



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

1.1.1 Background to the Problem

The Korean Church has had a short history of Protestantism, which is over one hundred and twenty years old.¹ During this short period, there has been a rapid growth in the number and quality of Christians in the Korean Protestant Church. Specifically, the number of Christians has doubled every ten years from 1960 to 1980. The *New York Times* reported in August 1992 that among the fifty biggest churches in the world, twenty-two were located in Korea (Lee 1998:22-34). In addition, according to a statistical study conducted in 1992, the number of Korean Christians exceeded tens of millions (Kidogkyomoonsa 1992:277-296). There are about three hundred theological seminaries, fifty thousand pastors, and nearly forty thousand churches that grew within the past century since the beginning of the mission in Korea (Chung 1996:21).²

Yun (1994:153) indicated that the Korean Church has already entered the phase that assures it of a leadership role and popularity as the major spirit of the times. Therefore, the Church acquired the role of the most dominant national religion. In other words, the

¹ Generally speaking, the first official visit to Korea by foreign missionaries was carried out by H. G. Underwood from the Northern Presbyterian Church and Mr. and Mrs. Appenzeller from the Northern Methodist who arrived in Incheon via Japan on April 5, 1885 (Kim 1992:67, Kim1997:91-95, Lee 1978:80). There is no objection that H. A. Allen's visit to Korea in 1884 was the start of the Korean mission. Since 1884, the founding year, the Korean Presbyterian Church celebrated the semi centennial anniversary of mission in 1934. In 1984, she celebrated its centenary.

² The number of Protestants in Korea was ten and a half million people. Compared to the statistics of 1998, which was nine million and seventy thousand people; the number was meant to increase up to eight hundred thousand persons (The Korean Gallup Poll 2005:311). Refer to the appendix of Chung's book (1996), *Korean Church and Reformed Faith*, and the statistical chart of Kim's book (1992), *A History of the Korean Church* for details.



Korean Church obtained the power to exercise a greater influence over the Korean society than any other religious or ideological group. From the dawn of the mission history to the present, the church has shared in the pleasures and pains of the Korean society. On this basis, it can hardly be argued that the Korean Church has indeed contributed much to the process of modernization and democratization of Korea society. These results can be attributed to the providence of God. God has been working through all these ages, creating the passion in Korean Christians for the Lord.

However, a recent assessment of the Korean Church shows a decreasing trend as well as a retardation in its growth.³ In addition, the side effects of rapid growth gave rise to the problems of diversification viz., Secularism, Epicureanism and the Motto of “Church Growth First,” the lack of the ordained ministry’s ethical conscience, the sect of heterodoxy and separation of denominations entered the church along with the corrupted trend of the times:

which degenerated into the anthropocentric culture, which was dominated by humanism instead of theocentrism, secularism instead of transcendentalism, material or scientific technique instead of spirituality, ethnocentrism and individualism instead of universal cosmopolitanism (Kim 1998:21-22)

The contemporary problems in the Korean Church can be summarized as the separation of daily life from faith or a rift between the world and the church. In the early stages of

³ Since 1991, according to Myung (1996:116), the rate of the growth of the Korean Church has slowed. The statistics of 1991 was thirty six thousand, eight hundred and thirty two churches. This number shows that there was a decrease of three hundred and fifty eight churches as compared to the previous year (1990). In case of *Yejang Tohap*, the annual rate of growth was 0.45 per cent and *Yejang Hapdong* recorded an annual growth of 0.06 per cent. (*Yejang Tohap* and *Yejang Hapdong* are some of the largest denominations among the Presbyterian Churches in Korea representatively). Compared to the statistics of the 1900s, which showed thirty five thousand, eight hundred and sixty nine churches and ten million, three hundred and twelve thousand, eight hundred and thirteen Christians, those of 2002 showed approximately fifty thousand churches and twelve million Christians. The rate of growth of the church and believers, which up to the 1900s had shown sharp quantitative growth, has been stagnant since 2002 (Institute for Church Growth 2006:178).



Protestantism in Korea, it rendered great services to the modernization of the Korean society by promoting human rights laws, abolishing of old customs and resisting the Japanese rule over Korea. During the end of the period of the Chosun dynasty, (the former name of Korea) and Japanese imperialism (1910-1945), there were not many Christians, yet their influence had a significant impact on Korean society and gave a positive image to the people. The contemporary Korean Church is larger than in the past; however, the influence of the Church over the Korean society has faded. Although there are voices that criticize and scold the Korean Church internally and externally, the Church seems to lack the ability to bring about a positive and desirable change. A chain of events is applicable not only to the Korean ecclesiastical situation, but also to the universal world church. Commenting on the twentieth century Christian thought, Gonzales (1975:390) said,

Our century will probably be the fact that the entire basis from which theology speaks had been greatly reduced.... Because of the foregoing, the scope of theology has also been narrowed because in most cases its audience had been increasingly limited. Theology is no longer “the queen of all sciences.”.... In any case, theologians speak mostly to the church, or to those at its borders who are contemplating the possibility of belief. But its voice of in the forum of humanity is often hardly audible... The one point at which theology is most often heard with interest-or at least with curiosity- in the world at large is in its pronouncements on social justice and such related subjects as violence, revolution, etc.

Despite the prevalence of the context of low spirituality, we ought to still confess God as the Lord of the Church, the Lord of humanity, and proclaim that the God of the Bible as the God of the world.

