself the Church of the Eagle.⁶⁸ While the Protestant faith grew so swiftly that the Roman Catholic authorities dared not interfere in the religion of God's people, certain radical elements once again stepped forward and created trouble. Stirring up large mobs, they went through all the cathedrals smashing, burning, and destroying anything that in the least smelled like popery. Philip II, furious at this, sent troops to lay siege to the city, which surrendered on Palm Sunday, 1567. Although Guido escaped with four companions, he was soon captured and imprisoned.

2.2.3 His martyrdom

Guido spent the first part of his captivity in prison in Doornik, where he could

⁶⁵ Thea B. Van Halsema, *op. cit.*, p.119.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p.120.

⁶⁷ This synod was held in 1565 at Antwerp.

⁶⁸ Thea B. Van Halsema, *op. cit.*, p.121.

receive visitors. Many of his visitors, however, were enemies who came to ridicule him. But just as was the case with the apostle Paul,⁶⁹ Guido's imprisonment became an occasion for him to witness to the truth. Soon Guido was transferred to Valenciennes and thrown into a dark, cold, damp, dungeon known as the Black Hole. In spite of the cold, the hunger, the horror of this hole, Guido wrote a tract on the Lord's Supper and letters to his friends, his aged mother, and his wife.⁷⁰ A letter to his wife is an especially moving testimony of his faith:

Your grief and anguish are the cause of me writing you this letter. I most earnestly pray you not to be grieved beyond measure... We knew when we married that we might not have many years together, and the Lord has graciously given us seven. If the Lord had wished us to live together longer, he could easily have caused it to be so. But such was not his pleasure. Let his good will be done, and let that be a sufficient reason. Moreover, consider that I have not fallen into the hands of my enemies by chance, but by the providence of God, which guides and govern all things, small as well as great... All these considerations have made my heart glad and peaceful, and I pray you, my dear and faithful companion, to be glad with me, and to thank the good God for what he is doing, for he does nothing but what is altogether good and right... I pray you then to be comforted in the Lord, to commit yourself and your affairs to him, for he is the husband of the widow and the father of the fatherless, and he will never leave nor forsake you... Good-bye Catherine, my well-beloved! I pray my God to comfort you, and give you resignation to his holy will.

Your faithful husband,
Guido de Bres.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Philippians 1: 12-14

⁷⁰ Henry Beets, op. cit., p.9.

⁷¹ Thea B. Van Halsema, op. cit., p.132.

Guido was publicly hanged on May 31, 1567 at age of 45.⁷² He was pushed off a ladder while comforting the crowd which had gathered while encouraging them to faithfulness to the Scriptures. His body was left hanging the rest of the day and buried in a shallow grave where dogs and wild animals dug it up and consumed it. The great heretic preacher died gladly for the faith. Through his masterful Confession of Faith, Guido de Bres has spoken to the church of many centuries and many lands.

2.3 The Belgic Confession

2.3.1 Its authorship

Traditionally Guido de Bres has been considered to be the author of the Belgic Confession. However, there has been controversy about the authorship of the Belgic Confession. Historically the question of the authorship of the confession began to receive attention in the seventeenth century, when it became part of the debate on the authority of the confession between the Reformed and the Remonstrants.⁷³ N.H. Gootjes argues it out in his paper:

The Belgic Confession, which was published in 1561 and first surfaced in Doornik, in the Southern part of the Netherlands, appeared anonymously. The title page informed the reader that the confession had been made with common accord by the believers in the Netherlands. This can be taken to mean that all reformed Dutch people were involved in the making of the Belgic Confession. The title is derived

⁷² Ibid., p.133.

⁷³ A theological movement that emerged from the teachings of Jacob Arminius, who opposed views held by John Calvin on election, predestination, and grace.

from the Gallican Confession and refers to the general agreement to the doctrine of the confession rather than to the actual making of the Confession. The title page does not provide any information on the author.⁷⁴

However, there has been a growing body of evidence that Guido de Bres is the author of the Belgic Confession. Considering the relationship between John Calvin and Guido de Bres, there is very little difference between the theology of the Belgic Confession and the Gallican Confession.⁷⁵ John Calvin is the author of the Gallican Confession. Guido was influenced by Calvin. At this point, it can be assumed that Guido de Bres is the author of the Belgic Confession.

Secondly, as mentioned above, the Belgic Confession first surfaced in Doornik, Guido's headquarters⁷⁶. He was evangelist and itinerant preacher at Doornik. Afterwards, a number of Doornik's Reformed believers confirmed his authorship.⁷⁷

Lastly, it is no wonder that there was no author named in the first printed edition of the Belgic Confession, because there was a horrible persecution of all Protestant believers at that time. In this respect, Guido would not have used his name on any document to avoid persecution. In fact, at the time he worked under a false name.⁷⁸ All these indications point to Guido de Bres was the author of the Belgic Confession.

⁷⁴ N.H. Gootjes, *The earliest report on the author of the Belgic Confessio(1561)*, Nederlands-archief-voor-kerkgeschiedenis, (1982): no.1 p,86.

⁷⁵ Statement of faith adopted in 1559 in Paris by the first national synod of the Reformed church of France. The draft of the confession was prepared by John Calvin, the draft was revised by his pupil Antonie de la Roche Chandien.

⁷⁶ Thea B. Van Halsema, op. cit., p.109.

⁷⁷ N.H. Gootjes, op. cit., p.92.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.132.

2.3.2 The relevance of John Calvin and Guido de Bres' confession

John Calvin's influence on the Low Countries was not limited to de Bres' personal contacts. His writings, which were well known and widely distributed, were also very important in spreading the Reformed faith. Calvin had early relationships with the Low Countries. His mother hailed from Cambrai close to Belgium, and his wife from Liege in Belgium. Calvin was born in Picardy, a French province that borders on the Netherlands. His home city of Noyon was only about sixty miles from the border of the Low Countries.

In fact, Calvin once wrote to Bullinger (1504-1575)⁷⁹, 'I am a Belgian too'. In other words, he considered the Low Countries as his second mother country. On the basis of this context, the Belgic Confession has been characterized as a Calvinistic confession.⁸⁰ As Calvin was one of the most significant theologians of his time, it would not be surprising if he had been in personal contact with the author of the Belgic Confession. It has been stated repeatedly that Guido met Calvin on at least two occasions, first in Frankfurt and later in Geneva. At any rate, he apparently considered Calvin, who was twelve years his senior, to be a trustworthy adviser. Although Calvin was not directly involved in the writing of the Belgic Confession, he influenced its author in several ways, and his outline of the Gallican Confession was the base of the Belgic Confession.

It is clear that Calvin undeniably had great influence on the Belgic Confession. In

⁷⁹ A Swiss-German Protestant reformer. At Cologne he read the works of Erasmus, Martin Luther, and Philip Melancthon, which greatly influenced him. He supported the reform in Zurich led by Huldrych Zwingli. Following Zwingli's death on the battlefield, Bullinger became his successor in December 1531. He was the principal author of the Second Helvetic Confession(1566), an important Reformed confession.

⁸⁰ Philip Schaff, *Creeeds of Christendom*, vol.1, (Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1877), p.506.

order to comprehend and explain the confession it has to be studied against the background of Calvin's writings.

2.3.3. The authority of the Belgic Confession

No other topic in connection with the Belgic Confession had been researched more recurrently than its authority. It is understandable, for this, more than anything else, determines its place and function within the Reformed churches from which it originated. Its authority was already in discussion before the Synod of Dort that convened in 1618. This international synod was convened to deal with the doctrines of the Remonstrants, and to reaffirm the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism⁸¹ as the adopted doctrinal statements of the Reformed churches. It is significant that the issue of authority is to be discussed first of all as a historical question.

2.3.3.1. The synod of Antwerp

This synod of the Reformed churches in the Low Countries was held at Antwerp in June 1565, which accepted the Belgian Confession for the churches of the southern Low Countries. The Belgic Confession was revised at the following Synod

⁸¹ The most widely accepted statement of Reformed Protestantism, published in 1563. Commissioned by the Reformed ruler Frederick III of the Palatinate, the catechism was written primarily by the Reformed theologian Zacharias Ursinus and the court preacher Caspar Olevianus. Frederick wanted a textbook for the ministers and the people in his province to teach them the way of salvation.

of Antwerp, which met during May 1566.⁸² This synod was convened while the persecutions in the Low Countries continued. The synod sought a confession with passages from Scripture to support it to persuade the nobility of the scriptural basis of the Protestant position. This declaration did not have any ecclesiastical intention, nor did any synod give it an ecclesiastical position. As biblical statements, they could stand by themselves. The resolution concerning the confession for the nobility cannot be used to certify the authority of the Belgic Confession, which had already been approved one year previously during the prior Synod of Antwerp.

The attempt of the Synod of 1566 to revise the confession is a signal that the Reformed churches required their belief to speak as clear as possible. The confession's revision in 1566 did not weaken its authority but strengthened the status of the Belgic Confession. The churches accepted the confession, and synod itself oversaw the revision.⁸³

2.3.3.2. The conference of Wesel and the synod of Emden

The conference of Wesel (1568), the name by which this convention is known is indicative of its character. It was not a synod with the authority to make decisions on ecclesiastical matters. It was a meeting of pastors who came together in Wesel in Germany, to prepare the organizing of the churches in the Netherlands. At the very beginning of the proclamation formed by this meeting, they announced that in their

⁸² Philip Schaff, op. cit., p.505.

⁸³ Arthur C. Cochrane ed., *Reformed Confessions of the 16th century*, (the Westminster press, 1946), p.187.

judgment a number of regulations are necessary or useful for their churches.⁸⁴

According to this regulation, the Belgic Confession has an influence similar to that of the Gallican Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. As a result, all those who teach in the church have to agree in every respect with the principles expressed in them. A cautious look at the statement given above evidently shows that the Belgic Confession, together with two other doctrinal statements, are presented as the standard for the teaching in the church. The ministers present at this meeting resolved that agreement with the Belgic Confession was to be a precondition for admission to the public ministry in the churches.

The next conference was held in 1571, because it was still dangerous to meet in the Low Countries. As a result, the delegates met in Emden, Germany, which had long been a safe haven for the Reformed from the Low Countries.⁸⁵ The Synod of Emden called for a disciplined church, not only in terms of organization, but also in terms of the supervision of the lives of the members of the churches. The Belgic Confession was confirmed as an expression of the union of faith. The authority of the confession, already declared at the meeting of Wesel, 1568, was therefore confirmed at Emden in 1571.⁸⁶

2.3.3.3. The synod of Dort

The synod of Dort (1619-1619) was the first international synod of the Reformed Churches in the Low Countries and was of vital meaning for the Belgic Confession.

⁸⁴ W. Stanford Reid, *op. cit.*, p.117.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.117.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.100.

During the theological dispute leading up to the synod, the content of the confession was discussed in the Remonstrant controversy. The preface to the Acts of the Synod of Dort specifically blames Jacob Arminius (1560-1609).⁸⁷

Arminius was appointed to a professorship in theology at the University of Leiden in 1603. Leiden had become a significant and internationally acknowledged Reformed university. On the surface, he seemed reliable. He had studied in Geneva and returned with a fine letter of recommendation from Theodore Beza. However, within a short period of time, questions began to arise at the university about Arminius's theological thoughts.

Actually, he openly voiced that he had a lot of objections against the adopted Calvinistic doctrine.⁸⁸ Subsequently, the strict Calvinists claimed that Arminius had deviated seriously from orthodox Calvinism on justification and election. The debate was temporarily interrupted by Arminius's death in 1609. The death of Arminius only postponed the outbreak of a dispute in the church. Indeed his followers continued determinedly to struggle for approval of their thoughts within the church. A group of forty-three Arminian ministers, met in 1610 to draw up a petition, a remonstrance, to the States of Holland to ask protection for their status. This document evoked a fervent reaction from the strict Calvinists who produced a seven-point statement that they called the Counter-Remonstrance. From that time on, the two groups were largely known by contemporaries in the Low Countries as Remonstrants and

⁸⁷ Dutch theologian who opposed the strict formulations on predestination associated with Calvinism. His followers came to be called Arminians. Arminius believed that Paul's letter to the Romans taught a "conditional predestination" in opposition to the "unconditional" views of contemporary Calvinists. He believed that God's predestination of individual destinies is based on divine foreknowledge of the way individuals will come to faith.

⁸⁸ Justo L. Gonzalez, *A history of Christian thought*, Vol.3, (Abingdon press, 1975), p.255.

Counter-Remonstrants.⁸⁹

The government called a conference of the two groups in 1611, but both the church and the society grew more polarized on the issues. The tensions in some towns were so great that riots broke out that spilt the Low Countries' society. They needed a solution at that time. Through the intervention of prince Maurice, the States general, convened the synod at Dordrecht on November 13, 1618.

It was unique in several respects. For instance, the assembly at Dordrecht was undoubtedly the only Dutch synod to which a bishop (George Carlton from England) was a delegate. More importantly, it was the first ecumenical synod that the Reformed churches ever had.⁹⁰ Most of the Reformed Churches (from England, Germany, and Switzerland) of the world were represented and their 29 delegates were able to discuss and vote on the doctrinal issues.

The synod of Dort dealt with the Belgic Confession on two occasions. Firstly, a decision was made on the major question of whether the Dutch churches were justified in using the Belgic Confession as the standard for the preaching and teaching in the church. This discussion took place in the presence of the foreign delegates, and it was decided to support this normative function of the confession. At a later point in time, when the foreign delegates had returned to their own countries, the text of the Belgic Confession was revised.

After the Canons of Dort had been drawn up and ratified, the synod continued to deal with the existing confessions of the Dutch churches, the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, which had caused the original controversy between the Reformed and the Remonstrants. Belgic Confession, together with the canons of that

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.256.

⁹⁰ Philip Schaff, op. cit., p.514.

synod and the beautiful Heidelberg Catechism, it became an authoritative statement of Dutch Calvinistic orthodoxy.⁹¹

2.4 Conclusion

Chapter 2, dealt with the history of the Low Countries under persecution by the Spanish regime. As many historians indicated, politically and religiously it was a long and hard walk to freedom, with many Christians dying for their faith. It was however, during this period that William of Orange rose up against the Spanish. Under his leadership, the movement for independence for the Low Countries continued. His son Maurice of Nassau succeeded him after he was assassinated. Nassau was only seventeen years old at the time but however, showed outstanding military qualities. Under Nassau's leadership they achieved religious and political freedom.

Meanwhile there was a travelling preacher Guido de Bres who preached in spite of surveillance of the Spanish regime. He sought refuge in a foreign country for religious freedom but never forgot his native country. He learned reformation theology under John Calvin and Theodore Beza. After his study he became a travelling preacher. During his ministry and preaching, he drafted the Belgic Confession to explain the faith of the Protestants of the Low Countries to the Spanish Emperor to induce religious tolerance. However, he was captured by the Spanish army with his comrade, and they were martyred. The Belgic Confession was authorized by the synod of Antwerp, the conference of Wesel, the synod of Emden, and the synod of Dort. Together with the Heidelberg Catechism, and the canons of

⁹¹ Andrew Murray congregation, *Doctrinal standards of the Dutch reformed church*, (Andrew Murray congregation, 1970), p.2.

Dort, the Belgic Confession is regarded as the standard of Reformed faith up till the present.

Chapter 3. The Korean Church under Japanese colonialism (The reaction of martyr Joo Ki-Chul and representatives of the Korean Church against Shinto Shrine Worship)

3.1 A historical background to Shinto Shrine Worship under Japanese colonialism in Korea

Japanese imperialism ruled Korea from 1910 to 1945. It was a horrible time for every Korean. The Japanese deprived Korea of money and resources. Moreover, they forced Shinto Shrine Worship on Koreans.⁹² Shinto Shrine Worship meant bowings to the past and present Japanese emperors' mortuary tablets.⁹³ Historically, a very important measure to strengthen the position of State Shinto or Shinto nationalism in Japan was the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education on 30 October 1890.⁹⁴ The fundamental principle of morality adopted by this reform was the Confucian-Shinto concept of reverence towards the proper authorities.

The occupation of Korea by Japan was never really accepted by the majority of the Korean people. From the beginning the Japanese administration (the governor-general) was extraordinarily sensitive to criticisms of Japanese rule or any hints of a Korean independence movement. Perceiving the Christian church to be the one organized body that might oppose their rule, the Japanese authorities attempted to

⁹² Hae-Yeun Kim, *The history of Korea church*, (Sungkwangmunhwasa, 1997), p.263.

⁹³ In-Soo Kim, *Lamb of Jesus: Joo Ki-Chul*, (Hongsungsa, 2007), p.115.

⁹⁴ D.C. Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, (The University of Chicago Presss, 1943), pp.77-79.

remove the threat in two ways : by the direct suppression of Christian dissent, and by the support of the revival of Buddhism to act as a counterforce to Christianity.⁹⁵ It was important to the Japanese that they should have authority, not merely power. As a means of making Koreans loyal subjects, the Japanese administration attempted, at any cost, to bring about the cultural assimilation of Korea, by urging the population to revere the emperor and to make obeisance at Shinto Shrines.

