

CHAPTER 2

PRESENT SOCIETY AND THE KOREAN CHURCH

Christianity that is based on the Creation and the Providence of God could overcome the dualism of the ancient Greek where ‘the matter’ is inferior to ‘the spirit.’ It implies that Christian thought affirms the two aspects—the physical world and human reason (or autonomy)—as products of God’s creation. The affirmation of the physical world makes it unnecessary to seclude society in order to reach God. This affirmation of human reason and autonomy led Protestants to resist the heteronomy of absolutism in the Middle Ages. Since the beginning of the 19th century, however, as capitalistic economy expands all over the whole world, the ‘practical reason’ of the Age of Enlightenment has become ‘technical reasons.’ In the process, autonomy and individualism has been distorted, and religion has come under this distorted individualism as well. As a result, religion has lost not only its role in traditional social integration, but has also retreated from the public to the private realm. In this way, the crisis of religion is closely connected with modern distorted individualism.

This chapter will firstly examine individualism, and then determine how it affects religion, and what religious individualism or privatization means. As a next step, it will explore how the phenomenon of religious individualism or privatization appeared in the Korean church. In the process of the research into the Korean church, finally, the current problem of the church will be diagnosed.

2.1 Individualism

Individualism is a commonly representative phenomenon of modern society. In the process of industrialization and the development of science and technology, modern society changed gradually from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* (Tönnies 1957). It was a

change from a moral community to a rational society (Wilson 1982:153-161). In consequence, the moral order and the organic community became weaker, but conversely, the rational order and the contractual and individualistic character of the community grew stronger. Robert Nisbet (1970:372) calls this phase “individualization.” Robert Bellah (1985:142) also points out that individualism lies at the very core of culture in the world: “Our highest and noblest aspirations, not only for ourselves, but also for others, society and the world, are closely linked to our individualism.”

Modern individualism, according to Robert Bellah (1985:142,277), emerged out of the freedom from superstition and out of the struggle against monarchical and aristocratic authority of the tyrannical structures of the past. Therefore, it might be a natural consequence that individualism focuses mainly on searching for ‘the self’ and on pursuing the right of individuals’ freedom—the freedom to decide individually and to develop as an individual. Everything here revolves around the nurturing, exalting, and gratifying of one’s self. The individual’s success at the cost of all else, satisfaction of needs, standing up for his or her rights and autonomy—these are the expressions of a self-driven culture (Gorman 1993:28). In an industrial society, such individualism had a positive impact with regard to allowing the value of each personality, equalitarianism, freedom, autonomy and self-fulfillment.

However, in the process of the battle of such cultural and social contradictions, the nervous search for self began at the place of “independence of and detached from any cultural or social influence.” According to the explanation of Bellah (1985:144,150-151,286), the reason is that individuals have some fear of losing their independence and autonomy unless they stand against society. Hence, one’s primary task is viewed as finding oneself in autonomous self-reliance, existing independently, entirely ‘outside’ any tradition and community, and then choosing one (Bellah 1985:63).

Paul Wachtel (1983:61) indicates the result of an extreme emphasis on ‘the self’ of individualism in brief. Individualism makes the individual a “separated and isolated self,

not only vis-a-vis the present, with respect to their contemporaries (communities and institutions), but also vis-a-vis the past, with respect to their ancestors (tradition and obligation).” On the one hand, the isolating individualism thinks of obligation (commitment) and tradition negatively because it seems to limit the ability of independence, freedom, and self-gratification. On the other hand, it endangers community and traditional relationships, whether of friendship, group, church, marriage and so on. If a relationship and community do not fulfill us, they can easily be discarded. This is why individuals’ interest and self-preservation are most desirable.

Relationships in such “a throw-away world” finally become the “things” to be selected or rejected at our convenience (Gaede 1985:140; Gorman 1993:57-58). Yankelovich (1981:248) argues that the very “me-first, satisfy-all-my-desires attitude” leads to form relationships that are superficial, transitory, and ultimately unsatisfying. The statement by Robert Bellah (1985:152) provides more detail: The individualism involved in pursuing such “unencumbered self” tends to isolate one from one’s group and causes one to withdraw into the circle of fewer relations (family and friends), and at last generates withdrawal from the public world (Bellah 1985:112). What it comes down to is that the individual of today is caught between ideals of obligation and freedom, or community and self.

Such separating individualism makes the individual a “socially unsituated self” and “a fragmented being” who lose coherence with the whole (Bellah 1985:55). According to Robert Bellah (1985:279,281), television and the technological revolution has helped in this process of isolating individualism because the lifestyle delivered by television is an individual (private) lifestyle rather than a public (communal) one. Accordingly, the present period is characterized by “private-oriented culture” or “culture of separation” (Bellah 1985:277).