1.1.2 Alternative Solutions

In order to deal with problems as above mentioned, alternative solutions have been offered within the religious circles of Korea. Comparing the Korean Church with the



aged European Church, Lee (1999:508-525) still optimistically analyzed the present condition of the Korean Church. He suggested that if the Korean Church lays emphasis on the younger generation and arouses new hope in the older, and, at the same time, evangelizes with a new enthusiasm, the church shall have some possibilities of continuous growth. Kim (1998:28-31) proposed five points of missions for the contemporary Korean Church. The first mission was that the view of God was rightly formulated. The God of the moderns, who could be found only through the revelation of the Bible and illumination of the Holy Spirit, is a transcendental Creator and personified Redeemer who came into the history of man, identified with neither the process of history nor Minjung (the people), nor a deity of other religions. The prosperity of the material civilization and worldly pleasures cannot replace God. In order not to be done so, the contemporary churches will have to experience God anew, live before God and vividly witness the moderns. The second mission was to formulate the view of man rightly. The Korean Church has to restore the identity of man as mentioned in the Bible. Because man's original status as a creature of God was deprived of the status of a machine. The third mission was to rightly set up and execute the points of view of Culture and Nature. Kim mentioned that the Cultural Commission⁴ was not to spoil and exploit nature endlessly, but to exploit it rightly: to use and preserve it for God's glory and human welfare. Man has to understand that he is not a master of nature, but a manager of it.

Considering the geo-political standing of Korea, the fourth mission was to set up the

⁴ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (NIV Gen 1:28).



Right Formulation of a View of Unification with North Korea. The Korean Church should try to keep in touch and make exchanges with North Korea in all dimensions in order for the waves of renovation and liberalization to reach North Korea and the two Koreas to be united and world mission achieved. The fifth mission, finally, was to establish the view of the world beyond. The Korean Church has to point out and show the world beyond to the moderns, who are losing memory of the world beyond; this is accomplished only through the Second Advent of Christ.

Furthermore, Kim drew up the following four specific schemes. Firstly: spiritual awakening by means of prayer, as well as the renewal of services by praise-and prayer-centered services, instead of sermon-centered services. Secondly: moral awakening and social participation of the Korean Church. Thirdly: the unification and harmony Movement. Fourthly: the renewal of theological Education by cultivating men of spiritual, ministerial and moral talent and church education. This is to be achieved through deep moving and practice-centered education instead of knowledge-centered education.

Similarly with the problems mentioned above, Kim (1997:410-412) commented on the twelve problems with which the Korean Church is confronted.⁵ He pointed out continuously that the future of the Korean Church would become dim if the Church fails to devote itself in keeping the truth, living a disciplined life, cultivating a high moral purity or if it returns to its former conservative church life (:414).

Moreover, Chung (1996:290) approached the problem theologically, defining his position that the Korean Church must be responsible for the study, development, and growth of Calvinistic theology in order to contribute to the world Church as well as to itself.

⁵ The concrete items are as follows: varied theologies; moral and spiritual deterioration of ministers; church emphasis on the spiritual gifts; faith focusing on the worldly blessing; hyper-fundamentalism; the priority of a private church; churches losing their denominational characteristics; the absence of a policy for foreign mission; the establishment of Korean theology; the success of the Korean faith of martyrdom; the problem of female ministers and the inclination toward a numerical decline.



Furthermore, similarly with Chung, Kim (1992:300-301) mentioned two assignments in terms of the Korean Reformed theology:

The first is to creatively succeed in the two thousand year old tradition of Christianity, which has been introduced through the Western Church. These days, Western theology has renounced the traditional doctrines and faith of Christianity and has become secularized. It has lost the identity of theology and of the church. In Asia, specifically, the Reformed theology in Korea, should recover the tradition of Christianity, in order to succeed in the spirit of the Reformation of Augustine, Luther and Calvin. It should re-discover the identity of the church and theology in postmodern society and proclaim the Second Advent of Christ. The second requires discussions with the unique religions and cultural traditions of Asia; to give theological direction about diversified high technology and ecological problems of a highly information-oriented global village. For the sake of doing the first thing, the Reformed theology must become the universal ecclesiology. In order to solve the second thing, the Reformed theology has to be the revolutionary cultural theology.

Similar to the above-mentioned solutions, diversified alternative ideas were enumerated to the contemporary Korean Church. To sum up, Calvin's explanation was appropriate,

For the gospel is a doctrine not of the tongue but of life. It is not apprehended by the understanding and memory alone, as other disciplines are, but it is received only when it possesses the whole soul, and finds a seat and resting place in the inmost affection of the heart (*Institutes of the Christian Religion* III. 6. 4).

Therefore, Korean theology should deal with and find a cure for the realm of life including politics, economy and culture as well as Christian faith. It is possible through sacrificed individuals and organizations with unwearied enthusiasm to transform the whole society on the basis of the Bible for the future of the Korean Church.



1.1.3 A Better Solution: Puritanism

In order to achieve the forwarding ways mentioned above and to address the contemporary church problems, the Korean Church has to pay attention to Puritanism. There are two decisive reasons for proposing such a solution and they are as follows:

Firstly, what the Puritans were trying to seek had something to do with realistic alternative ideas for the contemporary Korean Church. Morgan (1963:4) commented on the historical value of Puritanism that the Puritans were those who “designed to make the visible church a closer approximation of the invisible than St. Augustine probably had in mind.” Furthermore, not only the problem of the visible church, but also

Every Christian was bound to obey God not merely as a sanctified man (in order to prove to himself that he was saved) but as a member of each group to which he belonged. If he failed, he not only demonstrated his own damnation, but he brought the temporal wrath of God upon his family, upon his church, and upon his state. In New England, these ideas penetrated to every level of society (Morgan 1944:10).