Even before the formal occupation of Korea by Japan, during the period of the Japanese resident-general (1905-1910), they attempted to control the educational system, not only by regulating the curriculum, but also by attempting to limit Christian influence on Korean education. In 1908, an edict was issued by the office of the Japanese resident-general that all Korean schools should conform in practice to the Imperial Rescript on education. The intent of this document was innocuous enough in its own cultural and political context, but in the context of a Korean encroached upon by an imperialistic Japan, it became a goad to Korean nationalism.⁹⁶

Since the invasion of Korea in 1910, the expressed policy of the Japanese government had been to make all members of the subjected people into standardized Japanese subjects, both legally and psychologically. But the policy of cultural assimilation failed, mainly because of the widespread and institutionalized practice of racial discrimination. Forced worship at the Shinto Shrines or daily bows in an eastern direction to Tokyo annoyed, rather than converted Koreans. From the late 1920s onwards, Korea, as the principal dependency of Japan, suffered greatly from the internal political changes that were occurring in the metropolitan nation.⁹⁷

Among the many measures of the Japanization program, however, it was the

⁹⁵ Jung-Shin Choi, *Christianity of Korea*, (Kyupbogi, 2001), p.17.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.18.

⁹⁷ Hae-Yeun Kim, *op. cit.*, p.266.

Shinto Shrine issue that became the most challenging and controversial problem for the church. From the early 1920s the Japanese nationalists had a vision of conquering the Chinese mainland and the continent, and they realized that they did not only have to conquer an army, but also a faith. They cultivated faith in Shintoism, popularly known as the worship of the Japanese emperor, the divine descendant of Amaterasu, the sun-goddess, for its usefulness as “an agency of political and military control”⁹⁸

Thus, from the late 1920s, as Shintoism was forced on them, Korean Christians were increasingly faced with the question of how they should respond practically and theologically to the new measures taken by the Japanese colonial ruler in their country. The beginning of this new situation may be dated from the erection of the central Shinto Shrine for Koreans in Seoul in 1925, and the enforced attendance at the shrine’s ceremonies by students and ordinary citizens.⁹⁹ Although this was not the first and only Shinto Shrine erected in Korea, shrines such as these were intended for the use of Japanese residents all over Korea and were not officially considered to be State Shinto Shrines.

Shrines given the latter designation were not legally considered to be religious structures, but were said to be places for the performance of patriotic rites associated with the ancestors of the imperial family and the nation.¹⁰⁰ With the construction of the Chosun-Shingung in 1925, the religious situation changed dramatically. It was plain that, in the future, all Koreans would be expected to perform Japanese patriotic acts at one of these shrines.

However, the point is Shinto Shrine Worship was not just a patriotic act. As

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.262.

⁹⁹ In-Soo Kim, op. cit., p.52.

¹⁰⁰ Young-Hun Lee, *The history of Korea Christianity*, (Concorda press, 1978), p.193.

mentioned above, Shinto Shrine is a place with collected mortuary tablets. It was idol worship to bow there.¹⁰¹ The Shinto Shrine Worship question touched Korean Christians both as patriots and as Christians. It was an offense both nationally and theologically. It is also interesting to note, in this context, that whereas it had previously been the more liberal Christians who had been involved in the confrontation with the Japanese authorities, in the 1930s it was the theologically conservative wing that opposed the power of Japanese colonialism.

From the early 1930s, with party politics in Japan declining, and the power of the military taking firmer control of the government, the stricter enforcement of student attendance at shrine rituals became an increasing problem for Christians, which affected both missionaries and the Korean Christians. By 1935, pressure was building up to remove those missionaries who opposed the Shinto practices from schools and colleges.

The first to be forced out was Dr. George S. McCune, president of Union Christian College in Pyongyang, who left Korea late in 1935. Maintaining open schools under these conditions became such an acute problem that the Northern Presbyterian missionaries in Pyongyang voted in June 1936 to close their college and schools. The Southern Presbyterian mission likewise closed its schools in September 1937. Thus, the clear result was that most of Korea's Christians opposed reaction against Shinto Shrine Worship.¹⁰² Because, the Protestant missionaries who came to Korea from America had been strongly influenced by the pietistic revival of the late nineteenth century in North America, they were not liberal Christians, but held to a simple belief in salvation through repentance of sins, and

¹⁰¹ Seok-Hee Han, *The history of Japanese Imperialism's invasion Korea religion*, (Kidokgyumunsa, 1990), p.152.

¹⁰² James Huntley Grayson, *Korea: A religious history*, (RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), p.161.

adhered to a simple and rigid code of ethical behavior, influenced by Puritanism.

The Methodists took a different approach to the Shinto Shrine Worship issue. Schools were placed in the hands of Korean Christians, and the Methodist Mission in Korea adopted a resolution in 1937 accepting the governor-general's interpretation of the patriotic nature of the rites, which was subsequently confirmed in June 1938 by the Mission Board in America.¹⁰³ From the mid-1930s, measures taken by the Japanese authorities to control mission schools and education were paralleled by their attempts to control the actual denominations themselves.

One of the most dramatic incidents concerned the 1938 General Assembly of the Korean Presbyterian Church. Using selected stooges, the Japanese authorities had a proposal brought before the assembly. In the proposal they called for the attendance of all Christians at State Shinto.¹⁰⁴ The general assembly convened in a very tense atmosphere with the doors to the hall guarded by policeman. The police also intervened to eliminate contrary motions and procedural objections. The assembly passed the resolutions approving of attendance at shrine rituals and also further resolution approving conformity to a law requiring that worship occur only in places issued with a government permit.

These resolutions were important for the enforcement of Shinto nationalism. Until the general assembly had passed these resolutions, it would have been possible for a Korean Presbyterian to say that attendance at shrine rites went against the tenets of his faith and the practice of fellow believers. After the assembly, a Presbyterian could no longer do so. After the approval of the General assembly, Korean Presbyterian ministers and laymen opposed the action of the General

¹⁰³ Seok-Hee Han, *op. cit.*, p.177.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p.173.

Assembly and, finally, under the leadership of the pastor Joo Ki-Chul and other missionaries, launched the Non-Shinto Shrine Worship Movement independent of the General Assembly.

As a result, about 2000 Christians were imprisoned over the Shrine questions, and over 50 people died for their faith.¹⁰⁵ It is because these conservative Christians opposed the imposition of State Shinto, resisting the most potent symbol of Shinto nationalism, that they have become heroes to Korean nationalism.

3.2. Pastor Joo Ki-Chul's life, his counter action against Shinto Shrine Worship and theological background

Key figures 3.

Joo Ki-Chul	1897-1944	Pastor and martyr
Kim Ik-Doo	1874-1950	Pastor
Oh Jung-Mo	1903-1947	Wife of Joo Ki-Chul
Cho Man-Sik	1883-1950	Politician and elder

Pastor Joo Ki-Chul (1897-1944) is the greatest martyr the Korean church has ever produced under Japanese's Imperialism.¹⁰⁶ Pastor Joo became influential in the theological and ecclesiastical life of the Korean church in the wake of Korea's

¹⁰⁵ Oh Yun-Tae, *The history of Korean-Japan Christianity's interchange*, p.253, quoted from In-Soo Kim, *Lamb of Jesus: Joo Ki-Chul*, (Hongsungsa, 2007), p.133.

¹⁰⁶ In-Soo Kim, op. cit., p.10.

independence, formatively shaping the history and faith of the Korean church, the lifestyle of the Korean Christians, the understanding of the relationship between church and state, and the ideology of resistance to unjust powers.

After Korea's independence from Japan, his martyrdom was compared to that of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and gained recognition from international communities. Especially, after the 1980s, the Japanese church expressed deep interest in the life of pastor Joo Ki-Chul, his life of faith, his defiance of Shinto Shrine Worship, and his eventual death as a protester.¹⁰⁷ For this reason he was recognized as an independence activist and given a medal of honor for his contribution to the founding of the Korean government.

3.2.1 The life of pastor Joo Ki-Chul and his Non-Shinto Shrine Worship movement

Joo Ki-chul was born on November 25, 1897 in Bukbu-ri, Woongcheon-myeon, Changweon-gun, South Gyeongsang province, as the fourth son of Elder Joo Hyeon-Seong and Lady Jo Jae-Seon.¹⁰⁸ He went to elementary school in his hometown. After he graduated from the elementary school, he entered the Osan School at Jungjoo in 1912. This school was founded for nationalist education, and here, Joo Ki-Chul learned of faith, patriotism, and nationalism from such revered leaders of the people, like Cho Man-Sik and Lee Seung-Hun.

After he graduated from the Osan School in 1916, he entered Yun-hee College in 1917. His subject was commerce. But he had to drop out of the program due to an

¹⁰⁷ Young-Jae Kim, *The history of Korean Church*, (GaehyukJuishinhanghyuphoi, 1992), p.154.

¹⁰⁸ In-Soo Kim, op. cit., p.24.

eye disease. He then spent four and a half years in hopelessness and frustration until he met pastor Kim Ik-Doo. In 1917, at age of 20, he married An Kap-Soo. They had five sons, and one daughter. At that time, there was a revival meeting at the Woong-cheon Church, led by pastor Kim Ik-Doo who was famous nationwide. Joo attended that meeting. On the last day of the meeting, he was healed by pastor Kim's prayer. At that moment, he decided to become a pastor like pastor Kim Ik-Doo.

In 1922, he entered Pyongyang Theological Seminary. After he graduated from this seminary, he was appointed a Choryang Church's senior pastor. The Choryang Church was established by missionary W. M. Baird in 1892.¹⁰⁹ After a successful ministry, he moved to the MunChang Church in MaSan on June 1931, where he proved himself as to be successful minister from 1931 to 1936. But, tragically, his first wife died on May 1933. Pastor Joo was very sad. But, he was too busy to go into mourning. He had to take care of his children, as well as of his old mother.¹¹⁰

People recommended that pastor Joo should remarry. At last, Oh Jung-Mo was recommended by most members of the congregation. She was born in PyungNam province in 1903. She was a teacher at Ma-San girl's high school, and attended the MunChang Church at that time, where pastor. Joo was the senior pastor. Finally, she agreed to marry pastor Joo. They were married in November 1935. During his imprisonment, she supported him devotionally. At that time, the Sanchunghyun Church was looking for a pastor and asked Joo to be their pastor, but he turned down the invitation due to his ministry with the MunChang Church. However, elder Cho Man-Sik, his former teacher in the Osan school and an elder in Sanchunghyun Church, persuaded him that this was the will of God for him.

¹⁰⁹ Hae-Yeun Kim, op. cit., p.288.

¹¹⁰ In-Soo Kim, op. cit., p.24.

At last, he accepted elder Cho Man-Sik's request. This acceptance took him to the front line of the battle of the Non-Shinto Shrine Worship movement,¹¹¹ because the Sanchunghyun Church at that time was famous nationwide. After the middle of the 1930s, the Japanese administration began to intensify the campaign on Shinto Shrine Worship. Most official organizations in Korea agreed, under compulsion by the Japanese administration, to practice Shinto Shrine Worship.

Nevertheless, there were Christians who fought against Shinto Shrine Worship to the end. Pastor Joo was one of them. In fact, he had already pronounced a Non-Shinto Shrine Worship agreement in his presbytery when he served as the first senior pastor of the Choryang Church in Busan.

Upon his first violation in February of 1938, he was imprisoned for seven years on the charge of disturbing the order, but he continued his protest. Records differ on the time and duration of the violations, but four times—from February to June 1938(first imprisonment); from August 1938 to February 1939(second imprisonment); from August 1939 to April 1940(third imprisonment); from August 1940 to April 21, 1944, when he was martyred (fourth imprisonment)-for a total of about seven years.¹¹²

While pastor Joo resisted Shinto Shrine Worship, his congregation also kept their faith. The Sanchunghyun Church rejected any pastor who participated in Shinto Shrine Worship while pastor Joo was in jail.¹¹³ At that time it was difficult to find a preacher, because almost all pastors and elders bowed down in front of Shinto, except those who were in prison. Early every morning, his congregations prayed for

¹¹¹ Young-Hun Lee, op. cit., p.211.

¹¹² The Korea Institute for Advanced Theological Studies ed., *Joo Ki-Chul*, (The KIATS Press, 2008), p.16.

¹¹³ In-Soo Kim, op.cit., p.170.

pastor Joo. Especially, missionary C.F. Bernheisel prayed with them. He was the pastor who established and first ministered to the Sanchunghyun Church. In spite of the fact that he could not lead worship service officially, due to Japan police's surveillance, his presence comforted the congregation of the Sanchunghyun Church. He noted:

During his last six weeks, I have been attending assembly for pastor Joo at 5:30 every morning at his church. We have been praying for him with our utmost sincerity. My wife also has been attending every assembly, in spite of the possibility of physical suffering, for attending a prayer meeting.¹¹⁴

When he was imprisoned for the fourth time, the Pyongyang presbytery annulled the pastoral license of pastor Joo and closed down the Sanchunghyun Church, which stood as the linchpin of resistance against Shinto Shrine Worship during his imprisonment. He suffered incarceration and ruthless torture.¹¹⁵ His physical condition was getting worse from torture and beatings. Especially, his lungs and heart were in a serious condition. He could not walk on account of the horrible beatings. In the middle of April 1944, his wife and last son, Joo Sung-Jong, visited him in prison.¹¹⁶ It was the last meeting between them. His wife noticed that he would die very soon, and was very sad, but asked him what he wanted. He said:

1. Please take care of my mother.
2. I just want to drink Sungnyung (kind of Korean food).
3. I will pray for the Korean church before God. Please tell it to the Sanchunghyun church.

¹¹⁴ C.F. Bernheisel's letter to Rev. S. Wright, Nov.14, 1939, quoted from In-Soo Kim, *Lamb of Jesus: Joo Ki-Chul*, (Hongsungsa, 2007), p.171.

¹¹⁵ KIATS, op. cit., p.21.

¹¹⁶ 각주 넣어야 함.

4. Bury me at Pyongyang Dolbak mountain, instead of

Woongchun (his hometown). When my mother dies, bury her with me.¹¹⁷

While pastor Joo was in prison for the last four years, he was willing to die, standing firm in his faith in Jesus Christ. He died in prison on 22nd April 1944.¹¹⁸ Joo's son and elder Woo Gye-Jun went to the prison to fetch his body. He was buried in the public cemetery in Pyongyang on Dolbak mountain. With pastor Joo dead, his wife, Oh Jung-Mo, was continually persecuted and supervised by the Japanese police, because a lot of people respected her, as they did pastor Joo. She died in 1947 from breast cancer, and was buried at Dolbak mountain beside her loved husband, Joo Ki-Chul.

3.2.2 Joo Ki-Chul's thoughts and theological background

The lasting legacy of Joo Ki-Chul is his opposition and resistance against the enforcement of Shinto Shrine Worship. This orientation not only determined the trajectory of his pastoral life, but eventually helped crystallize and shape the Joo Ki-Chul model of martyrdom. His life and ministry run parallel to the Japanese colonial rule in Korea with its policy on religion, especially its policy towards Christianity and the subsequent conflict with the Korean Church. His faith in the gospel was the source of the vitality and energy that sustained him throughout his life.

In 1922, the year he entered Pyongyang Theological Seminary, Japanese colonial rule with its harsh measures disseminated throughout Korea, providing the catalyst for the anti-Japanese sentiments spreading in the country. In 1925, after

¹¹⁷ In-Seo Kim, *Kim In- Seo's writing* Vol.5, (Kidokgyumunsa, 1976), p.169.

¹¹⁸ Lee Young-Hun, op. cit., p.216.

three years of theological training, and around the time of his graduation, the Public Security Law was instituted and Chosun Shingung¹¹⁹, the headquarters of Shinto Shrine Worship in Korea, was established.¹²⁰ This meant that in the year of Joo Ki-Chul's ordination in the ministry, he clearly saw the forces against which he would have to fight to expose their identity. The yoke of oppression that would eventually lead to his unbearable suffering many years later took shape as a legalized enterprise.

His reasons for opposing Shinto Shrine Worship can be summarized with three points.¹²¹ Firstly, he regarded Shinto Shrine Worship as idolatry and a betrayal of God's command. To him, to Shinto Shrine Worship meant a transgression of the first and second commandment of God's law in the Decalogue.

Secondly, he thought of Shinto Shrine Worship to be a suppression of the individual's freedom of conscience and religion.

Lastly, he opposed it for the sake of the purity and holiness of the church. To him, the continuous oppression by the Japanese colonial rule was ultimately aimed at destroying the Korean Church. Pastor Joo Ki-Chul fought to preserve freedom of religion, spiritual liberty, the purity of faith, and the holiness of the church.