If so, what is the primary problem of isolating individualism? The answer is that individualism makes one live typically with a sense of imbalance and strain between

private life and public life. As examined above, although individualism implied much greater opportunities, it produced greater separateness. Overemphasis on the private realm of individualism spoils the unity with society. As Albert Borgmann (1992:3,6) points out, in the individualized society and separated culture, “we have no life to be shared in collaboration with together, ... we lost already common life.”

2.2 Religious Individualism: Privatization

How is religion today under the influence of individualism and the culture of separation? In his book *A Teachable Spirit*, Richard Osmer (1990:16,20-21) states that the present church is undergoing a crisis of a decrease in church-membership and a decline in the power of influence, so to speak, “disestablishment.” He goes on to point out that a representative cause of the crisis of religion lies in individualism. Individualism affects the realm of faith. Neither religion nor society can transcend individualism.

If this is so, in which aspects would religion show the phenomenon of individualism? According to Robert Bellah (1985:226), religion of today is regarded as “something individual, prior to any organizational involvement.” This means that the individual is a controlling factor even in religion. This is contrary to the traditional pattern that assumes a certain priority of religious community over the individual. The relationship of the individual with God in the past was ultimately personal, but was mediated by the whole of community life (Bellah 1985:223). However, our thoughts about community and relationship became colored by the individual himself nowadays. The main cry here is “every man for himself, and God for us all!” (Kraus 1979:107). Facing the God of man occurs not through the mediation of the mother church, but through the separate and isolated individual. In the religious sphere as well as in the true frontier of individualism, individual gain becomes the primary motivator, and thus the church is always secondary to the individual (Gorman 1993:66-67).

Many sociologists, most prominently Peter Berger, Talcott Parsons, Tomas Luckmann, and Robert Bellah, have put forward the notion that religion has become increasingly “privatized” in the contemporary world. They commonly profess the privatization or individualization of religion and the diagnosis that individualism has become today’s essential characteristic of religion. Metz (1980:32-47) also observed that “a distorted religious individualism legitimates bourgeois, privatized religion.”

What is the privatization of religion? Peter Berger’s (1969:133) statement below clearly characterizes the privatization of religion: “Religion manifests itself in its peculiarly modern form, that is as a legitimating complex ‘voluntarily adopted’ by an un-coerced clientele. As such it is located in the private sphere of everyday social life, then becomes privatization. This means that privatized religion is a matter of the choice or preference of the individual or the nuclear family, ipso facto lacking in common, binding quality.”

Such privatization of religion was brought by secularization and pluralism in modern society (Berger 1969:133-153). In ancient society, religious establishments existed as monopolies in society. The religious system was an organization to regulate human activity and thought. It was not a matter of individual choice. “To step outside the religious world was to step into a chaotic darkness, into anomy, possibly into madness” (Berger 1969:135). In contemporary society, however, religious traditions have been demonopolized by secularization. This leads to deficiency in the allegiance of its client populations, and religion, which could previously have been authoritatively imposed, now has to be marketed competitively. In addition, as pluralism produces a “market situation” of marketing and offering various opportunities of choice, the individual has the right of choice to shop for the right religion or church according to individual religious taste, on the basis of “the dynamics of consumer preference” (Berger 1969:145). In this context, religious institutions become ‘marketing agencies’ and the religious traditions become ‘consumer commodities.’ Individual believers become ‘consumers of religion’ (Berger 1969:135-138; Bellah 1985:233). This means religion

has become “a matter of choice” for the individual.

Privatization is, as Meredith McGuire (1992:58) states, the process by which certain institutional/private spheres become removed from effective roles in the public sphere. In this process of the privatization of religion, traditional religious forms are no longer definitive for the society as a whole, but can be directed mainly at the lives of individuals or subgroups. Privatization diminishes the individual's control over public life, and undermines the influence of religion over the public sphere. A privatized religion is expected to provide a haven away from the public sphere and to compensate for what their members are deprived of in the public sphere (Luckmann 1967:106-114). It tends to have primary concern for the individual and to have lost much of its public relevance (Beyer 1994:70).

In this way, religion has been marginalized from the public life. In *The Culture of Disbelief*, Stephen Carter (1994:xv) argues that “in the public square, religion is too often trivialized, treated as an unimportant facet of human personality, one easily discarded, and one with which public-spirited citizens would not bother. It has nothing to do with the real public world. At its most extreme, religious belief cannot serve as the basis of policy; religious beliefs cannot even be debated in the forum of public dialogue: in the public life, one does not talk about one's faith and one does not follow the rules of one's faith. Religion became something quiet, private, and something trivial and not really a fit activity for the public sphere.” Carter (1994:22,29) describes that this attitude exerts pressure to treat “religion like building model airplanes,” and “God as a hobby.”