As New (1964:85) mentioned, activism had become the hallmark of Puritanism. It was applicable not only to a member of church but also to the whole country. Therefore, compared with the lax and flexible ethics of Anglicanism of those times, “in the formation, Puritan ethics were comparatively worldly and pragmatic, in their application they were disconcertingly astringent and assertive” (:86). The purpose of which was only to glorify God on the basis of the Bible as the unique norm of life and faith. Puritans regarded man’s chief end as not to amuse or to be amused, but “to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever”⁶ as written by the first question of Westminster Shorter Catechism of 1674.

Like this, Puritan ideas can clearly present very forwarding ways for the Korean

⁶ Q 1. What is the chief end of man? A 1. Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever (Westminster Shorter Catechism 1674 in LCC: 2001).



Presbyterian church if it is determined to take action against the inner corruption of the church and the secular menace of the outer world.

Secondly and the more important other reason than the former, is that the earliest style of the Korean Christian faith was Puritanical, owing to the foreign missionaries who were taught by the Puritan heritages and transplanted them to Korea. However, the contemporary Korean Church seems to wander aimlessly along with the current of the times without knowing the early roots of Christian faith. The recovery of Puritanism is in connection with the identity of early Korean Christianity.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study

Many historians have mentioned the theological origin of Korean Christianity. Generally speaking, the style of the Christian faith in Korea was completely Puritan since the beginning of the mission. The standpoint has been accepted at home and abroad. As Kim (1992:30) pointed out:

The tradition of Korean Protestantism, generally speaking, originated from Lutheranism, Calvinism and Anglicanism. Presbyterianism holds the greatest majority in the Korean Church, and it is agreed that it has its root in Calvinism (or Reformism). The Methodist Church, the second largest denomination in Korea, has almost the same theological root as the Presbyterian Church in a broad sense. The Anglican Church did not grow as much as the other denominational churches, because of its strong English style. The Lutheran Church was the latest denomination to come to Korea ... At the outset, it was said to have no intention of forming its own churches.

Calvinism, which Kim mentioned as the origin of Korean Christianity, was identical to Puritanism in England. Calvinistic theoretical sources and strengths for reformation of the Anglican Church supported Puritanism. McNeill (1954:310) agreed to this point as follows:



It was to be [a] characteristic of the English Puritans that they were more unyielding on points of worship and ceremony than their instructors, Calvin, Bucer, and Knox.⁷

In addition, considering the records of the early missionaries, Brown (1936:434 in Kim 1997:116), the General Secretaries of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., pointed out that there was no church in the world that enthusiastically prayed, studied the Bible, collected contributions and preached the Gospel as the Korean Church. He also reviewed the mission work before 1911 as follows:

The typical missionary of the first quarter century after the opening of the country was a man of the Puritan type. He kept the Sabbath as our New England forefathers did a century ago. He looked upon dancing, smoking, and card playing as sins in which no true follower of Christ should indulge... In theology and Biblical criticism, he was strongly conservative... The higher criticism and liberal theology were deemed dangerous heresies. In most of the evangelical churches of America and Great Britain, conservatives and liberals have learned to live and work together in peace; but In Korea the few men who hold ‘the modern view’ have a rough road to travel, particularly in the Presbyterian group of missions (Brown 1919:540).

In 1972 when Dr. Weber first went to lead a society for the study of the Bible in Korea, he admired the Korean Church as “an Apostolic church” (He 1974:37). What has been said above clearly reveals the Puritan aspects of the Korean Church.

In order for the contemporary Korean Church to get out of its dwindling situation, it must not adopt Puritanism, but recover it. The hope is that Puritanism shall impress the Reformed theology in the life of the church and society. The most important reason for

⁷ Generally speaking, Calvinism had been introduced in England more through the influence of Bucer and Bullinger than that of Calvin. John Hooper called the first Puritan was a great admirer of Bullinger. However, these men were not Calvin’s revivals but his heralds (McNeill 1954:310-311).



the above-mentioned statement is the debt owed to the early American missionaries who preached the Gospel in Korea, and who were, for the most part, the descendants of Puritans from New England. Consequently, their theology and faith were based on early Puritanism. In view of this, the theological standpoint of Puritanism was naturally transplanted into the Korean soil through the missionaries (Kim 1997:115-135).⁸ In a certain sense, the Korean Christians could be regarded as the descendents of Puritans, because the mission body of North America, which was stimulated by Puritanism, has brought up Korean Protestantism.

Therefore, this study is an attempt to discover the kind of theological and ecclesiastical characteristics of the nineteenth century foreign missionaries who came to Korea. This investigation also intends to discover the factors that influenced these missionaries' formation and development of the Korean Church and the nature of the ensuing results. The study will, therefore, survey several methodologies of church history and related literature.

1.3 Methodology

There are generally three types of methods in the study of Church History. These include Church History as chronological description of historical facts, Church History as mission history and Church History from a theological point of view. In addition to these, there have been studies in martyrlogy,⁹ history of disciplines, dogma, denominations and division. These approaches to history could be a part of Church History from a theological point of view, but includes much more specific subjects.