Pastor Joo was a firm conservative and evangelical, who believed the Bible to be the only guidebook for faith and life in theological studies. Pastor Joo consented to the complete inspiration of the Bible by the Holy Spirit, and adhered truly to the tradition and polity of the Presbyterian Church. These convictions shaped the

¹¹⁹ A Japanese Shrine built in Namsan in which Japanese gods were worshiped.

¹²⁰ KIATS, op. cit., p.19.

¹²¹ Ibid, p.20.

theological foundation for his opposition Shinto Shrine Worship.¹²²

Nevertheless, pastor Joo's struggle never surpassed the range of individual and ecclesial opposition. He was not interested in a systematized campaign to structure a resistance movement. This set him apart from Han Sang-Dong and others, because he thought that any resistance to Shinto Shrine Worship must come from a person's conviction and conscience. While the collectivization of value systems might strengthen the resolve of an organization, it can also deny the voluntary nature and the value of doing so.

On April 20, 1939 pastor Joo, who had been under arrest for his involvement in a case concerning the Farming Cattle Association, was released from prison on bail for health reasons. Pastor Han Sang-Dong visited Pyongyang to see pastor Joo, who was convalescing at pastor Chai Jung-Min's home. Gathered there were many fellow activists against Shinto Shrine Worship.¹²³

Pastor Han proposed the establishment of a new presbytery for the people who do not bow to the Shinto Shrine. But pastor Joo said:

In my opinion, the plan would be premature, would not it? The new presbytery and an extensive influence of the opposition campaign would only invite a more forcible measure of suppression. As a result, it would victimize a greater number of Christians. We are pressed now, even without organizing a new presbytery. We will cause immense sacrifice throughout the country by launching into an active opposition campaign. I just wish that this movement would be limited to the ministers who would speak their mind, be arrested and suffer hardships, in order to

¹²² In-Soo Kim, op. cit., p.52.

¹²³ Koon-Sik Shim, *Till the End of the Age: The Life of Rev. Han Sang-Dong, A Living Witness of the Korean Church*, (Kosin College Department of Publication, 1984), p.104.

minimize the sacrifice of Christians.¹²⁴

As a real minister to his flock, he was concerned about the sacrifice of Christians, who were not ministers. The scarcity of his writings handicap the analysis of Joo's thoughts. Nevertheless, there are twenty-five sermons which he preached during the Korean state of emergency.

In his sermons he expressed his beliefs in spite of the Japanese police's various threats against his sermons as tendencious.¹²⁵ They delineate a clear understanding of life and death. His view of life and death not only deals with the problem of human mortality and finitude, but more importantly it shows his attitude of complete faithfulness. His commitment enabled him to fight until martyrdom, and to resist the unjust interference of the national power.

They are also filled with his conviction of Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection, with the hope that flows from it that permeates his faith. His sermons clearly show his judgment of history. This tendency is also expressed in the document ratified by the Shinto Shrine Worship protesters. It presents his prophetic proclamation in his most famous sermon "Il-Sa-Ka-Go" (being organized to die):

Can we live after denying Jesus? Or shall we die following Jesus? To deny Jesus is in reality death, while to die for Jesus means to live in the true sense of the word. The time when Jesus was welcome is past; now it is the time of persecution and suffering; let anyone who does not want to follow after Jesus, go! But from all those who are willing to follow after Jesus are required to deny themselves. Even communists, who deny life after death, are prepared to die for their doctrine. Why are we Christians hesitating to sacrifice our lives for the Lord? Do we not live in

¹²⁴ Ibid, p.105.

¹²⁵ KIATS, op. cit., p.23.

expectation of the resurrection with Christ? No, we already have eternal life. Then, why are we afraid?¹²⁶

His sermons were his confessions, and his words were demonstrated by his life. Each of them is full of the truths of the gospel and the spirit of martyrdom.

3.3. Views of Korean Church leaders on Shinto Shrine Worship

Key figures 4.

Kim Jae-Joon	1901-1987	Pastor and Scholar
Park Yune-Sun	1905-1988	Pastor and Scholar
Park Hyung-Nong	1897-1978	Pastor and Scholar
Son Yang-Won	1902-1950	Pastor
Lee Ki-Sun	1878-1950	Pastor
Han Sang-Dong	1901-1976	Pastor

3.3.1 Acceptance of Shinto Shrine Worship

Most of the liberal theologians supported this point of view. As pointed out previously, conservative ministers and theologians were convinced that Shinto Shrine Worship is idol worship. However, liberal theologians regarded the conservative's point of view as theological ignorance.

¹²⁶ Kim In-Seo, *History of Rev. Joo's Martyrdom and His Sermon Collection*, (Life of Faith press, 1958), For-Written by Rev.Son Yang-won, pp.14-15.

Chung Ha-Eun, a South Korean theologian, said.

Joo Ki-chul's death is not the mission of Christianity. It differs from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's resistance against the Nazis. It is more self-alienation on account of fundamentalism.¹²⁷

Moreover, Prof. An Pyong-Mu (1922-1996)¹²⁸ criticized pastor Joo Ki-Chul, saying "His seemingly heroic performance was caused by his wrong heroism; he was purposely looking for an opportunity to be martyred for his own honor." While conservatives suffered torture in the prison for their faith, liberal theologians usurped the lead of the Korean church, When the Pyungyang Theological Seminary, which opposed against Shinto Shrine Worship, was shut down in May 1938.

In April 1939, liberal theologians established the Chosun Theological Seminary. Chae Pil-Guen, Kim Young-Joo, Ham Tae-Young were significant members of that seminary. Prof. Kim Jae-Joon (1901-1987)¹²⁹ is the one who consolidated the foundation of the seminary. He declared that there was no theology in Korea before Chosun Theological Seminary, denying 50 years of history of Korean Christianity.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Ha-Eun Chung, *Eighty Year History of Korean Christian Social Ethics : A Look at Nationalism and Socialism*, (Christian literature society of Korea, 1966), p.45.

¹²⁸ Korean theologian. He studied New Testament at Heidelberg University, where he graduated in 1965. He taught at Kangnam Universtiy and Hankuk Theological Seminary. An was dismissed from two positions because of his involvement in the democratic movement in Korea, and he was imprisoned in 1976. He was one of the founders of Minjung theology.

¹²⁹ Korean Presbyterian minister and theologian. Kim studied in Japan and the United States, where he received a Th.M degree in 1929 from Princeton Theological Seminary. He helped to establish Chosun Theological Seminary in 1939 and served until 1961 as professor and president of the institution that became Hankuk Presbyterian Seminary, the seminary of the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea(Kijang).

¹³⁰ Kyung-Bae Min, *History of Korea's Christianity*, (DaehanKidokgyuchulpansa, 1982), p.449.

According to 'Kim Jae-Joon',¹³¹ he opposed Shinto Shrine Worship as a Sungin Commerical High school's teacher in 1934. But he kept silent about it since he became a prime member of the Chosun Theological Seminary in 1939. That means he accepted Shinto Shrine Worship for himself, as well as for the seminary since then. Min Kyung-Bae¹³² defends people, who bowed to the Shinto Shrine, saying:

We can not blame the people who bowed to the Shinto Shrine. Because we can not imagine the horrible situation under the Japanese empire at that time.¹³³

However, the fact that there were people who sacrificed their lives for Jesus Christ in spite of the horrible persecution makes it difficult to resist the conclusion that they were not honest before the Lord.

3.3.2 Escape Shinto Shrine Worship through exile

Pastor Park Yune-Sun (1905-1988) is an outstanding scholar, who influenced Korea's theology and Christianity. He was born in the Pyungnam province, on December 11, 1905. He graduated from Pyungyang Theological Seminary in 1934. Pastor Park received a Th.M. degree from the Westminster Theological Seminary in 1936.

While many ministers, including Joo Ki-Chul, Son Yang-Won, Han Sang-Dong, were put in jail because they opposed Shinto Shrine Worship, he finished his doctor's course. He went to Japan and Manchuria to avoid persecution. From the late 1930s on, Western missionaries were forced to leave Korea by Japan colonial

¹³¹ Samuel Chun, *Kim Jae-Joon*, (Salim, 2003), p.97.

¹³² He is church historian in South Korea.

¹³³ Kyung-Bae Min, op. cit., p.431.

government. At that time, Prof. Park Hyung-Nong (1897-1978)¹³⁴, a leader among conservative theologians, took religious asylum in China, at the Manchuria Theological Seminary, where he taught students who had also sought religious refuge in China.¹³⁵ Chung Sung-Kuh mentioned:

Under the extortion of the Japanese Empire, the Korean Church faced the problem of Shinto Shrine Worship. As a result of rejecting about it, Pyongyang Theological Seminary was shut down. In addition to that, the Korean Church was subjected to persecution. Many ministers, including Joo Ki-Chul, Son Yang-Won, Han Sang-Dong, were put in jail because they rejected Shinto Shrine Worship. In extreme distress, Park Hyung-Nong and Park Yune-Sun went to Japan and Manchuria to seek refuge.¹³⁶

Park Hyung-Nong and Park Yune-Sun, they were close friends as comrade. Thus, pastor Park Yune-Sun taught students at Manchuria Theological Seminary. When Korea was liberated from the oppression of the Japanese Empire in 1945, he confessed that he once joined Shinto Shrine Worship while he stayed at Manchuria.

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¹³⁴ Korean minister and theologian in the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Hap-Dong). He studied in the United States at Princeton Theological Seminary, earning Th.M degrees. Park then received a Ph.D. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He was the gatekeeper of conservative theology in the Presbyterian Churches of Korea and was deeply involved in the theological controversies that led to divisions within the church.

¹³⁵ Myung-Suk Shim, *The doctrine of repentance in reformed perspective*, (The University of Pretoria, 2006), p.314.

¹³⁶ Sung-Kuh Chung, *Korean church and reformed faith: Focusing on the historical study of preaching in the Korean church*, (Time printing, 1998), p.194.

¹³⁷ Written by Young- Il Seo, translated by Dong-Min Jang, *To teach and to reform: The Life and Times of Dr. Yune Sun- Park*, (Korea Christianity Institute, 2000), p.182.

3.3.3 Resistance to Shinto Shrine Worship

Pastor Son Yang-Won was one of the leading figures who protested against Shinto Shrine Worship. In fact, he was strongly influenced by the pastor Joo Ki-Chul. In 1930s, he was once forced to leave a school because he refused to take the vow to the Japanese Emperor. Both Pastors Joo and Son, along with others such as Yoo Kwan-Soon, (1902-1920)¹³⁸ lived and died by their faith rather than practice what Bonheoffer came to call cheap grace.

After he graduated from Pyongyang Theological Seminary, he became an itinerant evangelist for one year during 1937, before he was appointed as the pastor of the Aeyangwon church in Yeosoo in 1938. While he led revival meetings in various places, he said that “Japan would be ruined someday, because they forced Christians to participate in Shinto Shrine Worship. You must reject that”¹³⁹

When he was restrained by the police in September 1940 and stood in court, he asserted emphatically as a fact of history that a country that offended the Ten Commandments, and idol worship in direct conflict with the truth, will be destroyed.

Pastor Son, though anti-communist and one who spoke against Shinto Shrine Worship, is perhaps best known for displaying what Jesus taught about loving your enemy in the Scripture passage just read.¹⁴⁰ After his two sons were killed by a friend concerning their disagreement over pro-communist support in 1948, Pastor Son went to the officials to not only ask for the boy’s release from prison and death

¹³⁸ Yoo Kwan-Soon was a student and organizer in what would come to be known as the March 1st Movement against the Japanese occupation of Korea in south Chungcheong province. Her deep faith in God and the teachings from the Methodist Ehwa school gave her the courage to act boldly. She died in prison on October 12, 1920.

¹³⁹ Sung-Kuh Chung, *op. cit.*, p.126.

¹⁴⁰ Matthew 5:24.

row, but went even further to adopt him as his own son.¹⁴¹ In two years' time Pastor Son was shot and killed by a North Korean soldier.¹⁴² His adopted son went on to become a minister in his adopted father's house. This shows the power of agape love when it is not simply read about but actually lived.

In the north of Korea, the resistance movement against Shinto Shrine Worship developed under the leadership of pastor Lee Ki-Sun. He and like minded developed the following policy of resistance to Shinto Shrine Worship.

Firstly, do not send children to schools that practice Shinto Shrine Worship. Secondly, conduct Christian services only at the homes of those who did not participate in Shinto Shrine Worship ceremonies, and establish the church upon this foundation of the true faith. This policy was presented to the Christian communities in Manchuria, Pyungan province, and Kyungsang province. At that time Christians who were opposed to Shinto Shrine Worship and had left those churches that accepted Shinto Shrine Worship held their services in house churches or on mountain tops.

At the same time, there was a powerful preacher in Pyongyang. He was Choi Bong-Suk, born in 1869. He graduated at Pyongyang Theological Seminary in 1913 and for forty years proclaimed the gospel in candid catch phrases: Believe in Jesus, and Heaven. He served 12years in the unorganized Church in Manchuria. When he returned to Korea in 1939 he became the evangelical minister of Sanchunghyun church. He was taken to Pyongyang prison as he opposed to Shinto Shrine Worship

¹⁴¹ James & Marti Hefley, *By their blood: Christian martyrs of the twentieth century*, (Baker books, 1996), p.98.

¹⁴² Koon-Sik Shim, *The life of Korean church' martyrs*, (Youngmun, 1994), p.41.

and died in 1944 by the extreme weakness after forty days of fasting.¹⁴³

In the south, the resistance movement against Shinto Shrine Worship was headed by pastor Han Sang-Dong (1901-1976)¹⁴⁴ He was born in the Kyungnam province, on July 30, 1901. He was arrested by the police, and was put into prison for forty days. In November 1938, about ten persons of the same mind received information about pastor Lee Ki-Sun's activities and his principles from Lee Joo-Woon, and gathered to strengthen his policy. Their policy entailed the following:

1. To prevent those who agreed to participate in Shinto Shrine Worship to attend general council meetings.
2. To organize a new district only for those who were opposed to Shinto Shrine Worship.
3. To help each other to contact those who refused to participate in Shinto Shrine Worship.
4. The establishment of Christian services and prayer meetings in house churches, by those who did not attend Shinto Shrine Worship.¹⁴⁵

However, after June of 1940, the Japanese police conducted a national investigation against persons that opposed Shinto Shrine Worship. Those who opposed Shinto Shrine Worship were extensively examined, were arrested, and put into prison. Eventually, there were more than 50 Christian martyrs. If there had not been for those 50 martyrs who fought against Shinto Shrine Worship to the end, the

¹⁴³ Sung-Khu Chung, op. cit., p.357.

¹⁴⁴ Korean Presbyterian minister and founder of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Koshin). He served several churches, including Choryang of Pusan, Munchang of Masan, Sanchunghyun of Pyongyang. In 1939, he organized the Non-shrine Movement against the Japanese colonial government. His activities led to arrest and imprisonment until the liberation of Korea in 1945.

¹⁴⁵ Yang-Sun Kim, *The research of Korea christianity's history*, (Kidokgyumunsa, 1971), p.196.

Korean church would have lost its identity. In addition, they were the “living” martyrs, who did not die in prison, but were only released at independence in 1945. They suffered through all kinds of severe tortures in prison, as they kept their faith in the Lord Jesus.

3.3.4 Present assessment

The group, who opposed Shinto Shrine Worship, was right, because of the many religious tenets in Shinto. This was even acknowledged by the Japanese Christians at that time. When conscientious ministers of religion had resisted Shinto Shrine Worship, Oota, who worked at the Government-general, met with them. He asked them the reason for their disobedience. He was a Christian. The Korean ministers replied that they will keep on fighting unless the Government-general announce that there is no religion in Shinto. But he said “Yes, there is.”¹⁴⁶ Thus, liberal theologians, who said that Shinto Shrine Worship is just a patriotic act, were clearly wrong.

Moreover, the religious factor in Shinto is even reflected in the meaning of the word Shinto, ‘place of the ghost’. The evidence strongly supports the justness of people who resisted Shinto Shrine Worship to the end.

3.4 Conclusion

Chapter 3 indicated the strategy of Japanese imperialism that forced Koreans to

¹⁴⁶ Yune-Tae Oh, op. cit., p.253.

join Shinto Shrine Worship. They achieved their goal with their religious and political plan. In this respect, in 1938, the General Assembly of Presbyterian church authorized Shinto Shrine Worship as a religious action. This decision was important because Presbyterians formed one of the biggest denominations at the time.

There were religious leaders who were against this wrong decision. Pastor Joo Ki-Chul was one of them. In spite of seven years of imprisonments, torture, and intimidation, he proclaimed the truth. At the end he was martyred by the Japanese army. In fact, at the time there were many backsliders, including elders and pastors. But there were also people who kept their faith, as Oh Jung Mo, Joo Ki-Chul's wife and many people in the Sanchunghyun Church. They were the beginners of Korea's underground church movement. Concerning the issue of Shinto Shrine Worship, Korean Church leaders were classified according to their actions and views: collaboration, exile, and resistance.

