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**THE ROOTS OF PURITANISM IN THE KOREAN
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

by

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I declare that “The Roots of Puritanism in the Korean Presbyterian Church” is my own work, and that all the sources that I have read or quoted have been indicated by means of complete references.

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ABSTRACT

“The Roots of Puritanism in the Korean Presbyterian Church” offers an analysis on Puritanism and an alternative to the contemporary Korean Presbyterian Church, which has lost its course; specifically in the current century of mission in Korea. The reasons for the abovementioned idea are as follows. Firstly, Puritanism was not foreign concept to Korean Christians, who have had contact with the concept before. Early missionaries in America fought against Conservatism (or Fundamentalism) and Liberalism. The conservative camp especially tried to hold on to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the authority of the Bible. These were the representatives of Puritan legacies. Puritanism was naturally implanted into Korean soil through early foreign missionaries who preached the Gospel. Therefore, the suggested idea must take on the character not of a creation but of a restoration in terms of the Korean Presbyterian Church. Secondly, it is due to its confidence that the Puritans pursuing points, which tried to establish the whole society on the basis of the Bible, are the answer to the contemporary Korean Presbyterian Church, which has stagnated in both number and quality of faith. The Puritans did not separate faith from the secular world. Instead, they tried to establish their society on the Bible. The Covenant with the church and the state as well as the individual was a strong vehicle for their thoughts. Their ultimate aim was piety in the presence of God.

Meanwhile, the early Korean Presbyterian Church adopted the Twelve Articles of Faith and the Westminster Confession of Faith as official creeds. It meant that the Korean Presbyterian Church kept the Puritan point of the Bible and faith from 1884 to the



middle of the 1930's. The faculty of Pyongyang Theological Seminary, which was a unique training school for would-be ministers, taught the Puritan faith and theology thoroughly. However, Korean political changes tremendously influenced her Christianity. During the period of Japanese Imperialism (1919-1945), the early conservative faith and theology had to face the challenge of Liberalism. The whole of the Korean Presbyterian Church submitted to the Japanese iron-fisted rule and Shrine Worship in 1937. However, the Puritan faith and theology were rediscovered through the faith of the few resisters of Japanese rule.

After Liberation from Japan in 1945, the antagonism of ideology caused Korea divided into two. On the one hand, North Korea fell under the banner of communism, which thoroughly eradicated the church in terms of its ideology more than the Japanese did. On the other hand, South Korea joined under the banner of democracy and churches were found to be in an unparalleled prosperous condition. The few resisters of Japanese imperialism cried out for the Puritan faith and demanded that the Korean Church should officially repent the sin of Japanese Shrine worship. However, an overwhelming majority consisting of the ecclesiastical authorities rejected their proposal as well as their faith and treated them as religious outcasts. The few resisters detached themselves from the established denomination and formed the Goshin Party. After the separation, schisms of denomination accelerated, because of differences in faith and theology or religious concession.

In addition, Pentecostal theology and its spirituality as a substitute to Puritanism were more dominant in Korean Christianity than any other denominations. The Private



experience and the charismata of the Holy Spirit were the keys points of the Pentecostal movement. They contributed to the concern and development of Pneumatology in Korean Christianity. However, Pentecostalism made the Presbyterian Church interpret the Bible without theological balance. The church began to seek material blessings instead of spiritual ones and to the pursuit of this world instead of the next. In addition, the Presbyterian Church was only concerned with itself without being indifferent to the ungodly society beyond itself.

In conclusion, the restoration of Puritanism, which tried to base both the society and the church on the foundation of the Bible, is the best solution to the future contemporary Presbyterian Church.

KEY TERMS: Puritanism, Covenant, Westminster Confession of Faith, Pyongyang Theological Seminary, the Twelve Articles of Faith, the March First Movement, Liberalism, Chosun Theological Seminary, Shrine Worship, the Korean War, Pentecostalism, Park Hyung-Nong, Kim Chae-Choon, Presbyterian Church of Korea, .



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

J. S. R. T.	Journal for the Study of Reformed Theology
J. N.	Jangsin Nondan (The Journal of the Presbyterian General Assembly Theological Seminary)
M. S.	Ministry and Theology
P. C. U. S.	Presbyterian Church in the United States (or Southern Presbyterian Church)
P. C. U. S. A.	Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (or Northern Presbyterian Church)
S. J.	Shinhak Jinam (The Journal of Chongshin University)
W. C. F.	Westminster Confession of Faith
I. C. R.	Institutes of the Christian Religion



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