However, the first three methods of the study of Church History have been the main

⁸ To put it concretely, there were the Twelve Faith Articles of 1907, the Smaller Catechism of Westminster, the administration of church from the American Presbyterian Church, the Ordinances of Discipline from P. C. U. S. A. , the modified Prayer Book from the Southern Presbyterian Church in the constitution of Korean Presbyterian Church, which were newly passed in 1922 (Rhodes 1943: 389 in Kim 1992:142).

⁹ The first martyrlogy of the Korean Church is *Hyun Sek-Moon's Gihae Ilgi* in 1905 (Kim 1997:29).



approaches used to understand and cover the contemporary history of the Korean church, which has not had as long a history as Protestantism. The various approaches, methods, development and relevant literature concerning the history of the Korean church discussed in terms of the above standpoints are as follows.

1.3.1 Church History from a Chronological Descriptive Perspective

This perspective traditionally assumes the narrative form, which deals with the sequential telling of a story, the history of events, mainly the history of those men who act them out (Black and MacRaild 2000:95). Church History from a chronological descriptive perspective was in wide use, but on the other hand, it has a weak point. When the past is analyzed on the basis of the conception of time the analysis might possibly become anachronistic. Black and MacRaild (:16) pointed out this possibility with a quotation from Butterfield's *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931).

The study of the past with one eye, so to speak, upon the present is the source of all sins and sophistry in history, starting with the simplest of them all, the anachronism.

To apply the above to Church History, all theological and historical thought is formed as the result of our own context, subjective experience and ideological perspective. Troeltsch (1972:10) once mentioned the diverse factors which influenced historiography:

All historical phenomena are unique, individual configurations acted on by influences from a universal context that comes to bear on them in varying degrees of immediacy.

“Influences from a universal context” means that all the historians are affected by a personal, a religious, a socio-economic, a national and a general context in which they belong to and live. Conversely, reading historical sources forces readers to have a ‘willingness to enter the world of the author and don the garb of his [their] assumptions’ (Oberman 1981:163). Therefore, historians who are called “the last advocate of the



dead: a spokesperson for the ‘dead’ past” (Oberman 1986a:11) should be careful that various factors which influence historiography are seen only from a single point of view. Holloway (1967:1) supported this with a quotation from Leopold von Ranke:

If there is meaning in history it can only be discovered by a patient and detailed examination of the facts by men trained in the use of objective methods of historical scholarship. To be objective, it is necessary that only what the documents reveal must have actually happened should be reported.

Such an aspect is the golden rule undeniable to historiography. Seen from this viewpoint, many records by early missionaries in Korea did not completely satisfy Ranke’s mention because they were enthusiastic evangelists rather than historical scholars, who can treat with objective methods of historical scholarship.¹⁰ For instance, Allen, the first medical missionary in Korea, mentioned his *Things Korean* (1908:114-115) that the commons were apt to lay a plot against others for their interests readily. It can be somewhat subjective judgment being a lack of objectivity. Nonetheless, these records should win public recognition because they are the solitary historical materials concerning the early history of Korean church.

The early Korean missionaries sent reports of their mission to their homelands from the beginning of their missionary works. Their reports and books covered several fields of studies such as the geography, history and the culture of Korea as well as the establishment and growth of the Korean churches. *The Korean Repository* (1892, 1895-98), *The Korean Review* (1900-95) and *The Korean Mission Field* (1896-1942) were the important historical materials as well as stories of missionaries that were included in the periodicals. These periodicals can be classified into church history as mission history in terms of the contents of the books (Kim 1997:25). *The Korean Repository* was the first magazine translated into Korean. It rendered a great service in introducing Korean

¹⁰ Han (1970:99) mentioned that early foreign missionaries in Korea belonged to New Side and New School rather than Old Side and Old School. The former laid stress on revival movements but the latter attached importance to education of ministers in the nineteenth century. Missionaries in Korea put stress on revival movements more than anything else.



politics, economics, culture, religion and language to foreign missions which was trying to send missionaries to Korea. The writings in these magazines provided foreign missionaries dispatched to Korea at the end of the nineteenth century with reliable tips (Yoo and Yun 2004:3-4).¹¹

Paik Lak-Gune's *The History of the Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910*, was the first book that was published in English concerning the History of the Korean church in 1929. Kim Yang-Sun's book, *The Ten-year History after Liberation of the Korean Church*, was written by a Korean for the first time. This book included some material concerning the split of the church and the vicissitudes of the ten years after liberation from Japanese rule (1945). It also dealt retroactively with the history before Liberation. In addition, his nephew, Kim Kwang-Su, published Kim Yang-Sun's book, *The Studies of History of Christianity in Korea* posthumously (1971) These two books received much recognition as indispensable materials concerning the history of the Korean Church. Chae Phil-Geun had published *A History of Development of Christianity in Chosen* serially in the *Gidok Daily News* for almost a year (1938.8-12).

Recently, A Society for the Study of Christian History in Korea published *A History of Christianity in Korea* volumes I (1989) and II (1991). The Society has brought together several contributors who referred to many reference books internally and externally. They wrote that church history grew in the soil of Korean culture and history without a specific theological point of view. Lee Yung-Hun wrote *A History of the Korean Church* (1978), which is regarded as a detailed and praiseworthy book. Kim

¹¹ For instance, the first number of *the Korean Repository* on January in 1892 representatively included the following articles: 'The Korean alphabet' (Hulbert 1892:1-9), 'The Japanese Invasion' (Jones 1892:10-16) and 'Notes on Recent Russian Archaic Researches Adjacent to Korea, and Remarks on Korean Stone Implements' (Macgowan 1892:25-30). The final number of this magazine on December in 1898 typically included the following articles: 'Korean Songs' (Gale 1898:443), 'the Korean Pharmacope' (Landis 1898:448-464), 'Popular Movement in Korea' (Yun 1898:465-469). For details of the whole contents of these magazines, see Yoo and Yun's *19 Segimal Seyang Sengyosawa Hankuk Sahoi* (The Foreign Missionary of the Close of the Nineteenth Century and the Korean Society) (2004:339-375).