In conclusion, to every Korean, the Japanese imperialism in Korea was painful times. Korea's Christianity could not embrace the Shinto Shrine Worship, because it is not only a courtesy to the state, but a religious worship. Sadly, when Japanese imperialist had forcibly exacted Shinto Shrine Worship on the Korean church, a lot of people abandoned their faith and bowed to Shinto. They even justified their choice. But some chose exile to avoid persecution, and others kept to their faith in spite of imprisonment, and were martyred for the sake of Jesus Christ, like pastor Joo Ki-Chul, who suffered approximately seven years in prison and died. He kept his faith. Therefore, pastor Joo Ki-Chul and his comrades have powerfully bolstered the Korean Church spiritually.

Chapter 4. The trials of the underground church in North Korea

With its hard-line Communist ideology and a bizarre personality cult built around leader Kim Il-Sung (1912-1994) North Korea ranks as the most tyrannical regime on the face of the earth at present.¹⁴⁷ The Kim Il-Sung regime destroyed churches, executed pastors, and imprisoned thousands upon thousands of Christians. As a result, the only existing church in North Korea, besides two government-controlled churches used for propaganda, is the underground church, made up of believers who worship and keep their faith in secret.

Kim Il-sung died in 1994. However, the death of Kim Il- Sung did not change anything in North Korea. Kim Jung-Il, his son, accomplished the hereditary succession of power. Thus, North Korea continues to be a closed society, isolated from the international community. North Korea maintains the same dogmatic communist regime under the same ‘Juche’¹⁴⁸ ideology.

Politically, the North Korean people are living in an extensive gulag. Economically, they experience a shortage of food, a shortage of energy and of foreign currency. The government relies on relentless propaganda, and an inclusive surveillance system to control virtually every act, thought and desire of its citizens. It demands and rewards loyalty to the self-styled “Great Leader” Kim, classifying citizens on that basis, and accordingly granting them access to housing, education, employment and even food.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Paul French, *North Korea: The paranoid peninsula-a modern history*, (Zed book, 2005), p.272.

¹⁴⁸ It means ‘self-reliance.’ It is also called ‘Kim Ij Sung-ism.’

¹⁴⁹ Byung-Hee Yang, *North Korea’s Church: yesterday and today*, (Kukminilbo, 2006), p.69.

North Korea's government has successfully suppressed all non-governmental organizations, forbids opinions not held by the government, and punishes dissent of any kind. Though the regime's strict secrecy precludes knowing the actual number with certainty, the U.S State Department estimates that North Korea holds between 105,000 and 150,000 political prisoners.¹⁵⁰ In spite of a horrible situation like that, there are people who have kept to their faith, at risk of their lives. This chapter is a story about them. Focusing on periodization, this chapter attempts to provide a precise historical perspective in order to understand the North Korean Christianity (especially the underground church)

4.1 The historical background of the Korean Church. (The period of persecution of the Korean church)

Key figures 5.

Robert Tomas	1839-1866	Missionary
Allen	1858-1932	Doctor and Missionary
John Ross	1842-1915	Missionary
Underwood	1859-1916	Presbyterian Missionary
Appenzeller	1858-1902	Methodist Missionary
Samuel Moffet	1864-1939	Missionary
R.A. Hardie	1865-1949	Missionary

¹⁵⁰ Yoon Yue-Sang, *2009 North Korea Religious freedom white book*, (North Korea's human right information center, 2009), p.112.

Roosevelt	1882-1945	Politician
Stalin	1879-1953	Politician
Kim Il-Sung	1912-1994	Politician

4.1.1 The beginning of the Protestant Church under Japanese oppression (1866-1945)

Tertullian once said, “The blood of a martyr is the seed of the church.” In Korea, numerous people shed their blood. A Welshman, Robert Thomas (1839-1866), was the first protestant martyr in Pyungyang province. This Welsh missionary with the London Missionary Society, He went to Beijing in 1863 and met two Korean traders who told him about Catholic converts, who had no Bibles.

Thomas became an agent of the Scottish Bible Society, and traveled to Korea to sell Bibles. Later he found a job as an interpreter on the armed American schooner, the General Sherman. As the boat traveled around Korea, Thomas handed out Bibles. When the boat was involved in a firefight with the Korean army near Pyungyang¹⁵¹, Thomas jumped overboard with his Bibles, and handed them out to the angry crowd on the river bank, shouting, “Jesus, Jesus.” He handed his last Bible to his executioner. The Korean authorities ordered people to destroy their Bibles. Some used them as wallpaper, and those who came to believe in Jesus, formed a Presbyterian congregation. Many of the early Korean Christians embraced the Christian gospel through reading the Bible given to them by Thomas. His blood was

¹⁵¹ Sang-Bok Kim, The church in North Korea, *Asia Theological Association*, (1989), p.160.

a foundation of the Korean church.¹⁵²

A new day arrived in 1882 with the signing of the Shufelt Treaty, which established diplomatic relations between Korea and the United States of America. The Korean court believed that a treaty with a western power would serve as a deterrent to the increasing encroachment of the Japanese. The treaty opened the country to residence by American citizens, but, unlike the “unequal treaties” of China, no mention was made of the propagation of the Christian faith.

Meanwhile, Dr. Allen had arrived in Seoul just before the coup.¹⁵³ He was introduced to the king not as missionary but as a United States legation doctor. He could not even think about any missionary work in the anti-Western, anti-Christian land. However he was invited to treat Min Young-Ik, a high-ranking official of considerable influence, who was seriously wounded during the 1884 coup. Through his medical skills, Allen established a personal relationship with the powerful Min family, King Kojong, and other court officials. As a matter of fact, Allen was able to open a modern hospital, the Kwanghyewon, in Seoul in April 1885 with support from King Kojong and the Min family.¹⁵⁴ Because of personal relationships, Allen and other missionaries, including Horace G. Underwood, Henry G. Appenzeller, John W. Heron, and Mr. and Mrs. William Scranton, who arrived from America in 1885, were able to establish additional mission hospitals and schools. These organizations became the first places where missionaries could contact Koreans and influence them to change their anti-Western, anti-Christian views. By providing Koreans

¹⁵² Young-Kyu Park, *The great revival in Korea 1907*, (Llifebook, 2005), p.13.

¹⁵³ The reformists planned the assassination of prominent politicians affiliated with China at a reception to be given on December 4, 1884, but the plot was not fully carried out. The reformists first called on King Kojong(1863-1907) at the royal palace and pressed for his sanction of their reform plan. On December 5, they assassinated military commanders and ministers inside the palace on their way to a royal audience. The reformists were forced to flee to Japan.

¹⁵⁴ Young-Jae Kim, *The history of Korean Church*, (GaehyukJuishinhanghyuphoi, 1992), p.67.

modern medical treatment and education, the early missionaries began to establish a good reputation with them.

Although the missionaries came into contact with many Koreans in and around these missionary hospitals and schools, they could neither preach Christianity openly nor convert Koreans themselves to the Western religion immediately. Under such circumstances, medical and educational work proved to be the best method for proselytizing. The Koreans who were treated in mission hospitals naturally came into contact with the missionaries. The number of patients grew rapidly to the point of requiring expanded facilities to accommodate them.

In the field of education, Henry G. Appenzeller was permitted to open the first modern school for boys, the Paichai School, and Mrs. Mary F. Scranton opened the first modern school for girls, the Ehwa School, in 1885.¹⁵⁵ In other words, through these mission hospital and schools, the early missionaries were able to contact the hostile Koreans and even to convert some of them to Protestant Christianity. In fact, a small Protestant Christian community began to form in and around these institutions.

On the other hand, in 1874, John Ross, a Scottish Presbyterian missionary, who was working in the area of Sandong, went to Dandong, which is located on the border of China and North Korea, with the vision to evangelize Korea.¹⁵⁶ In 1887 he produced the first Korean translation of the New Testament with the help of his Korean interpreter, Lee Eung-Chan. Seo Sang-Ryun, a peddler of Chinese medicines, was converted by Ross and returned home carrying a supply of the Gospel portions. In 1887, he led seven of his friends to Seoul, where they sought out

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p.77.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p.63.

Underwood, requesting to be baptized. The village of Sorai, from which these men had come, has been honored as the cradle of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

A missionary, Samuel Moffat, settled down at Pyungyang and established a mission place in 1894. Due to his dutiful efforts many churches were established in Pyungyang. In 1907, the Presbyterians conferred degrees upon the first class at their Pyungyang Theological Seminary, ordained the first seven graduates, sent out their first missionaries, and formed the presbytery of all Korea, which became the first and largest protestant denomination.¹⁵⁷

During the same year, there were great revivals in Pyungyang. The starting point of the 1907 Pyungyang Great Revival could be traced to a prayer conference of Methodist missionaries for a week of prayer and Bible study at Wonsan Beach in 1903.¹⁵⁸

R.A. Hardie, a medical missionary who had given up his medical practice to concentrate on evangelistic work, led the group, spoke of his own failures and frustrations, and shared how he had become conscious of a new spirit of power. The group experienced a similar period of confession and filling of the Holy Spirit. Subsequently, he shared his confession and repented before the Korean congregations, which ignited a flame of revival and a receiving of the Holy Spirit as never experienced before.¹⁵⁹ As the revivals grew in number and intensity throughout Wonsan, the following year witnessed the outbreak of an enormous blessing and revival that swept the area through Pyongyang, Seoul and beyond.

In the meantime, Japan annexed Korea in 1910. The next year 124 Koreans

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p.127.

¹⁵⁸ Hae-Yuen Kim, op. cit., p.153.

¹⁵⁹ Young-Kyu Park, op. cit., p.41.

were arrested for the outlandish claim by the Japanese that they were plotting to assassinate the Japanese Governor-General in Korea. Of the 124, 98 were Christians.¹⁶⁰ Many Christians joined the independence movements despite severe hardship. In particular, the Japanese regime fabricated cases to remove Christian figures that were very influential with the people. A lot of Christians suffered brutal torture, and even died from the injuries sustained. They lost their lives during the Independence Movement.¹⁶¹ The Independence Movement of 1919 was composed of a large number of Protestant Christians. Nearly half of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Protestants. These men had a significant influence on the nature of the movement, especially through their insistence on non-violence. This characteristic of the Korean demonstration stood in stark contrast to the brutal Japanese attempt to suppress it. The non-violence of the Koreans won them much sympathy in the western world, while the harsh measures which the Japanese took against the Korean Christians made manifest the Japanese animosity towards the Church. Among them, members of the Jeamri Church, the Suchon Church, and the Hwasuri Church were brutally massacred by the Japanese.

When Japan began total war against China in 1937, Japan was determined to establish the peninsula as its own secure base on the Asian mainland, for Korea was the key to Japan's thrust into Asia, providing the direct overland route into Manchuria and China. Japan thus attempted to assimilate Korea and its people vigorously and relentlessly through the policy of "Japanization" in order to incorporate them as part of the Japanese empire.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Duk-Joo Lee, *First story of Korea church*, (Hongsungsa, 2006), p.232.

¹⁶¹ In 1919, a popular movement broke out in Korea which aimed to bring about independence from Japan. Remarkably, years before Gandhi and Martin Lutehr King, Jr., the movement was based on nonviolent principles.

¹⁶² Andrew E. Kim, *A history of Christianity in Korea*, (Korea Overseas Information Service, 1995),

As noted in chapter 3, Japan attempted to impose Shinto Shrine Worship on its entire people, including the Koreans, to bind the whole empire into a loyal and dutiful force for the Asian conquest. Accordingly, the Japanese government in 1935 ordered all educational establishments, including Christian's schools, to participate in Shinto Shrine Worship.¹⁶³ Shinto shrines were instituted in every town, and schools were ordered to enforce student's participation at Shinto ceremonies.

In 1938, after strong protest, the Presbyterians decided to involuntarily comply with the Japanese government order to participate in Shinto Shrine Worship. Few Christians resisted, and campaigned hard to oppose the order, risking imprisonment and death. Nearly 90% of the missionaries had to leave Korea in 1940. By 1942, all missionaries were expelled. During 1942-1943, 3,000 Christians leaders were imprisoned for professing their faith that was considered to be anti-Japanese; and as many as fifty of them suffered martyrdom, primarily through mistreatment in prisons.

4.1.2. From liberation to the Korean War. (1945-1953)

The Korea was freed from Japanese oppression in 1945. With the defeat of Japan in World War II Korea was liberated, but the festival was short-lived, owing to international intervention in Korean affairs. The agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union to participate jointly in the surrender of the Japanese army in Korea split the country into two opposing sides.¹⁶⁴

p.9.

¹⁶³ James Huntley Grayson, *Korea: A Religious History*, (Routledge Curzon, 1989), p.161.

¹⁶⁴ Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Worst of the Worst: dealing with repressive and rogue nations* (World peace foundation, 2007), p.90.

It is ironic that it was Roosevelt (1882-1945) who urged Stalin (1879-1953) to become involved in the Far East war after the defeat of Germany that gave the Soviets access to Manchuria and Korea. Had Roosevelt not encouraged Stalin to declare war on Japan, there would have been no Soviet Union troops in the Korean peninsula, no Korean divide, and no Korean war.¹⁶⁵

With the U.S force in the south and its Soviet Union counterpart in the north, the two camps became deadlocked over the type of government Korea should have. Besides the struggle between two super powers, Korea was already faced with immense internal problems, including the rehabilitation of the economy, which had been thoroughly exploited by the Japanese, and the absorption of the nearly two million returnees from China and Japan.¹⁶⁶

In the “divided” Korea, the experience of the churches in North and South Korea was markedly different, in addition to the nation-wide bitter disputes between those who collaborated with the Japanese and those who resisted. In the north, the newly established communist government did not appreciate the prominence of Christian leaders in local politics, or the creation of Christian politics. As with the Japanese authorities, therefore, the communist government in the north came to see the churches as a threat to its rule. In addition, the North Korean government considered Christianity (especially Protestantism) to be closely connected with the U.S. In 1941, Stalin chose Kim Il-Sung, who was taking refuge in Soviet Union from the Japanese, as the puppet ruler of their satellite state.¹⁶⁷

In December 1945 Kim Il-Sung took over the leadership of the northern branch

¹⁶⁵ Seok-Ryul Yoo, *Life of light in North Korea*, (Yeyoung communication, 2008), p.258.

¹⁶⁶ Andrew E. Kim, op. cit., p.11.

¹⁶⁷ Chang-Il Kim, *A witness of North Korea's underground church*, (Kunsamchulpana, 2005), p.34.

of the Communist Party. Early in 1946 the North Korean Interim People's Committee was established, and was gradually dominated by Kim, who then used it to assimilate the autonomous organizations within the north. In July 1946 the North Korean Worker's Party was created, which unified all existing left-wing groups. Kim was one of the dominant figures within the new party, but was not yet entirely in control of all aspects of the political apparatus.¹⁶⁸

Kim Il-Sung, with the support of the Soviet Union military, ignored the advice of the National Preparation Committee, led by elder Cho Man-Sik.¹⁶⁹ In the process of communization in North Korea, Kim Il-Sung purged many who were considered to be his enemies. He and the Soviet Union feared the North Korean churches most of all. In 1945, Yoon Ha-Young and Han Kyung-Jik organized the Christian Socialist Party.

The first clash between the two sides occurred in March 1946 when the government forbade the planning by local churches to hold the first commemoration of the 1919 demonstration for independence. Thereafter the communist government deliberately conducted all their important affairs on Sundays to interfere with church activities.¹⁷⁰ Kim Il-Sung formed the Chosun Christian Federation in 1949 to take over the North Korean churches and began persecuting church leaders through it.

There is a report that 150 Catholic priests were murdered in 1950.¹⁷¹ Incarcerated Christians were kept in cells so crowded that there was no room to sleep. They were underfed so severely that some starved to death. They were denied medical care, forced to perform harsh physical labor and were physically

¹⁶⁸ Seok-Ryul Yoo, *op. cit.*, p.259.

¹⁶⁹ He is the key person in this chapter. He was the first to establish underground church in North Korea.

¹⁷⁰ Duk-Joo Lee, *op. cit.*, p.98.

¹⁷¹ Yoo-Sang Yoon, *op. cit.*, p.90.

abused. Many Christians fought fiercely against the communists and suffered difficulties or lost their lives.¹⁷² Although the situation in the south was more amicable, the religious circumstance was equally complex. With the new found religious freedom, the missionaries, who had been absent in Korea since 1941, started to return.

There was, however, strong disagreement about the retaining of the Japanese-imposed structure of church union. Confrontations between the Japanese “collaborators” and Korean nationalists would trouble the church in the south for many years thereafter, leaving the church divided permanently. Subsequently, there emerged many separate Methodist and Presbyterian bodies.¹⁷³

Far more tragic than these disputes among the churches, however, was the outbreak of the Korean War on June 25, 1950. Unexpectedly, the North Korea invaded the South Korea without a declaration of war.¹⁷⁴ For the Korean churches, the three-year war proved to be the most appalling sequence of events that outweighed the persecution suffered by the Catholics during the nineteenth century. The communists singled them out as being anti-Communist and as sympathizers of the American imperialism, hence, tens of thousands of Christians perished, many of whom were imprisoned and systematically killed.

At the beginning of 1953 Truman was elected as the new U.S President. In March 1953 Stalin died.¹⁷⁵ Thus, the era in which the Korean War had begun was fast receding. This change was reflected at the negotiating table in 1953 as the talks progressed towards the conclusion of an armistice, which all recognized as

¹⁷² Young-Hun Lee, *The history of Korea Christianity*, (Concordia press, 1978), p.233.

¹⁷³ Hae-Yuen Kim, op. cit., p.301.

¹⁷⁴ D.S. Lewis, *Korea: Enduring Division?*, (Longman, 1988), p.12.

¹⁷⁵ Chang-Il Kim, op. cit., p.66.

inevitable. At last, the armistice agreement was signed at Panmunjom¹⁷⁶ on July 27, 1953.

Total South Korean casualties probably numbered something in the order of 1,313,000, while Chinese and North Korean losses are generally thought to have exceeded 900,000 and 520,000 respectively. In addition to its military losses the North Korean suffered civilian casualties in excess of 1,000,000, as the U.S bombing offensive left each of its cities in utter ruins.¹⁷⁷

During the Korean War about three million North Korean refugees moved to South Korea. Among these were many Christians and they began planting churches across South Korea. The Korean War left deep emotional scars in the minds of the Korean people. However, this period immediately following the war provided the most opportune time for evangelization in South Korea.

4.1.3 After the Korean War (1953~) (Focus on North Korea's Christianity)

Until 1950, according to some estimates, there were 2,850 churches, 700 pastors, and 300,000 Christians in North Korea.¹⁷⁸ As mentioned above, during the Korean War about three million North Koreans, including a large percentage of Christians, migrated to South Korea.

By the time the cease-fire was signed between North and South Korea, only a small group of Christians remained in North Korea. Some of them were killed or

¹⁷⁶ A village of northwest South Korea just south of the 38th parallel. Truce negotiations for the Korean War were held here from 1951 to 1953, when the truce was officially signed.

¹⁷⁷ Geoff Simons, *Korea: The Search for Sovereignty*, (St.Martin's Press, 1995), p.216.

¹⁷⁸ Jong-Suk Kim, *Bukan Gyohwae Jaegunron*, (Jili wa Jayoo Press, 1998), p.104.

exiled to northern labor camps. The Labor Party of North Korea expelled all religious people from the society, starting at the end of the Korean War in 1953. Constantly, under the name of an enormous search programme, the Central Communist Party in 1958 started to classify citizens into three large groups and into fifty-six different levels. As a result of this search, North Korea's government arrested a lot of Christians; either executed them or sent them to labor camps.

During the Korean War the Chosun Christian Federation was used to help build the communist country, but the North Korea government dismissed the Chosun Christian Federation after their five year economic plan had been fulfilled. However, in 1972 the Chosun Christian Federation unexpectedly started to influence the churches in South Korea, with the consent of the South-North Adjustment Committee.

The South Korea churches experienced exceptional growth in the 1970s.¹⁷⁹ The North Korean government needed the Chosun Christian Federation as a counterpart for it. Kim's regime expropriated the Christian churches, to serve as part of the country's elaborate propaganda machine. The Government's construction in late 1988 of one Protestant and one Roman Catholic Church building in Pyongyang is the most glaring evidence of it.¹⁸⁰

It normally features on the seriously controlled tours of Pyongyang given to Western visitors, to give Western observers the sham impression that religion in North Korea is alive and well. However, Go Tae-Woo wrote "Religious history in North Korea clearly does not exist. If it exists at all, it is no more than the history of brutal persecution and eradication, or the process of a religious policy full of fabrication and tricks."¹⁸¹ In spite of this, there remained in North Korea individual

¹⁷⁹ Andrew E. Kim, op. cit., p.11.

¹⁸⁰ Byung-Hee Yang, op. cit., p.131.

¹⁸¹ Tae-Wu Go, *Religious Policy in North Korea*, (Minjokmunhwasa, 1988), p.20.

Christians who are sincere in their belief, but most of North Korea's experts have concluded that official Christianity under Kim is in a large measure a fraud, even its ministers.

A British journalist visiting North Korea last year met with a leader of the Federation who couldn't name the first three books of the Bible, and a scholar studying North Korean religion has heard several Korean protestant leaders say that Kim is more important than Jesus. Church leaders recognize the cult of Kim as the country's dominant ideology, and as the U.S. State Department noted in its 1991 report on North Korea, they are not known to have preached that there is any moral authority higher than that of Kim Il-Sung¹⁸²

Pyongyang, nicknamed "Asia's Jerusalem," was one of the continent's most Christian cities. Today, the North Korean Government claims that there are only 10,000 Protestants and no more than a few thousand Catholics in a country whose total population is over 21 million.¹⁸³

4.1.4 Suspicions concerning the church in North Korea

It has been disputed whether official Christians, who appeared after the 1980s, are faithful or not. Ryu Dae-Young¹⁸⁴ insisted:

The year 1988 was a historical landmark for Christianity in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK-North Korea). In the fall of that year, one protestant church and a Catholic chapel were built in Pyongyang and open to public worship

¹⁸² Seok-Ryul Yoo, *op. cit.*, p.378.

¹⁸³ Yoo-Sang Yoon, *op. cit.*, p.54.

¹⁸⁴ He was an associate professor at Handong University, South Korea. During 2005-2006.

for the first time since the end of the Korean War. It was a most dramatic development that visibly symbolized the changes in North Korean Christianity¹⁸⁵

He denied the view's that the religious policy of North Korea after 1980s is government propaganda, and said:

More than anything else, it reveals a conviction that South Korean and international Christians should open mindedly acknowledge what their brothers and sisters in North Korea have achieved on their own terms. South Korean and international Christians should be ready to give a legitimate and well-deserved place to North Korean Christians in the history of their beloved religion.¹⁸⁶

However, the fact that suspicions have not subsided that the churches in North Korea are mere propaganda organs and not "real" churches at all.¹⁸⁷ The North Korean Labor Party published a booklet called 'Revolution of South Korea and Unification Strategy', based on the principal thoughts of Kim Il Sung.¹⁸⁸

This booklet gives Kim Il-Sung's guide on how North Korea should enhance the South Korea Revolutionary Movement through the unification strategy, by using the religious force in South Korea which advocates the doctrines of the secular Minjung theology.¹⁸⁹ Since that time they have never forsaken this policy.

¹⁸⁵ Dae-Young Ryu, Religion, Politics, and Church Construction in North Korea, *Theology Today*, Vol.63, (2007), p.493.

¹⁸⁶ Dae-Young Ryu, Fresh wineskin for new wine: A new perspective on North Korea Christianity, *Journal of church & State*, (2006), p15.

¹⁸⁷ From interviews conducted by the author with missionary Kim Ha-Chul (Nick name) on 2010.05.

¹⁸⁸ Byung-Hee Yang, op. cit., p.142.

¹⁸⁹ The word *minjung* is made up from the Chinese character 'min' which means 'people' and the character 'jung' that means 'the mass'. When put them together it translates to 'the ordinary

Ryu did not mention the fact that a lot of real Christians have been killed by the North Korean government even up to this day. In fact, North Korea's Christianity has been completely controlled by its government.

4.2 The underground church

4.2.1 The origin of the underground church

Key figures 6.

Jesus	3 BC- AD 30	Central figure of Christianity
Stephen	?-AD 34	Deacon
Peter	1 BC- AD 67	Apostle
Paul	AD 5- 62	Apostle
Nero	AD 37-68	Emperor of Rome
Domitian	AD 51-96	Emperor of Rome

From the beginning of the church, the believers suffered persecution or were in danger of it.¹⁹⁰ The blood of the martyrs, it has been said, is the seed of the church. (First written by the second-century church father Tertullian). This is not an empty statement. The persecutions the church suffered under the Roman Empire were extremely painful, but they were also extremely fruitful. During the time of suffering

people'.

¹⁹⁰ J.W.C. WAND, *A History of the Early Church*, (Routledge, 1989), p.32.

the church was growing. In the new era, the age of the Church, Christians would learn to suffer some of the most horrible persecutions and forms of death imaginable.

Firstly, Christian persecution started with Jesus himself. At his trial he was asked directly. “Are you the Christ, the son of the blessed one?” Jesus left no room for ambiguity. His first two words were “Yes I am.”¹⁹¹The religious elite in Jerusalem knew what Jesus was saying. It was very clear that He was claiming to be God. As such, Jesus was put to death on a Roman cross for the crime of blasphemy, thus becoming the first martyr for what would become the Christian Church.

Christian persecution was a dramatic part of early church history. For anyone who holds that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a man-made hoax conspired by a group of disciples should check out the legacy of martyrdom. Some of the 12 apostles, and many of the other early disciples, died for their adherence to this story. This is dramatic, since they all witnessed the alleged events of Jesus and still went to their deaths defending their faith.

Around 34 A.D., one year after the crucifixion of Jesus, Stephen was thrown out of Jerusalem and stoned to death.¹⁹² We can call those congregations as the origin of the underground church. Peter was condemned to death and crucified at Rome. Jerome held that, Peter was to be crucified upside down, at his own request, because he said he was unworthy to be crucified in the same manners as his Lord. Paul suffered in the first persecution under Nero. Paul’s faith was so dramatic in the face of martyrdom, that the authorities removed him to a private place for execution by the sword.¹⁹³Paul’s attitude toward suffering would set the stage for many who

¹⁹¹ Mark 14:62.

¹⁹² Alan Watson, *The trial of Stephen: the first Christian martyr*, (the university of Georgia press, 1996), p.62.

¹⁹³ Bart D. Ehrman, *Peter, Paul, & Mary Magdalene: the followers of Jesus in history and legend*,

would come after him. He became an example of living and dying for Christ, both in conduct and in attitude. He taught that Christians should have the same attitude that Christ Himself had, to be “obedient to the point of death.”¹⁹⁴

In the new era of the Church age, Christians would learn to suffer some of the most horrible persecutions and forms of death imaginable. Extreme forms of persecution in the early Church started to escalate around the summer of A.D. 64.¹⁹⁵ There was a massive fire in Rome and tradition holds that it might have been started by the emperor, Nero, in an attempt to do away with a rotting part of the city. Nero took it upon himself to blame the Christians. Almost instantly, and without much investigation, the fury of Rome exploded upon Christianity. Nero was glad to lead the persecution because it kept all eyes away from him as a possible candidate of the disaster. The persecutions under Nero are reported to be among some of the worst in early Church history next to the emperor Domitian who reigned from A.D. 81-96.¹⁹⁶

The Roman emperor Domitian (AD 51-96) was probably one of the cruelest persecutors of Christians.¹⁹⁷ Some believe Domitian wanted to snuff out Christians because he thought they were guilty of sedition. Rome would tolerate any religion as long as that religion did not forbid them to worship the emperor. Early Christians were willing to serve an emperor, but not when he made claims of deity, or when obedience to him contradicted an obedient life to God. Domitian interpreted the Christian behavior as a challenge to his authority and the authority of Rome. Domitian quickly moved to destroy Christianity because he was afraid their views

(Oxford university press, 2006), p.174.

¹⁹⁴ Revelation 2:10.

¹⁹⁵ Philip Carrington, *The Early Christian Church*, (Cambridge at the University press, 1957), p.79.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p.332.

¹⁹⁷ Joyce E. Salisbury, *The blood of martyrs: Unintended consequence of ancient violence*, (Routledge, 2004), p.11.

might spread and Rome might become weak and divided.¹⁹⁸

For many Christians there was not only the physical pain to be suffered, but also the emotional pain of watching loved ones put to a horrible death; and all because they would not deny their Jesus Christ. Christians in the early church who were going through persecution could find comfort and solace from many who had suffered before them.¹⁹⁹ Likewise they have given comfort to the people who would serve Jesus Christ. Some Christians might argue that it would be better to give some recognition to the emperor, rather than to suffer greatly, or to watch family members be put to death. However, the demands of Christianity are such that a believer cannot compromise any substitute of the living Christ.

Any compromise would have been shameful in the face of so many who had testified of Christ with their life. Hundreds and thousands of early Christian believers were empowered by the Spirit of God to face death with great confidence.

4.2.2 The suffering of the North Korean underground church

The North Korean communist regime's persecution of Christians today may be more severe than in any country of the world. Freedom of religion or religious thought does not exist in North Korea. The communist nation has topped the missions organization's World Watch List for eight consecutive years, because of its long history of targeting Christians for arrest, torture and murder. The California-based Open Doors estimates that of the 200.000 North Koreans languishing in

¹⁹⁸ David W. Bercot ed., *A dictionary of early Christians beliefs*, (Hendrikson publishers, 1998), p.220.

¹⁹⁹ Philip Carrington, op. cit., p.195.

political prison 40,000 to 60,000 of them are Christians.²⁰⁰

“It is certainly not a shock that North Korea is No. 1 on the list of countries where Christians face the worst persecution,”²⁰¹ said Open Doors U.S.A President Carl Moeller. He said “There is no other country in the world where Christians are persecuted in such a horrible and systematic manner.” Anyone caught with a Bible is sentenced to 15 years in jail. In some cases, the methods used by prison guards are to pour molten iron on their heads. Even people from Christian backgrounds (going back three generations) are persecuted, just because they have Christianity in their family tree. They are not allowed to work for the government, have limited education possibilities, and in some cases, cannot even marry unless the government approves.

In addition to religious persecution, there is no tolerance for political dissent either. Any word spoken against the government or the country’s dictator, Kim Jong-II, is considered an act of treason, carrying with it an automatic jail sentence. In other words, there are no human rights.²⁰²

Documenting North Korea’s abuse of religious and other human rights is extraordinarily difficult. Korea was long known as the “Hermit Kingdom” because of its tendency toward self- isolation, and North Korea, to this day, allows few Westerners to visit, and even fewer of its own citizens to leave. It has never allowed an independent human rights fact-finding mission into the country. Westerners permitted in North Korea are largely confined within the showcase city of Pyongyang-designed and maintained to impress foreigners-where they are vigilantly

²⁰⁰ Adrienne S. Gaines, North Korea Again Tops List of World’s Worst Persecutors of Christians, *Open Doors*, (2010. 1.6), p.1.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.2.

²⁰² Jasper Becker, *Rogue Regime*, (Oxford University press, 2005), p.65.

supervised. Reports from refugees are also scarce, because the Government's extremely tight security has made fleeing the country nearly impossible.²⁰³

The North Korean government is reported to be setting up fake underground churches, and disguising national security agents as defectors, to expose real Christians.²⁰⁴ The communist state has also been criticized for its all pervasive and severe restrictions on freedom of expression, religion, assembly and movement, its imposition of the death penalty for political reasons, the detention of thousands in prison camps, the punishment and torture of border-crossers, and the maltreatment of people with disabilities.

North Korea's refugees are also in serious problem. More than one hundred thousand North Koreans have fled their country, and continue to do so because of starvation and political oppression. Most of these refugees are scattered, and live under miserable conditions in neighboring countries, constantly facing the threat and fear of coercive repatriation. They live in abject poverty, without any right to live. If they are caught and forcibly repatriated to North Korea, they will be tortured, sent to labor camps or be executed. At the end of 2001, China harbored 50,000 North Korean refugees. Others are in Russia or Mongolia. Severe malnutrition, religious persecution, and extremely poor medical care are driving North Koreans to flee.²⁰⁵

In western countries, the plight of North Korean refugees has drawn the attention of a coalition of religious and human-rights groups. For example, the National Association of Evangelicals in May declared that North Korea is "more brutal, more deliberate, more implacable, and more purely genocidal" than any other

²⁰³ Ibid., p.66.

²⁰⁴ See above at footnote 187.

²⁰⁵ Carnes Tony, Fleeing North Korea, *Christianity Today*, (2002.10.7), p.22.

nation.²⁰⁶

The 1995-1998 North Korean famine starved to death an estimated 2 million people about 10% of the population.²⁰⁷ After the famine subsided, Christians across the border in northeast China saw the trickle of refugees grow into a steady stream. Christians helped them with food, housing, and medical care. Amazingly some of the new arrivals became Christians and, after a period of discipleship, returned to North Korea for their people. The early church's acceptance of faith in God led to their refusal to accept Caesar's lordship over them. Likewise, the North Korea's underground church refused to concede to communist rule that sought to dethrone Jesus as Lord.

4.2.3 The connection between North Korea's underground church and the non-Shinto Shrine Worship movement

This study suggests that there is a connection between North Korea's underground church and the Non-Shinto Shrine Worship movement. Both movements fought under their government's horrible persecution, while they just served their God. Cho Man-Sik is representative.²⁰⁸ During the days Japan ruled over the Korea peninsula, he was an elder of the Sanchunghyun Church. This church, ministered by pastor Joo KI-Chul, was closed by the Japanese government because they resisted Shinto Shrine Worship. As noted above, Elder Cho invited pastor Joo Ki-Chul to Sanchunghyun church.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p.23.