Hae-Yeon's book, *A History of the Korean Church* (1997) deserves special mention in this regard.

1.3.2 Church History from a Missio- Historical Perspective

To consider history as mission history, the conception of mission needs to be given a definition. Saayman (1995:188) introduced Kritzing's conception of mission as follows:

Mission is ... the attempt to embody God's liberating presence in every human situation. It never takes place a vacuum, but is always concerned with specific people in specific situation, and searches to discover the meaning of the Good News in each context.

The above definition is to be considered in relation to the context in which mission occurs. Mission history should not deny but deliberate on the various areas of human surroundings like socio-economic, political, religious and cultural situations in order to reach real history without being subjective. With regard to the viewpoint of mission history, historiography generally follows the three patterns of pre-critical, critical and post-critical writing chronologically and progressively (Millard 1991:78). Especially, the patterns are more remarkable in the third world including Asia because of "positive assessment of missions which are lauded as the harbingers of Western values and a positive view of colonialism (Du Plessis 1911:264-5 in Duncan 1997:9) and strong criticism against it. For instance, Millard (1991:78) applied these patterns to South Africa's situation that pre-critical gives the white point of view (missionaries and government officials), critical gives a critical analysis from both black and white perspectives and the post-critical approach brings the focus of the black and the oppressed.¹² This study belongs to the second category, namely, a critical writing because it does not always evaluate all kinds of the theological aspects affected by early missionaries positively. Also, it criticizes liberal theology called "the Korean theology"

¹² However, Millard (1991:78-91), instead of these patterns, insisted that real history is reinterpretation in the light of the context of the times in which the author lived.



which depended on the unique socio-political situation in Korea, especially from 1960's to 1980's without understanding western Christian history.

The following records mainly belong to the first category (pre-critical writing: pro-missionaries' viewpoint). Early foreign missionaries left abundant records concerning church growth and development in Korea.

Firstly, a missionary Charles A. Clark¹³ published *The Korean Church and the Nevius Method* in 1930, in which he regarded a special mission policy viz., the Nevius Methods, as fruits of the church growth. A missionary, Alfred W. Wasson's book,¹⁴ *Church Growth in Korea* (1934), dealt with the mission history of the Southern Methodist Church in U.S.A. He demonstrated that the growth of the Church in Korea has been oscillating in ten-year cycles depending on the political and social conditions of Korean society. Furthermore, Roy E. Shearer's book,¹⁵ *Wild Fire: Church Growth in Korea*, explained that the rate of church growth differs in various geological areas in addition to Wasson's theory. He showed that the rate of church growth in the middle and southern-eastern parts of Korea was slower than that in the northwestern parts of the country. All the above studies dealt with church history from a mission history point of view.

1.3.3 Church History from a Theologico-Historical Perspective

Church historians, like secular historians, organize and interpret the data collected to reconstruct the past according to a chronologically reasoned order. In this intellectual process, they can get away from neither subjectivity nor certain supposition. Therefore, church historians must free themselves from an uncritical position and avoidable prejudices. In order to do so, historiography must basically adopt a theological and critical method with the Church as norm (Brown 1985:1-18). This means that Church

¹³ C. A. Clark (*Kwak An-Ryun* in Korean) taught practical theology and religious education in Pyongyang Theological Seminary and published many books. He played an important role in theological education in Korea (Kim 1997:25).

¹⁴ A. W. Wasson is known as *Wang Young-Duk* in Korea.

¹⁵ R. E. Shearer is known as *Se Myung-Won* in Korea.



History as a chronological description or mission history is, in a broad sense, Church History from a theological point of view fundamentally because all works of church historians were influenced by their theological backgrounds, consciously or unconsciously. However, what the section mentions means Church History which has a special theological viewpoint from a starting point of research. For instance, Cullman insisted that all history is to be understood in the light of salvation history. He contended that Christian knowledge of the “not yet,” combined with the “already,” plays a decisive role in “being fellow-workers in carrying out the saving plan in history” (Cullman 1967:338).

In the early part of the 1960s, theological circles in Korea began to debate the concept of “indigenization theology.”¹⁶ Among three general approaches to history (pre-critical, critical and post-critical) as mentioned before, this belongs to the third approach to history. This viewpoint attempted to regard the Koreans not as the object of mission but as the subject of mission. Liberal theologians especially have regarded it as an important topic for the history of the church in Korea since then.

To consider some literature with the theological and ethnocentric perspective (the post-critical writing), Palmer published *Korean Christianity: the Problem of Identification with Tradition* in 1967. Here, he dealt with the identification of conventional culture and Christianity as important keys concerning the success of the mission work in comparison with Chinese Christianity. For him, the central issue of Christian mission was to assimilate different cultures. Palmer (1967:96) said, “... in conclusion, and in view of the record of Protestantism in Korea and China, it must be said that Christian identification with Asian tradition can be a distinct advantage...”