²⁰⁷ Seok-Ryul Yoo, op. cit., p.319.

²⁰⁸ Chang-Il Kim, op. cit., p.163.

Even though pastor Joo Ki-Chul was martyred by the Japanese Police, elder Cho and his congregation persevered against Shinto Shrine Worship to the end. Later when the Soviet Union ruled North Korea, Cho won public recognition as an executive of the National party. Moreover, he started the underground church in North Korea, because Kim Il-Sung's regime persecuted every religion.

Therefore, the Non-Shinto Shrine Worship movement and the North Korean underground churches are very closely linked to each other. They have kept their faith through out the Japanese oppression, and through the persecution of the government of North Korea. The one extended into the other.

4.3 Adversaries of the North Korean underground church

4.3.1 Juche ideas

As mentioned above, North Korea has been described as one of the most repressive and isolated nations in the world, and is ruled by the state religion called "Juche", meaning "self-reliance"²⁰⁹. It was elevated to the status of an all-embracing philosophy, which parallels and upholds the personality cult of Kim Il-Sung. Juche is most successfully explained by Kim's declaration of his personal authority over factional rivals and the parallel assertion of by him North Korea's status in its triangular relationship with the Soviet Union and China. Through Juche, Kim established a vigorous identification of his own personality with North Korea's economic and technological power and international identity.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p.87.

Kim Il-Sung first spoke of Juche in his speech of 1955²¹⁰. In this speech, Kim stated his intention to maintain a stance of militant anti-Americanism, the priority given to heavy industry, and the hard-line drive for collectivization. Juche was the ideological weapon with which he sustained this argument, a vehement polemic against his political rivals. Appealing to nationalist sentiment, Kim portrayed Juche as the creative application of Marxism-Leninism to North Korea's concrete conditions. Furthermore, Juche only allowed for one voice of authority in North Korea. Since the mid-1960s, Juche has been formulated in the following four principles:

1. Juche's ideology. The ruling party should be given sole responsibility for revolutionary construction, because it has the fullest understanding of the country's problems and its potential.
2. Independence in politics. All parties of the international communist movement, regardless of their size, are equal and should be treated with corresponding respect.
3. Autarchy. The state should adhere firmly to the principle of self-reliance, and construct their socialist economy being constructed solely from native material and human resources.
4. Self-defense of North Korea. Armed national defense is the military expression of Juche. External military aid, while important, is only supplementary.²¹¹

Juche has continued to dominate the North Korean ideology. Throughout the 1970s, international conferences on Juche were held. The 1972 constitution proclaimed it to be the ideology of the state. To support his claims to succession, Kim Jung-Il is hailed as having contributed to its creative development.

²¹⁰ Seok-Ryul Yoo, *op. cit.*, p.309.

²¹¹ Byung-Hee Yang, *op. cit.*, p.222.

4.3.2 Close observation by the regime

A further factor that makes it difficult for North Korea's underground church is the tight government observation that exists inside the country. Even if a missionary could enter North Korea he would be extremely restricted in his activities. In North Korea, every action of a foreigner, as well as of every national, is watched by government authorities. North Korea closely resembles a totalitarian state that is under the total control of the central government.²¹²

The institution that monitors the citizens' political behavior is the State Security Agency. It supervises whether people are following every order of the government.²¹³ It uses to keep watch over each citizen through the Five-Household System.²¹⁴ It is a watch system designed to place the entire populace under constant political surveillance. Five households are organized into one team, in which party propagandists supervise the ideological indoctrination of the residents. The key is that every member of the team is used as an informant against everyone else.²¹⁵ Thus far, the North Korean regime has been successful in keeping its people under constant watch and fear. Any complaint against the government or religious activity other than worshipping Kim Jung-Il can be punished by incarceration or death.

²¹² Seok-Ryul Yoo, op. cit., p.43.

²¹³ Robert I. Rotberg, op. cit., p.93.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p.95.

²¹⁵ The Institute for South-North Korea Studies, *The Human Rights Situation in North Korea*, (The Korea Herald, 1992), p.134.

4.4 An outlook on North Korea's future and its underground church

Concern on North Korea's future, nobody knows when or if the government will loosen control over religion. Actually, as the economy worsens, the circumstance in North Korea becomes increasingly unpredictable. However, the point is whether to wait until the government loosens control over religion, or to go ahead with mission efforts that might risk the lives of many foreign missionaries and the North Korean underground church congregations. In order to understand this uncertainty of North Korea, four possibilities will be discussed: no change, reform, militaristic reunification, and voluntary collapse.

4.4.1. Persistence of its system

The first possible scenario for the North Korea regime to follow is that of no change. In this scenario, the Kim Jung-Il regime continues its totalitarian rule by crushing all opponents and critics of the government. Kim Jung-Il upholds the Juche philosophy in all aspects of government, and there is little change in economic, political, or social policies. Perhaps North Korea will enter into better relations with China and Russia, resuming the relationship that upheld North Korea in the 1970s, 1980s and thus alleviating the chronic shortage of food.²¹⁶ On the peninsula, the antagonistic relationship with South Korea is perpetuated with large armies showcased.

Though many North Korea observers state that the regime will be forced to make changes in the near future, it is clear that the North Korea regime shuns change altogether. First, the North Korean regime is so far successful in rejecting

²¹⁶ Young-Whan Kihl, ed. *Korea and the world: Beyond the Cold War* (Westview, 1994), p.101.

change. Kim Jung-Il continues his purges of government and no sign of protests or demonstrations (It must be impossible at the moment) are visible anywhere in the country. Furthermore, the fact that the regime is holding out despite large numbers of people starving to death speaks to the present confidence of regime.²¹⁷ The current North Korea regime has outlived the expectation of most observers, and it is possible that it could continue to do so.

In the case where the North Korean regime follows a “no change” policy, several outcomes for the Korea peninsula are possible. First, it is clearly possible that North Korea continues in its current state for many years to come. North Korea’s ailing economy can be restored from aid and resumed trade with China, and perhaps from Russia or the Middle East. In this case, North Korea’s religious circumstances will face a tremendous obstacle in accessing the country for many years to come. There can also be a perpetual state of this regime where Kim Jung-Il selects a successor and successfully transfers leadership in the future. In fact, surprisingly, Kim Jung-Il is trying to repeat his succession to the regime of his father, Kim Il-Sung (1912-1994), with his youngest son, Kim Jung-Euen.²¹⁸

In this outcome, reunification and the loosening of the government’s control over religion is break over the next forty to fifty years. Another possible outcome of the “no change” scenario could be a sudden collapse of the regime. After resisting change the Kim Jung-Il regime could suddenly collapse via a coup or the willing surrender of the government. In this case, the collapse would be sudden, since no previous signs of change would be visible. Chaos would rein in the Korea peninsula it scenarios of rapid absorption or gradual reunification would be examined. If freedom of religion would be instantly granted, leading to a rush of religious groups entering the country,

²¹⁷ Carroll Borgert with Jeffrey Bartholet, “Days of Hunger,” *Newsweek*, May 5, 1997, p.24.

²¹⁸ Seoul Newspaper, 2010.10.07.

including cults. However, in the case where border movements will be restricted, it is uncertain whether South Korean religious groups will be free to enter North Korea.

4.4.2. Reformation

Reform of the North Korean regime is one of the possible scenarios. In this case Pyongyang may follow the advice of China and open its economy, to international trade and foreign investment albeit slowly. The regime could open new special economic zones aimed at encouraging export growth and technology transfer. Then North Korea will follow the example of China in allowing limited political change over a long period.²¹⁹ People in North Korea could attain to limited religious freedom. If the economy improves over the year, thus alleviating the food crisis of its past. Economic integration with the South may move toward rapprochement with unification many years down the road.

Several factors contribute to making this scenario highly possible. First, Kim Jung-Il might have no other choice but to implement reforms. Amos Jordan notes, “Only a massive infusion of relief aid and economic assistance can sustain the regime in the short and mid-term; only deep economic reforms, coupled with continuing economic aid, can sustain it in the long term.”²²⁰ In fact, signs that the elite are becoming critical of Kim Jung-Il are becoming more visible. Thus, it is likely that North Korea will sooner or later embark on reform, or else at some point his associates will likely topple or exterminate him. Another factor that lends credibility to

²¹⁹ Thomas H. Henriksen & Kyong-Soo Lho ed. *One Korea?: Challenge and prospect for Reunification*, (Hoover institution press, 1994), p.22.

²²⁰ Amos A. Jordan and Jae H. Ku, Coping With North Korea, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 1, Winter 1998, p.33.

the scenario is the belief of some people that the foremost goal of the North Korean regime is national survival, not the forceful domination of the South. These “optimists” believe Pyongyang is gradually trying to end its isolation and is beginning to engage with the outside world.²²¹ However, as noted above, most Russian observers think Kim Jung-Il is simply scared to launch reforms because he remembers the fate of communist reforms in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.²²² Nevertheless, North Korea’s deteriorating economy may be a sufficient incentive for Kim Jung-Il to initiate change.

In a scenario of reform several results on the Korean peninsula are possible. First, the reforms that Kim Jung-Il implements could be successful and follow the case of China. As the economy and government slowly open to change, religion will be increasingly tolerated. This would probably lead to a government-sanctioned church, much like the 3-Self Church in China.²²³ However, Kim Jung-Il would retain control and mediate change. Second, if Kim Jung-Il implements reforms he could be toppled by a coup. Those in the North Korean military dissatisfied with an “opening to the West” policy could seize power in the name of Kim Il-Sung’s legacy. In another case, technocrats together with the elite and military could take over the government in an effort to improve conditions in the country if Kim Jung-Il’s reforms are not successful. North Korea could return to the totalitarian Juche state of government, which is admittedly unlikely, or the government could open up, leading to eventual reunification. All in all, if Kim Jung-Il implements reform, the most likely outcome for North Korea is to follow the example of China. In this case, religious efforts must have a long-term mission strategy to work within a communist country and with a

²²¹ Kenneth C. Quinones, North Korea’s ‘New’ Nuclear Site—Fact or Fiction?, *Korea times*, 3 Sept. 1998, p.5.

²²² The Institute of Contemporary International Problems with the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, “The DPRK Report #9,” September-October 1997.

²²³ Byung-Hee Yang, op. cit., p.165.

government-sanctioned church.

4.4.3. Reunification by war

A third possible scenario for the North Korea regime to follow is war. In this case, Kim Jung-II, realizing that his country is doomed, decides to make a drastic move to salvage his government. North Korea threatens to deploy nuclear weapons over Seoul and Tokyo unless the United States backs out of Seoul and agrees to reunification on equal terms. North Korea and South Korea enter into a confederation with two states and two governments, eventually leading to a unified country. Several factors make a militaristic reunification scenario plausible. First, reunification, according to Kim Jung-II, is North Korea's greatest national task. He declared:

We must achieve the country's reunification, the lifelong will of respected comrade Kim Il-Sung and the vital demand of the nation. National reunification is the greatest national task that must not be delayed any longer.²²⁴

In the case where North Korea faces imminent doom, Kim Jung-II likely will pursue reunification by force as a last option. Second, the status of the military continues to elevate in North Korea's power structure. Kim Jung-II might be tempted into a military option as he increasingly becomes dependent on the army for power. Third, militaristic reunification might appeal as the best-case scenario to the North Korea regime. Rather than being absorbed into South Korea- in the process facing extreme humiliation-North Korea would likely opt for a two-state confederation, even if the means are nuclear blackmail.

²²⁴ Seok-Ryul Yoo, *op.cit.*, p.257.

The outcome of a militaristic reunification effort by North Korea would be marked by sudden and severe change. If successful, North Korea would almost instantaneously enter a confederation with the South, and the process of reunification would begin. Reunification would take the world by surprise. Mission agencies would find many obstacles of access removed, and depending on how well prepared for such a situation mission groups are, missionaries would enter the North in large numbers. If militaristic reunification ends unsuccessfully, it is possible that North Korea could deploy nuclear weapons, supposing they possessed them, Seoul and Tokyo would be devastated. Following this, the North Korea regime would either collapse immediately or after a military standoff. Mission group will be faced with a gigantic task of cleaning up after a nuclear holocaust in South Korea and ministering to a famine-stricken society recovering from a totalitarian collapse of the government in North Korea.

4.4.4. Reunification by collapse

The last likely scenario for the North Korea regime is one of voluntary collapse.²²⁵ In this case, Kim Jung-Il, rather than trying to save Juche or his government, could officially announce that Juche is a failure, and awaits absorption of the North by the South. A period of chaos and disorder is followed by meetings between the two governments to facilitate the joining of the two states.

Though not as likely a scenario as the previously mentioned ones, this scenario remains a possibility. For one, this is the way that East Germany and the Soviet Union chose to unshackle them from Communism. Nobody prior to its collapse foretold the sudden, passive surrender of Communism in the Soviet Union. This

²²⁵ Young-Whan Kihl, *op. cit.*, p.257.

could very well be the case in North Korea. Also, many observers note that North Korea is already on the verge of collapse. It might be easier for Kim Jung-Il to surrender than to try to implement reforms or save his regime.

In this scenario the voluntary collapse of the regime will be sudden and unexpected. It will most likely be followed by a period of chaos, where refugees and unemployed people by the hundreds of thousands would be displaced. In such distress, the church could play an instrumental role in bringing order to society through relief and humanitarian efforts. The door to North Korean missions would also likely be opened, though it is not clear how much freedom missionaries will have in their activities in the North. It is clear that the more prepared North Korea mission efforts are the greater influences they will have during this time.

4.5 Conclusion

In chapter 4, discussed the history of the Korean Church as the background to the present state of the North Korean Church. It is the fact that Korean Protestantism began with missionary Tomas's martyrdom. His blood was the foundation of Korean church. Western missionaries' devotional efforts and Koreans' religious sentiment combined to a remarkable performance in the history of Christianity. There were many martyrs and theologians. After the Korean War, North Korea's Christianity has been horribly persecuted by the communist regime.²²⁶ In spite of terrible persecution, very secretly there are still underground churches. North Korea's underground church kept to their faith despite the Juche idea and system of close observation. Four scenarios were expected of North Korea's future:

²²⁶ Yoo-Sang Yoon, *op.cit.*, p.156.

Persistence of their political system, reformation, war, and collapse of its system. The following conclusions were reached:

Firstly, the religious repression in North Korea is kept completely hidden from international scrutiny. For this reason, some religious organizations, and much of the international community, have been deceived by North Korea's manipulative policies, while their so-called religious activities are just propaganda.²²⁷

Secondly, a humanitarian aid to North Korea through religious groups should be made more efficient. Such action will help demonstrate to the North Korean government and its people the goodwill and positive intentions of religious people. Presently, an enormous amount of humanitarian aid is donated to North Korea by religious groups. However, relief goods are being delivered in the name of the Red Cross. As a result, instead of recognizing and being grateful to religious people for their support and assistance, North Korea has intensified its persecution of Christianity. If relief aid is delivered by religious groups, it will have a beneficial influence on the attitude of high ranking officials and the people toward religion.²²⁸

Thirdly, Christian groups need to differentiate between the North Korean Christian institutions correlations that are influenced by the government versus the Christian groups that have gone underground. The religious freedom of the underground religious believers should be the focus rather than the high-ranking elites in religious organizations and the well-trained participants in religious functions under the auspices of the government.

The North Korean people who are the most in need of religious freedom are those who had escaped the totalitarian North Korean regime to China, but have no

²²⁷ Byung-Hee Yang, *op. cit.*, p.125.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.284.

immigration status in China. These North Koreans in China need to be elevated to the status of refugees so that they can be awarded their basic human rights.

To be sure, the changes currently taking place in North Korea seem to be driven by pragmatism rather than by any real shift in ideology. North Korea wants to adopt the Chinese model. But, at the same time, they are afraid of a Romanian-style collapse.²²⁹ It is their dilemma.

To those Christians in South Korea who are determined to evangelize the Korean peninsula, there may be the prospect of a new mission to North Korea in future. With a possible economic and political collapse of the North Korean regime looming, South Korean churches are developing contingency plans to mobilize both spiritual and humanitarian resources to aid North Korea. It will be interesting to see whether the churches in the North, where the Unification Church has a solid beachhead, can shed their animus and work cooperatively. A new history of God is starting in North Korea.

²²⁹ A rebellion in Romania toppled its communist regime in 1989, and ruler Nicolae Ceausescu was convicted of genocide and executed.

Chapter 5. A comparative study between the time of the Belgic Confession and of the Korean Church under persecution

The similarities and differences between the time of the Belgic Confession and the time of the Korean Church will be indicated to give spiritual insight to the present generation.

5.1 Similarities

Table 5.1

5.1.1. Both Guido de Bres and Joo Ki-Chul were
5.1.1.1 Martyrs,
5.1.1.2 Preachers,
5.1.1.3 Patriots,
5.1.1.4 Influenced by John Calvin,
5.1.1.5 Supported by devotional families.
5.1.2. Working in the underground church.
5.1.3. Suffered under cruel ruler.

5.1.1. Guido de Bres and Joo Ki-Chul

It will be explained their personal similarities. History is always made by the people. There is a Korean proverb says 'the times of hardship making a hero'.

Likewise Guido de Bres and Joo Ki-Chul believed God and led people, those who were in danger of losing the way, back to God and his word.

5.1.1.1 Martyrs

Firstly, Joo Ki-Chul explained his long and painful imprisonment, in his sermon that stated his attitude towards his death. Its title is 'My prayer: Five supplications':

Help me to overcome the power of death.

I am on the verge of death. The dark hand that seeks my life draws close every minute. Facing death, I cannot but pray for the strength to overcome its power. Every living thing laments before death and every human life trembles in fear and grieves before it. The power of death seems to be the devil's most powerful weapon in threatening human beings. How many people have forsaken righteousness for fear of death, and how many people have abandoned their faith in order to save themselves from it? Even the chief apostle Peter denied Jesus at the court of Caiaphas and swore three times before the female slave because he was afraid of death. Who, then, can say with certainty that he is not afraid of death? ²³⁰

In addition to, he also urged that everyone who believes in Jesus Christ to take up their cross:

The Lord says, "Carry your cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Therefore whoever wants to follow Jesus would necessarily have to go the road that he commands us. Even if you do not want to go the way of the painful road, you must.

²³⁰ The Korea Institute for Advanced Theological Studies, *Joo Ki-Chul*, (The KIATS Press, 2006), p.157.

If you do not want to go to the road the Lord commands you, the only other option is the unholy road. Therefore, let us abandon the fastidious and promiscuous road of greed, the road of vanity and abnormality. Let us instead piously go the road Jesus command us before God and men and let us make haste to go the road of the cross. This is the road to life.²³¹

As mentioned above, the cross' real meaning is martyrdom for Jesus Christ. He only pointed to the instruction of Jesus Christ. Likewise, Guido de Bres emphasized that a child of God has to endure any kind of suffering, even death, for the glory of God. To the king he said:

And if you try by killing, for every one who dies, a hundred will rise in his place. If you will not forsake your hardness and your murder, then we appeal to God to give us grace patiently to endure for the glory of his name... And heaven and earth will bear us witness that you have put us unjustly to death.²³²

Guido urged that disciples of Jesus Christ must be ready for martyrdom for God's glory. In fact, Guido worked hard in the underground church, and named it the church of the Rose. Its list of members included many martyrs.

One day in March of 1556 the blacksmith Robert Oguier was dragged off to prison with his wife and two grown sons. In their home had been held some of the secret meetings of The Church of the Rose. After a mock trial the father and one son, Balwin, were tied to stakes in the market place of Lille. As the flames leaped up around them they could be heard comforting one another in the Lord. The next day Joanna, the mother, and the other son, Martin, were led to their death. From prison Martin had written to the faithful ones, "I pray you not to forget the holy doctrine of

²³¹ Ibid, p.46.

²³² Thea B. Van Halsema, *Glorious Heretic*, (Baker book house, 1961), p.116.

the Gospel which you have received from our brother Guido.²³³

From this it is clear that Guido's preaching of faithfulness in life and death was received by his congregation as God's command. They also walked the way of martyrdom of their Savior. More importantly, both Joo Ki-Chul and Guido de Bres served God at risk of their lives.

5.1.1.2 Preachers

They were both preachers who never gave up, in spite of the horrible hardships and adversity. Joo Ki-Chul had preached despite Japanese police appeasement and intimidation. Constantly, Japanese police tried to counteract the authority of Joo's preaching. Pastor Kim In-Seo wrote:

One day, Japanese police closed in on the Sanchunghyun church. They told pastor Joo that he could no longer preach. However, he did not care, and told them. "I have received authority to preach from God. If God commands me to stop preaching, I will do that. Otherwise, I am going to preaching. The police said "If you keep doing that, we will arrest you". Joo answered. "My job is preaching. Your Job is arresting. I will do my best."²³⁴

Joo Ki-Chul's longing to communicate the word of God is confirmed by An I-Sook's testimony. She opposed Shinto Shrine Worship like Joo Ki-Chul, and she was locked up in a police cell next to Joo Ki-Chul. They communicated with each other by sign language as much as possible.

²³³ Ibid, p.106.

²³⁴ In-Seo Kim, *Kim In Seo's writing* Vol.5, (Kidokyumunsa, 1976), pp.68-69.

An : Reverend, what do you want to do if you get out of here?

Joo : Firstly I would like to stand on the platform, and preach that God is alive. I want to exclaim that Jesus Christ is our savior because he died on the cross for our sins.

An : what do you want to do after that?

Joo : I will comfort my wife and family.²³⁵

Joo Ki-Chul's priorities were: God first, second his family. In this respect, the contents of pastor Joo's preaching show certain tendencies.²³⁶

First, his sermons emphasized spiritual transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the most characteristic feature of his sermons, such as "Let us live by the Spirit," "Receive the Holy Spirit," and "The Holy Spirit and Prayer" that emphasize this point.

Second, his sermons describe a clear understanding of life and death. His view of life and death not only deals with the problems of human mortality and finitude, but more importantly it emphasizes an entire faithful life. This commitment enabled him to fight until martyrdom and to resist the unjust interferences of the national power.

Third, his sermons are filled with his conviction of Jesus' death on the cross and of his resurrection. His sermons show the hope that comes from Christ's cross and resurrection, which permeates his faith.

Lastly, his sermons clearly show his judgment of history. This tendency is also expressed in the document ratified by the Shinto Shrine Worship protesters.

Prof Chung noted pastor Joo's sermon:

²³⁵ Yi-Sook Ahn, *If I perish, I perish*, (Kidokyumunsa, 2004), p.192.

²³⁶ Sung-Kuh Chung, op. cit., p.106.

To get to know a person's faith, thought and life, much material is needed. Since one's personality, faith, and thought are condensed into one's sermons, through one's sermons, we may know his theology, character and life. Pastor Joo's sermons were proclaimed to Korean people who were suffering and struggling in frustration and resignation. His sermons were expressed in our own language, filled with both joys and agonies. Therefore, when we hear them, they reach our hearts with a touching power. They suggest to us how we should live, what true pastorship is, what a sermon is, and what a church is.²³⁷

Prof Chung's true assessment of pastor Joo's sermons is that they are God-centered, *Coram deo*, preaching the victory of God's grace.²³⁸

Guido de Bres was also the most important Calvinist in the Netherlands and its best preacher.²³⁹ Beyond of all things, Guido was a preacher who was prepared by his mother's prayer. His mother had prayed to have a son who could become a faithful preacher.²⁴⁰ Guido wrote a letter to his mother after his arrest by Spanish army:

You asked, and God heard. Because He is rich in mercy... He has given you more than you asked of Him. You asked that your child... might become like that Jesuits priest, but of Jesus Christ Himself, and He has called me to his holy ministry, not to teach the words of other men, but to preach the pure word of Jesus and his apostles. This I have done until now.²⁴¹

²³⁷ Ibid., p.105.

²³⁸ Ibid., p.106.

²³⁹ Erwin Iserloh, Joseph Glazik, Hubert Jedin, *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, (Burns & Oates,1980), p.400.

²⁴⁰ Thea B. Van Halsema, op. cit., p.101.

²⁴¹ Ibid., p.101.

He was probably one of the first travelling preachers in the Low Countries that had to avoid persecution on account of spreading the gospel. He regarded preaching the word of God as his sole mission. Therefore he did his best in spite of horrible circumstances. Many people were impressed by his restless efforts.

5.1.1.3 Patriots

Both loved God fervently. At the same time they loved their native people. Without any hesitation Guido de Bres returned to his own country after his life in exile. He boarded a sailing ship for home in 1522. He could not bear to stay away any longer, because he wanted to help his own people. For a third time Guido de Bres went into exile. Whenever he thought about his native country, he was concerned about his persecuted fellows.

Joo Ki-Chul also loved his own country. Therefore he did not escape to Korea. In 1963, an order and a medal were conferred upon him by the Korean government.²⁴²

5.1.1.4 Influenced by John Calvin

They were directly or indirectly influenced by John Calvin. Especially Guido de Bres was influenced by John Calvin directly.²⁴³ They met in person and Guido learned under him and his theological friends. In September of 1556 John Calvin travelled from Geneva to Frankfurt. At the time there was a French refugee church in

²⁴² In-Soo Kim, *Lamb of Jesus: Joo Ki-Chul*, (Hongsungsa, 2007), p.1.

²⁴³ Albert Hyma, *The life of John Calvin*, (Eerdmans, 1943), p.106.

Frankfurt. So John Calvin wanted to settle the problems in the French church. Guido stayed in Frankfurt at that time. There de Bres met the great reformer whose writings he had read and followed.²⁴⁴

For two years de Bres attended the Protestant Academy in Lausanne studying Greek under Theodore Beza, who became Calvin's successor in Geneva. When Beza went to Geneva to help Calvin, de Bres went with. He stayed three year in this Reformation city. Every Sunday he listened to Calvin's preaching every Sunday. When he returned to his motherland, Guido helped to organize the church and to elect elders and deacons as Calvin had taught.

As noted above, Joo Ki-Chul studied at Pyungyang Theological Seminary.²⁴⁵ It was established by the Presbyterian missionaries. As a result, Joo Ki-Chul was steeped in the historical tradition of the Presbyterian Church following the Reformed perspective on Scripture.²⁴⁶ Actually Korea's Presbyterians were deeply effected by John Calvin's thought up to the present. Prof. Chung mentioned:

It is usually said that the Korean Presbyterian Church is conservative and Calvinistic. But actually, what we call Calvinistic thought is one thing, and the study of Calvin is another. Ever since the Gospel was brought to Korea by the American missionaries in 1884, the Korean Church has mainly been centered on the Presbyterian Church, with America sending most missionaries. This is the reason why the Korean Church has been so affected by the American Presbyterian Church. Therefore, the Korean Church has been influenced by Calvinism and formed on Calvinistic tradition.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ Thea B. Van Halsema, op. cit., p.106.

²⁴⁵ In-Soo Kim, op. cit., p.47.

²⁴⁶ KIATS, op. cit., p.25.

²⁴⁷ Sung-Khu Chung, op. cit., p.269.

Because most of the earliest western missionaries in Korea studied at conservative Calvinistic seminaries.

5.1.1.5 Supported by devotional families

Both Joo Ki-Chul and Guido de Bres were devotionaries who were supported in their ministries by their families, in particular, by their wives.

On account of her being very weak and sick, Joo's wife, Oh Jung-Mo, decided not to marry but to teach students, serving in the church until she die. However, through God's providence she married Joo Ki-Chul and had to raise the young children of pastor Joo by his former wife. Moreover she also had to sustain her husband in prison. Indeed she was inspected and tortured by the Japanese police more than ten times. But she never forsook this situation and her faith. Through her firm faith, she got over horrible circumstances. She was not only Joo Ki-Chul's wife but also his comrade and faithful supporter.²⁴⁸ She was worried about the possibility that Joo Ki-Chul could apostatize under his terrible torture and long persecution. Therefore, whenever she met with her husband, she never showed her weak figure, but supported him and other family's situation as Joo Ki-Chul wife. Oh Jung-Mo confessed:

I loved pastor Joo as my life. But when I think of Jesus Christ's suffering for me, I regarded his hardship as second, and third. In spite of his martyrdom, I could not say 'abandon your faith rather than die for Jesus Christ.'²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ In-Soo Kim, op. cit., p.210.

²⁴⁹ Yong-Joon Ahn, *Pastor Joo Ki-Chul and his wife*, p.67, quoted from In-Soo Kim, *Lamb of Jesus: Joo Ki-Chul*, (Hongsungsa, 2007), p.212.

There are only a few documents on Guido de Bres' family. But it can be assumed that his family helped him devotionally as he met his wife, Catherine de Bres, in a group that secretly gathered to worship:

No wonder he was attracted by a dark-eyed young woman in the group that gathered to worship. But did a hunted minister have the right to marry? De Bres spoke of his love to the dark-eyed Catharine Ramon and told her he could offer her only a life an uncertainty. It was enough, she answered, to love each other and to know their lives were in God's good hands. Sometime in 1559 Guido de Bres and Catharine Ramon were married.²⁵⁰

In addition, Guido's older brother, Christophe, the glass merchant, arranged the publication of his first writing. As Christophe distributed Bibles and Reformation books,²⁵¹ he surely supported Guido.

5.1.2. Working in the underground church

When Guido returned to his motherland after exile, he preached to the group of reformed Christians in Lille who met secretly in homes.

They called themselves the church of the Rose. The list of their members included many martyrs. De Bres worked hard in his Church of the Rose. Besides, he found time to study and to write.²⁵²

As mentioned in chapter 4, North Korea's underground church was directly

²⁵⁰ Thea B. Van Halsema, *op. cit.*, p.107.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.102.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p.105.

influenced by Joo's group who were against Shinto Shrine Worship. In particular, while Joo Ki-Chul was in prison, his wife secretly helped the underground church.²⁵³ She led its worship and comforted them. After the liberation from Japan, under supervision of the Soviet Union, Oh Jung-Mo and elder Cho Man-Sik helped to establish the underground church in North Korea. In fact, it was the origin of the North Korean underground church.

5.1.3 Suffered under a cruel ruler

Both periods suffered under cruel rulers, namely under Spain and Japan. They dominated their colonies using indiscreet violence. Spain's cruelty in the Low Countries of Guido's time is captured in the following statement:

Alva's²⁵⁴ vengeance was terrible. His armies took city after city, and repeatedly broke the terms of surrender. Prisoners were killed for no other reason than revenge, and several cities that had resisted were put to torch. Women, children, and the elderly were indiscriminately killed along with the rebels. Soon every rebel stronghold was in Alba's hands. Those put to death under such ordinances were so many that chroniclers of the time speak of the stench in the air, and of hundreds of bodies hanging from trees along the wayside.²⁵⁵

Sun Woo-Hun's testimony of his ordeal captures the kind of cruelty at the time of pastor Joo Ki-Chul.

²⁵³ In-Soo Kim, op. cit., p.210.

²⁵⁴ As noted chapter 2, he was notorious general of Spain's army.

²⁵⁵ Justo L. Gonzalez, *The story of Christianity*, Vol.2, The Reformation to the Present day, (HarperSanFrancisco, 1984), p.99.

I was arrested by Japanese police at the second of April. There were some women and men in the cell. The police officer asked who Christians are. There were twelve Methodists, two Presbyterians, one Chondogyu (*Tonghak*).²⁵⁶ Suddenly, they stripped us naked of our all clothes and let us stand in front of men. They hit us with a whip until I was wet with perspiration. Both my hands were tied behind me when they hit my bare body. When I said "I am very cold", they scorched me with tobacco ashes. They took all our bibles. We were strictly prohibited from talking or praying. In other words, we were treated as animals.²⁵⁷

Ironically, even today, Spain sticks to Roman Catholicism with 99% of its citizens adhering to the Roman Catholic Church.²⁵⁸ In addition to, this Japan is one of the typical countries which worship polytheism.

5.2 Differences

Table 5.2

5.2.1. Resistance and surrender
5.2.2. Past and present.

²⁵⁶ *Tonghak* means "Eastern Learning" and as the name implies, it was an Eastern religion embodying the Korean spirit, in opposition to Christianity which had come from the West. The *Tonghak* religion, which had by then been renamed *Chondogyu*, headed the March First Independence Movement, and thus became the fundamental domestic force behind the anti-Japanese struggle.

²⁵⁷ *The unofficial history of March 1st Independence Struggle*, (the Christianity's thought, 1966), pp.88-89.

²⁵⁸ Jonathan Fox, *A world survey of religion and the state*, (Cambridge university press, 2008), p.108.

5.2.1 Resistance and surrender

The Low Countries people fought for political and religious freedom against the Spanish army to the end, although there were military and religious crises during the time of their resistance.

First, with the horrible attack by the duke of Alva, Spain could have totally suppressed the Low Countries. Alva defeated William of Orange repeatedly and ordered the execution of the count of Egmont and the count of Horn. It was the most dangerous moment for the Low Countries. But the rebels received support from an unexpected side. They were 'beggars of the sea.'²⁵⁹ William once granted privateer licenses on account of hoping that they could bother communication between the duke of Alva and Spain. At the beginning, they were just pirates. But when they attained organizing ability, Spanish navy were defeated by them, constantly in the Northern provinces of the Low Countries.

Second, the new general of Spain, succeeding Duke of Alva, Luis de Requesens wanted to use the religious difference among the rebels, because most of the southern people adhered to Roman Catholicism and most of the Northern provinces were Calvinists. He sought separate negotiation with the Roman Catholics of the southern provinces, to drive a wedge between them and the north. However, William of Orange dissolved this issue by the pacification of Ghent in 1576 after the death of Luis de Requesens.