¹⁶ This term ‘Indigenization’ was used first by Jang Byung-il’s article, The Theological Understanding of *Tangun* Myth -Indigenization study concerning a creation narrative-, carried in the *Gidokyo Sasang* in December 1961. There were two groups divided within the positive standpoint concerning the indigenization of Christianity. One group held a view of indigenization that evangelism itself has to be retranslated from a Korean perspective. Yun Sung-Byem, Ryu Tong-Shik and Kim Kwang-Sik agreed with this standpoint. Another advocated that indigenization was applicable within the area of the Korean culture only. Kim Jung-Jun, Lee Jong-Seng, Han Chul-Ha and Hong Hyun-Sel belong here (Kim 1992:291-92).



Harvie M. Conn,¹⁷ a missionary, wrote more than four times about the development of Korean theology from 1966 to 1968. He dealt with the controversies and confrontations between conservative and liberal theology up to the period of liberation from Japanese rule (1945).

Min Kyung-Bae's *Hankuk Gidokgyo Hyungseungsa: Hankuk Minjok Gyohoi Hyungseungsa (A History of Church in Korea: A History of the Formation Process of the Korean National Church)* (1972) was written from an ethnocentric point of view. He expressed his regret at the early history of the Korean church because he regarded it as history recorded from a foreign imperialistic point of view. Furthermore, he pointed out the negative influences given by early missionaries. He emphasizes discontinuity from such a historical point of view. Furthermore, he stressed the need for a national church to establish Korean independence. For him, the decisive forces of a national church consist of Christian piety (legacies inherited from Christian tradition) and Korean nationalism (legacies inherited from the Korean tradition). Ryu Tong-Shik's *Hankuk Shinhakeui Kwangmaeck (A Vein of the Korean Theology)* (1982) introduced various theological points of view and systematized them. Ryu also wrote in terms of Min's viewpoint.

However, his point of view came under serious criticism owing to its lack of a theological appropriateness by the conservative camps (Kim 1992:18, Kim 1997:28). Kim Young-Jae described Korean Christianity from the Reformed point of view of Church History in his *A History of the Korean Church* (1992). Kim's historical point of view was the opposite of Min and Ryu's. His approach to the Korean history belonged to the critical writing by giving criticism to both the conservative and the liberal viewpoints in terms of the reformed perspective. The differences between them remained as an irreconcilable rift between conservative and liberal camps of theology existing in Korea.

¹⁷ H. M. Conn is known as *Kan Ha-Bae* in Korea.



All the above mentioned materials were written from various theological points of views.

1.3.3.1. Collision of Two Theological Approaches in Understanding the Korean Church: Ethnocentric vs. Reformed Viewpoints

Two different representative views exist concerning the understanding of the history of the Korean Church. One is an ethnocentric position and the other is the Reformed perspective. The ethnocentric idea is a new approach to the history of the church in Korea interpreted by Korean historians. It did not come to the fore of religious circles of Korea until the 1960s. Many historians depended on foreign missionaries' historical writings because of a lack of historical material written by Koreans. From the end of the 1970s and up to especially the 1980s, it was a big issue among the historians who were concerned with national consciousness and self-respect. The most representative figures are Min Kyung-Bae, Park Bong-Bae, Se Nam-Dong and Ju Jae-Yong. According to them, 'the understanding of the Korean Church developed by foreign missionaries is cultural subordinationalism or cultural colonialism' (Han 1996. A Task and View of Korean Theology in the 21st Century. *J.N.*, 12, 414-435). They contended that Koreans themselves should take the initiative in understanding the history of the Korean Church. In order to do so, they asserted under the guise of tracing the self-identity of Korean Christianity that the early missionaries' achievements should be negatively evaluated. (Han 1996:414-435).

Meanwhile, Kim (1992:31) refuted this approach, arguing that they showed a tendency to reject any consideration of the historical tradition of the Western church. For example, the Great Revival of 1907 was acknowledged as an event, which laid the cornerstone for Korean Christianity at home and abroad.¹⁸ However, ethnocentric theologians regarded

¹⁸ According to Song (1980:722), 'before and after 1907, the Korean Church ascertained and experienced the work of Holy Spirit in a pragmatic manner, and understood that the Spirit played an important role in the Christian life, the development and revival of the church.' Also, a missionary, Reynolds (1935:9-10 in Park 1991:20) described the revivals of the three special areas, Wales, Chosun (a old name of Korea) and India in the early part of the twentieth century, as resulting from the work of the Holy Spirit among



it critically as the result of the enthusiastic religious sentiment of the Koreans, or the achievement of the de-politicization of the Korean Church. In other words,

They (the foreign missionaries) made Korean Protestantism only be concerned about the spiritual and the world beyond, but on the other hand also co-operated with Japanese imperialism by paying no attention to politics and contemporary problems (Min 1974:42).

Meanwhile, the Reformed point of history, which placed its root from Calvin and his school, was ardently represented by Park Hyung-Nong in Korea. He completely emphasized the Reformed point of history, defining the faith of the early missionaries as Puritanical Calvinism. Furthermore, Park and his party considered it as a standard theology and insisted on defending it as the tradition of the Korean Church.¹⁹ Actually, an ethnocentric interpretation of the history of the Korean Church became extremely meager owing to Park's theological activities.

The two above mentioned opposing viewpoints concerning the interpretation of the

Christians who devoted themselves to prayer. Consequently, great meetings of revival were held, sins were confessed and churches grew greatly in numbers and quality.