In 1609, almost a decade after the death of Philip II, Spain determined that her losses in this struggle were not worth the effort and the cost of continuing the war,

²⁵⁹ Ivo Schoffer, *A short history of the Netherlands*, (Amsterdam, 1956), p.52.

and a truce was signed.²⁶⁰ By then, the vast majority of the population in the Northern provinces was Calvinist, and many in the north equated their Calvinist faith with their nationalist loyalty, while the southern provinces remained Roman Catholic. As a result, religious, economic, and cultural differences would lead to the formation of three countries, one Protestant-the Netherlands- and two Catholic- Belgium and Luxemburg. In conclusion, the Northern provinces, the present Netherlands eventually achieved political, religious freedom.

Concerning the issue of freedom of religion in Korea, especially for the Protestants, failed pitifully in Korea. Japan had tapped Korea's national strength step by step. Outright control by the Japanese began on February 1, 1906. The Resident-General was vested with full authority over Korea's diplomacy, domestic administration and military affairs.²⁶¹ Under the treaty concluded on August 22, 1910, Japan changed the office of the Resident-General to that of Government-General. Finally they ended religious freedom through the authorization of Shinto Shrine Worship at the Presbyterian general assembly in 1938. There were military resistance and protesters against Shinto Shrine Worship in public, by Joo Ki-Chul, Son Yang-Won, and Han Sang-Dong among others. However, it was sporadic.

After liberation from Japan, this issue, the Presbyterian general assembly's approval of the Shinto Shrine Worship, caused the spilt in between denominations.²⁶² The Koryu Seminary founded in 1946 by ministers from north Korea was not recognized by the general assembly of 1951, its graduates resigned and established a new Presbyterian church popularly known as the *Koryupa*. The *Koryupa* strongly

²⁶⁰ Ibid, p.59.

²⁶¹ Seok-Hee Han, *The history of Japanese Imperialism's invasion Korea religion*, (Kidokyumunsa, 1990), p.52.

²⁶² Deok-Kyo Oh, *A history of the Presbyterian*, (Hapdong Theological Seminary Press, 1995), p.285.

advocated repentance for succumbing to Japanese pressure to accept the Shinto Shrine Worship.²⁶³ However, their demand was not accepted by the mainstream that controlled the Presbyterian general assembly.

The reason for the success of the Low Countries' resistance and the Korean resistance's failure was probably its leader. In case of Low Countries, there was a political leader against Spain's pressure. He was William of Orange. In fact, he believed that religious dogmatism was an obstacle to the unity and freedom of the Low Countries. Therefore he welcomed the pacification of Ghent. That was a coalition of the various provinces that made it clear that what was at stake was political freedom and not religious difference.²⁶⁴ However, the Korean Protestant society could not take a unified stand. It was divided into denominations, its leaders engaged in factional politics.²⁶⁵ In other words, most of Korean church leaders lost confidence, except the pastors who were against Shinto Shrine Worship as Joo Ki-Chul, Son Yang-Won, and Han Sang-Dong.

5.2.2 Past and present

The biggest difference between the time of the Belgic Confession and the time of the Korean Church under persecution is their past and present. In other words, the persecution of the Low Countries is past. At present they have the freedom to read the Bible, praise the Lord, and serve God.

But North Korea's underground church is still suffering under a cruel communist

²⁶³ Ibid., p.286.

²⁶⁴ Justo L. Gonzalez, *op. cit.*, p.100.

²⁶⁵ Chung-Shin Park, *Protestantism and politics in Korea*, (University of Washington press, 2003), p.156.

regime. Actually, North Korea is one of the most repressive regimes in the world, has been criticized for the systemic, widespread and serious violations of human rights that reportedly take place in the country, as well as the government's refusal to cooperate with the UN human rights commissioner or special investigator. Especially, Protestants are at present horribly persecuted by the North Korean regime. On account of their faith in Jesus Christ they are separated from their families, and sent to concentration camps where they are killed by security guards.

5.3 Conclusion

In chapter 5 the correspondence and difference between the time of the Belgic confession and of the persecuted Korean Church was depicted. Both times had powerful and spiritual leaders in the persons of Guido de Bres and Joo Ki-Chul. They were martyrs, preachers, patriots, who were influenced by John Cavin, and were supported by devotional families.

During both times the church had to resort to underground churches, while they were persecuted by horrible rulers. But times differ in its conclusion. The Low Countries' people resisted to the end, while the majority of the Korean people surrendered to Shinto Shrine Worship politically and religiously. While the Low Countries' persecution is past, North Korea's Christians are at present still persecuted by the communist regime.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

This comparison between the time of the Belgic Confession and the time of the Korean Church (concern on martyrdom and persecution) will be summarized and evaluated. Firstly, chapter 1 introduced this study with a discussion on its title, the problem, the purpose of this study, indicating the period under discussion, and its chapter outline.

The problem that called forth this research is the question why modern Christians' faith has become nominal at a time when there is no persecution of their lives. On the contrary, when there was horrible persecution by the ruling force, they believed and followed Jesus Christ until the end. The Korean church experienced persecution during the rule of Japanese imperialism and the Korean War. Since the 1960's the Korean church had expanded surprisingly, especially in South Korea. But at present the Korean church is criticized for many failures. Also is reported that Islam, Buddhism and other oriental religions have expanded in western countries. This study made a connection between spiritual maturity and times of trial of the church, and between spiritual depravity and peaceful times for the church.

While the Westminster confession and the Heidelberg catechism have been lively researched, the research of the background and value of the Belgic Confession needs much more attention. This approach to martyrdom through a comparison between the European Church and the Korean Church is an unassuming contribution.

Chapter 2 dealt with three small sections of the historical background to the Low Countries' political revolution and church Reformation, namely the life of Guido de Bres, the authorship of the Belgic Confession, and the history of the Belgic Confession.

During the sixteenth century the provinces of the Low Countries formed part of the kingdom of Philip II of Spain. Officially the religion was Roman Catholic, while Protestants of different persuasions – Lutherans, Calvinists and Anabaptists – were persecuted. One of the issues of the Netherlands' eighty year war with Spain was the freedom of religion. The Low Countries' people were terribly persecuted by the Spanish troops, but they never forsook their long walk to freedom. This struggle for freedom was led by members of the house of Orange. Among the high points were the pacification of Ghent (1576), the alliance of thirteen Low Countries' provinces for independence, and the declaration of independence (1581). Finally, Spanish accepted that the people of the Low Countries will never abandon their struggle, and arrived at a cease-fire agreement in 1607.

During the struggle for Independence, Guido de Bres was a faithful traveling preacher in the Low Countries. He was born at Mons in 1522, the fifth child of a family of glass painters. He was educated in the Roman Catholic Church. However, by diligent reading of the Scriptures he was converted to the evangelical faith. Expelled from his native country, he sought refuge in London under Edward VI, where he joined the Belgic fugitives, and prepared for the ministry under famous Protestant Reformers. Afterwards he studied at Geneva under John Calvin and Theodore Beza. He became a traveling evangelist in Southwestern Belgium and Northern France, from Lille to Sedan, from Valenciennes to Antwerp. After the conquest of French Flanders he was taken prisoner, together with a younger missionary, Peregrin de la Grange, put in chains, and executed on the last day of May 1567 for disobedience to the commands of the court at Brussels, and especially for the ministration of the Holy Communion in the Reformed congregations.

The Belgic Confession was prepared by Guido de Bres in 1561. It was probably printed in 1562 or at all events in 1566, and afterwards translated from Latin into

Dutch, and German. It was presented to the bigoted Philip II, in 1562, with the vain hope of securing toleration, and with an address which breathes the genuine spirit of martyrdom. The Confession was publicly adopted by the Synod of Antwerp (1566), then of Wesel (1568), more formally by the Synod of Emden (1571), and finally by the great Synod of Dort (1618-1619). The Synod of Dort submitted the French, Latin, and Dutch texts to a careful revision. Since that time the Belgic Confession, together with the Heidelberg Catechism, has been recognized as symbols of the Reformed Churches.

Chapter 3 discussed the Korean Church under Japanese Colonialism. They ruled Korea from 1910 to 1945. During the occupation of Korea, they took control of Korean diplomacy, resources, the people, and even of each person's name. Since the early 1930s, they forced Shinto Shrine Worship on all Koreans, including the Christian mission schools which were established by the western missionaries. At first most of Koreans refused Shinto Shrine Worship. However, the Japanese police's terror and intimidation made them bow down in front of Shinto.

Pastor Joo Ki-Chul's life and actions against the Shinto Shrine Worship were described. He was minister of the Sanchunghyun Church. In spite of horrible persecution, he stood up against Shinto Shrine Worship, together with Son Yang-Won, Han Sang-Dong and Lee Ki-Sun. It is noteworthy that his wife, Oh Jung-Mo, also fought against the idol of the Japanese and supported her husband admirably. Finally Joo Ki-Chul was martyred for his confession of Jesus Christ. Among Korea's Christian leaders there were three views on Shinto Shrine Worship: collaboration, exile, or resistance. It was argued that the resistance was theologically and politically correct.

In the chapter 4, the history of Korean Christianity was reviewed, with reference

to North Korean Christianity since the 1953-truce between South and North Korea. The real circumstance of the North Korea's underground church was argued. Korea was divided by the international conference after its liberation from Japanese imperialism in 1945. The custody of North Korea was given to the Soviet Union's communist regime. Even today anyone who brings a Bible into North Korea goes to prison. Despite this situation there are Christians in underground churches with a reported fervent religious life. At present, some Christians returned from their self-imposed exile in China to evangelize the native people in spite of danger.

In the late 1980s, a few public churches in North Korea merged. But it probably was just government propaganda to show that there is freedom of religion in North Korea. Surprisingly, it is reported that the North Korean government sometimes establish fake underground churches to expose the real underground church. It strongly suggests that there is no freedom of religion. In spite of this circumstance, the members of the underground church believe in Jesus Christ and keep to their faith at risk of their lives.

Lastly chapter 5 focused on analyzing the times of the Belgic confession and the Korean Church's persecution by comparing the two histories. In this respect, five agreements and two differences between the two times were indicated. Their respective leaders were martyrs, preachers, patriots, influenced by John Calvin, and had the support of a devotional family. They differed in the results of their resistance, and the time of persecution.

The problem of modern Christianity (especially of the Korean Christianity context) is the following: Through western missionaries' devotional ministry, Korea's Christianity experienced outstanding and notable performances. When the Koreans suffered under Japanese imperialism that invaded the Korean peninsula, Christianity, especially Protestantism, was the friend of the Koreans. They established hospitals

and schools. In addition, Protestantism provided the Korea people with spiritual solace during a chaotic time. The Protestant church also supported the Korea community and people during the Korean War and thereafter. For the Protestant church's devoted efforts, the Korean people regarded them as friends and comrades. This support resulted in the explosion of Protestant membership after the Korean War.

However through the 60s & 70s the Protestant churches were blamed by non Christians for the following negative factors: the church's commercialization, the connection with the military regime, and Mormonism. At present non Christians hate protestant churches in South Korea. This study investigated the reasons for it and effect of the context of the Korean Christianity. A solution for the problem was the looked for in the church's history.

In this sense, this study suggests that there is a meaningful comparison between the time of the Belgic Confession and the Korean Church's time of suffering. Under horrible political and religious persecution, they showed strong faith. In particular, these two pastors of each time, Guido de Bres and Joo Ki-Chul's lives can give spiritual insight to modern Christians.

In the Low Countries people were persecuted by Spain. These times produced a lot of martyrs such as Guido de Bres. They wrote out the Belgic Confession which was a confession of their faith. Korea was persecuted by Japan as well and from that persecution arose many martyrs such as Joo Ki-Chul. However, the point should be made that the Korean Church has not made a formal confession about the persecution. The church should have followed the example of the Dutch Church which declared their faith against Nazis' horrible ruling in its Declaration of

Barmen.²⁶⁶ Many people and social movements blamed the *Koryupa* for factionalism after Independence. As explained above *Koryupa* was a group that fervently opposed Shinto Shrine Worship. On account of this *Koryupa* asked for repentance for those who bowed down in front of Shinto Shrine Worship during the Japanese rule. Unfortunately it was not accepted by majority of the people. Therefore, there is a need for a formal public 'Korean Confession'. Even though there had been various attempts to write a confession most of it were sporadic and cannot be said to be a 'Korean Confession'. There must be a clear guideline of what a true confession should encompass, thereby rejecting the sporadic attempts as 'Korean Confession'.

At this point however, it is suggested that in order for a confession to qualify as a 'Korean Confession' the following requirements needs to be fulfilled. The confession must be in writing which is accepted by all Korean denomination which bowed down, joined or promoted the practice of Shinto Shrine Worship. In this regard one can glean towards the South Africa experience where uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa drew up Belhar Confession²⁶⁷ and condemned apartheid.²⁶⁸ In that

²⁶⁶ The Barmen Declaration or The Theological Declaration of Barmen 1934 is a statement of the Confessing Church opposing the Nazi-supported "German Christians" movement known for its anti-Semitism and extreme nationalism. More specifically, The Barmen Declaration rejects the subordination of the Church to the state and the subordination of the Word and Spirit to the Church.

²⁶⁷ Belhar is a small suburb of Cape Town, South Africa. In 1982, the mixed-race mission church which had been excluded from its parent, the Dutch Reformed Church, in the mid-1880's, wrote a confession of faith about justice issues, including a special focus on racism, reconciliation, and unity. This document, adopted in Belhar in 1986, is now known as the "Belhar Confession."

²⁶⁸ Apartheid was a system of legal racial segregation enforced by the National Party government of South Africa between 1948 and 1993, under which the rights of the majority 'non-white' inhabitants of South Africa curtailed and minority rule by white people was maintained. In 1990 President Frederik Willem de Klerk began negotiations to end apartheid, culminating in multi-racial democratic elections in 1994, which were won by the African National Congress under Nelson Mandela. The vestiges of apartheid still shape South African politics and society.

confession they publically expressed their regret at the promotion and participation in racial discrimination in South Africa. Likewise the Korean Churches must remember the wrongs of the past by adopting a 'Korean Confession'.

As reflected upon in the introduction, Korean Christians of today can be characterized by an attitude of "Laziness". In terms of this realization, it has been suggested in this study that the adoption a "Korean confession could aid many Korean Christians and the church in particular. Such a confession will give insight and motivate them in the faith. Firstly, it will call upon the body of the church to remember the superior martyrs who kept their faith in Christ Jesus during the times of persecution. Secondary, it will serve as a new challenge to the new devotees in encouraging them to adopt their own confessions. By doing this a new chapter in the history of the Korean Church would be opened and the old chapter will be finally being put in its rightful place.

Most modern South Korean Christians are blinded by the pleasures of this world. The life of a modern South Korean Christian is not one that is centered on Jesus Christ. They spend very little time meditating on the word of Christ.²⁶⁹ Their lives are very complicated and fast. Jesus said 'blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'²⁷⁰ and 'I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven'²⁷¹ In this respect, the life of Guido de Bres is to be remembered. As noted above, he urgently preached the gospel of his Lord as a travelling preacher. Joo Ki-Chul was also horribly tortured. His only power to endure the suffering was Jesus Christ. In fact, when the Japanese police questioned Joo Ki-Chul about whether he placed his God above the emperor of Japan, his answer was an emphatic yes, and that sealed his fate.²⁷² North Korea's underground congregations

²⁶⁹ www.igoodnews.net/news/articleView.html?idxno=9690 2005.06.09

²⁷⁰ Matthew 5:3.

²⁷¹ Matthew 19:23.

²⁷² Chung-Nam Kim, *Joo Ki-Chul's life*, (Paekhap press, 1974), p.210.

read the Bible constantly and secretly, because it is their only hope. James & Marti noted:

We do believe that every martyr, whether included in this classification or not, has died for a purpose within the sovereign will of God. God was there when every human life was taken, not setting up the deaths, but permitting evil men to exercise free will and to do their dastardly deeds under the temporary dominion of Satan. Yes, our God was there in grace abounding over sin, beauty growing out of ashes, victory triumphing over death, and the Church advancing beyond defeat.²⁷³

As noted in chapter 1, martyrs' original meaning was defined as 'witness'. As it has already seen throughout this paper, specifically in chapter 2 and 3 it can surely be said that Guido de Bres and Joo Ki-Chul lived faithfully as witnesses of Jesus Christ. They suffered for their public confession of the Christian faith. At this point, they were true martyrs and disciples of Jesus Christ. Guido de Bres and Joo Ki-Chul left us a spiritual inheritance that belief in Jesus Christ is not just ideological. True faith in Christ demands taking up your cross and even risking your life to follow Him, like those two martyrs. Today's Christians have to follow their example.

²⁷³ James C. & Marti Hefley, *By their blood*, (Baker Books, 1979), p.11.

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