¹⁹ Han (1993:569-595), divided and introduced theological lines after Park Hyung-Nong as follows: 1. Evangelistic Theology in the line of the Reformed tradition - Kang Sa-Moon, Gye Il-Seung, Kim Ki-Moon, Kim Myung-Yong, Kim Young-Han, Kim I-Tae, Kim In-Soo, Kim Jung-Eun, Kim Ji-Chul and Kim Chul-Young...etc. 2. Fundamentalist Theology laid emphasis on Calvinism – Kwon Sung-Su, Kim Kwang-Su, Kim Myung-Hyuk, Kim Se-Yun, Kim Young-Jae, Kim Ui-Won, Kim Jung-Woo, Kim Hei-Bo, Na Yong-Hoa and Park A-Ron... etc. 3. Fundamentalism on the basis of the modern Dutch Reformed Theology – Park Yun-Sun, Se Chul-Won, Oh Byung-Se, Lee Geun-Sam, Lee Seung-Mi, Lee Bo-Min, Lee Hwang-Bong, Jung Hun-Taeck, Cha Young-Bae and Choi Hong-Sek...etc. 4. Liberal Neo-orthodox Theology – Kim Gyun-Jin, Kim Jae-Jun, Kim Jung-Jun, Park Bong-Rang, Oh Young-Sek, Lee Jang-Sik, Jung Kyung-Youn, and Jung Ha-Eun. 5. Progressive Theology – Go Jae-Sik and IL Tae-Soo. 6. Neo-orthodox Cultural Theology – Kim Kyung-Jae and Jung Wung-Seb. 6. Minjung Theology – Kang Won-Don, Kim Sung-Jae, Kim Yong-Bok, Kim I-Gon, Kim Chang-Rak, Moon Il-Hoan, Moon Hi-Sek, Min Young-Jin, Park Sun-Kyung and Park Jae-Sun...etc. Theological perspective has been enumerated from the above in order to analyze the various theological inclinations within the Korean Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian theological perspective has a majority in Korean Protestantism. But briefly, two parts will be divided: the Reformed Theology (from 1 to 3) vs. the Liberal Theology (from 4 to 6).



history of the Korean church have conflicted sharply within its tradition. However, this confrontation started to pay attention only to the illiberality of the understanding of history. The ethnocentric point of view of church history has a tendency to not acknowledge the horizontal flow of church history. Consequently, they tried to understand the church and the theology of each period with only the vertical relation of the Word to the context which they live like heresy and eschatological movement.²⁰ Kim's evaluation (1992:31-32) of them seems to be right. It is as follows:

The Korean Church excessively regards early missionaries as the Apostles of itself and this may unconsciously produce an unexpected result; discontinuing the continuity of the ecclesiastic tradition. Therefore, according to the tradition of the Korean Church, it is supposed to rediscover Calvinism into the historical development of Reformism as well as early missionaries' faith. If we called Korean Christianity Puritan or Pietistic, we have to have an understanding of the historical situation in which such movements broke out and what the original spirit of the movement was.

Therefore, the best way to understand Korean Christianity is that a horizontal point of view (the historical theological line of missionaries flowing into Korea) and a vertical point of view (the relation between the unique context of Korea and evangelism) are considered in the unique context of the history of the Korean Church without prejudice. For instance, the unique tradition of the daily dawn prayer meeting in Korean soil shows

²⁰ For instance, Rev. Kim Jang-Ho established the new denomination called "Chosun Gidok Gyodan" (the Korean Presbyterian Group) and seceded from the General Assembly on 7th July, 1918. He justified himself, saying that the purpose of my denomination was to prevent the Korean Christians from schisms because of missionaries' struggle for power. Rev. Kim denied all kinds of miracles in the Bible. The Presbyterian General Assembly of 1923 condemned Rev. Kim a heretic (Min 1993:405). Also, Hwang Kuk-Ju cried out that Jesus himself descended upon him after a long prayer. He regarded himself as reincarnated Jesus in 1930's (Lee 1978:289). Hwang raised a non-biblical mystical movement and became the matrix of non-biblical mysticism in Korea subsequently. Both of two despised the horizontal aspect of Christianity, which was begun from the apostolic succession as a starting point of Christian faith. They only sought the vertical relation of Christian faith between God and themselves or their circumstances. The aspect became the starting point of heresy in the history of Korean Christianity.

religious enthusiasm for God and the Bible, which is in accord with Puritanism.

This thesis can be classified under the third approach to the study of history (a history as the theological perspective), because this study describes the Puritan roots in the history of the Korean Church. Moreover, the basic approach of this thesis will be chronological descriptive, at the same time, critical and theological as mission history in terms of the Reformed theological viewpoint.

1.4 Hypothesis

The following hypothesis is argued in this thesis:

The Korean Church inherited a Puritan faith and theology. However, with the lapse of time, its form became distorted, extinct and is now beyond recognition. In the mean time, various theological lines - Pentecostal spirituality, fundamentalism, liberalism and even secularism – have formed a popular foundation of Christian faith within the Presbyterian Church and took seats in the church, putting on a mask of Puritan theology and spirituality. Therefore, the true recovery of the Korean Presbyterian Church is the rediscovery and the pursuit of Puritanism.

1.5 Periodization of the Study

In order to enhance theological enterprise, the Korean Presbyterian Church established the theological Seminary under S. A. Moffett's leadership (1864-1939) on May 15, 1901, eighteen years after missionary Underwood made the first step to Korea with the Gospel. It was called Pyungyang Theological Seminary,²¹ which was a training institute

²¹ The official name of the Seminary was Union Theological Seminary. In 1902, two presbyteries from Pyungyang were recruited as students and four people working as a church-preacher applied for it. They studied together. There was a rule that students studied three months per year and graduated within five years. This was decided by the Presbyterian Assembly in 1905 (Paik 1970:303). In 1907, the first graduates from the Seminary became pastors. In the meantime, the first Synod of the Korean Presbyterian church was established on September 17, 1907 (Sejong 1998:246).



for pastors run by the Presbyterian Association. It consisted of four representatives from four foreign missions viz., Southern and Northern Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church of Victoria and Canadian Presbyterian Church.

Besides Moffett, the missionaries who had exerted influence over the Korean Presbyterian theology were as follows: C. A. Clark (1878-1961), W. D. Reynolds (?-1951), W. C. Eerdmans, S. L. Robert, J. C. Crane, W. L. Swallen and E. F. Hamilton (Kim 2002. A History and Theology of Korean Theological School. *J. S. R. T.* 3, 1-12). Considering their Seminary of graduation,

among the forty missionaries from the Northern Presbyterian Church, who came to Korea from the beginning of the mission until 1901; sixteen came from the Princeton Seminary and eleven from McCormick Seminary (Kim: 1-12).

That meant that Pyungyang Theological Seminary was greatly influenced by Princeton Theological Seminary with C. Hodge, A. Hodge and B. Warfield as leaders. Therefore, focusing on Princeton Theological Seminary including McCormick, Westminster and Calvin Seminary, the study will research the American theological background from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century.

The investigation shall cover the history of the Korean Church which was divided into three major periods: First, the formation of the Korean theology by foreign missionaries (1885-1909). Second, the adherence to the Korean theology (1910-1944). Third, the development, decline and distortion of it (1945-to the present).

These divisions are considered in the context of changes of Korean politics. Even though the community of faith like the church has a transcendent property, it is impossible to exist without having any relationship with the historical and the social situations of the society, to which it belongs. From this view, the Korean Church is not an exception. Korean Christianity has developed in the vortex of political incidents including the annexation by Japan (1910) between the first and second period, the Liberation from Japan (1945) and the Korean War (1950-1953) between the second and



third period.

1.6 Thesis Outline

In order to discover the root of Puritanism in the Korean Presbyterian church, and to solve the stagnant problems within its regarding Puritanism, this investigation will use both primary and secondary sources.

Chapter Two will consider the historical, theological and ecclesiological backgrounds in America from the eighteenth to nineteenth century as a unit. It was during this period that the foundation of the Korean Christianity was laid. The study shall utilize the theological and chronological approach. The study shall focus on the study of Westminster Standards, which the Korean Presbyterian Church still regards as the basis of important confessions, including the historical and theological backgrounds, characteristics and the position of those times upon them. In addition, the study will include some of the theological seminaries and theologians who had fought against liberalism and tried to keep the Confessions, and who had an influence on the early foreign missionary work in Korea.

Due to the fact that in that period, the early missionaries were met with the strong challenge of liberalism, liberalism will be investigated. Lastly, the missionary movement of the nineteenth century, which was regarded as the greatest century, will also be studied. The above three issues were the main religious matters of those times, which the early missionaries were influenced by and had to face.

Chapter Three shall examine the theological and ecclesiological principles that the early major foreign missionaries had to adhere to from the beginning of the mission up until 1909. The period was one in which the Korean Presbyterian Church experienced the great revival and laid the groundwork as a church itself. They became the direct and permanent foundation of Presbyterianism.

Chapter Four will trace the Presbyterian Church under the rule of Japanese imperialism. This was the double faced period decorated with apostasy and martyr. When apostasy



was committed on a large scale of General Assembly, a few martyrs showed Puritan spirituality by their death. This rang an alarm bell. On the contrary, during this period, liberalism also rose up and developed under the aegis of the Japanese government. The issues mentioned above will be studied in the fourth chapter.

Chapter Five will consider the more complicated picture of the Korean Presbyterian Church, which had to be faced since the Liberation from Japanese imperialism until the present. The post-management of apostasy on a scale of General Assembly, was expressed by schisms of denomination in a Presbyterian Church. In addition, the explosive growth of each denomination was unique in the world. This period, on the contrary, shows that Pentecostalism, instead of Puritanism, was completely dominant in the Korean church. The reverse side of this tendency leaves many problems awaiting solutions, like the separation of faith and life, the reduction of the influence and corruption of the church. Therefore, these diverse causes will be analyzed in the Korean context, with focus on Pentecostalism.

A summary of the findings shall be embodied in Chapter Six, including the way forward for the Korean Church in terms of the rediscovery and application of Puritan characteristics.

1.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the problems leading to the stagnation and current crisis in the Korean Church were discussed. Diverse alternative solutions were also described to address the above-mentioned problems. These solutions were summarized in the theology and life of Puritanism (in the subsection that deals with the aims and objectives of this study). Moreover, three patterns or viewpoints for understanding the situation of the Korean church were briefly introduced with related literature. This study follows the third viewpoint among the diverse methods of the historical study viz., Church History from a theological point of view. The hypothesis used in the investigation is presented in the light of respective periodization of American theological backgrounds during the nineteenth century and in the history of the Korean Presbyterian Church. In the next



chapter, the investigation shall focus closely on the historical, theological and ecclesiological formation during the nineteenth century American context.