As society became individualized, the phenomenon of separation between public life and private life occurred. In other words, under the influence of individualism, religious individualism or privatization of religion arose. In addition, in the process of connection of religious individualism with secularization and the phenomenon of pluralism, the position and function of religion gradually changed from public religion to private religion. This change has eventually brought about a crisis of credibility in religion.

What is the change in the position and function of religion? If seen from a perspective of status, contemporary religion fell from a position of monopoly to one of competition (Berger 1969:138,151), because religious groups were transformed from monopolies to competitive marketing agencies by the logic of market economy in the consumer culture. The individual cannot really talk about religion any more in the public realm. On the other hand, if seen from a perspective of function, religion became a private affair only. Religion became a matter of private choice or preference of the individual or family.

The most important cause of such religious changes lies in the loss of the socially significance of religion in the public sphere. The reason is that religion as a private matter means the loss of its social sphere. Thomas Luckmann (1967) explains: “Religious issues are based on only the experience of private realm, mainly emotion and feeling, so it became a very subjective issue.” Peter Berger (1969:152) also diagnoses: “Religion no longer refers to the cosmos or to history, but to individual existence or psychology.”

In conclusion, this indicates what the basic problem of religious individualism or privatization is. That is, religion in modern society fulfills simply a psychological function in the private realm, but does not execute a social function which affects the whole society. In fact, the most serious crisis of today’s religion, as Bryan Wilson (1966:14) mentions, “is not the decline of religion itself, but the decline in religion’s ability to influence other spheres of life.” The crisis of religion lies not in the fact that religion has been driven out of modern society, but that religion has not had an important function for the whole of society any more. That is because “religion is judged by its effects” (Wuthnow 1996:26). It is important how religious commitment affects ‘the others’ and the public sphere.

If this is the case, how can religion, especially Christianity, become a publicly influential religion? In the face of privatization of religion or religious individualism, the question is

how Christianity will overcome the segregation between public realm and private realm, and how it will form a connection with the world. This is the main concern of this dissertation. Before a solution can be found, it is necessary to examine the Korean church.

2.3 The Korean Church and Church-Individualism

Where does the Korean church stand in the religious stream of individualization and privatization? Considering the fact that the Korean church is placed in a totally multi-religious context, the phenomenon of individualization or privatization would be expected to occur as in a competitive market situation. In particular, the privatization of the Korean church has emerged with a specific form of 'church-individualism' or 'each church centralism.' Therefore, a diagnosis of the Korean church will proceed with a focus on the representative phenomenon of 'church-individualism.'

First of all, there will be a study of the characteristics of church-individualism, and then research into the influence of church-individualism on the Korean church. Examining both positive and negative aspects will reveal the relation between church-individualism and the growth of the Korean church, and a correlation between church-individualism and the crisis in the Korean church. Finally, the basic cause of crisis will be diagnosed.

2.3.1 Religious Pluralism in the Korean Church

The Korean church is placed in a context of pluralism. Korea is a society in which many kinds of religion, including Buddhism, Confucianism, Won-Buddhism, Cheondogyo, Catholic and Protestant, coexist. The number of surveyed 'new religions' is calculated as about 400. In addition, if one considers Folk belief, Korean society manifests religious pluralism most remarkably and can be called "an exhibition of religion" (Lee W.G. 1998:38; 1992:28).

Religious pluralism means that different religious groups coexist in a free competitive situation (Berger 1969:135). However, the Korean church has not taken the attitude of generosity and tolerance of other religions. On the contrary, it has shown an exclusive attitude of a religious crusade mentality with the motive of evangelism. Furthermore, the disunion, separation and struggles are represented even within the religion. Disintegration of Protestantism is most severe among the Korean religions, as it is divided into 113 denominations (1993 present. The Ministry of Culture and Gymnastics 1993:5; Lee W.G. 1998:69) and polarized in respect of faith to the conservative and to the liberal. This polarization of faith affects the attitudes of political-social participation. The Korean church needs public dialogue with other religions and also within denominations to create contact and harmony.

2.3.2 Church-Individualism and Church Growth

In plural-religious and plural-denominational circumstances, “a competitive market-situation” as Peter Berger calls it, was developed in the Korean church. Concentrating all its energy on the solidarity and growth of an inner group in order to compete, the Korean church followed ‘church-individualism’ characteristics very strongly (Roh C.J. 1995:48, 50-51). Church-individualism is another form of individualism expanded into the church (Roh C.J. 1997:27). According to the description of Roh Chi Jun (1995:32), church-individualism means “an attitude or a policy that gives a priority to inner-issues of a local church, especially to the maintenance and the expansion of its own church, when the church sets up its purpose, practices its ministry, and uses human and material resources. The Korean church has formed and developed ‘independent church-individualism’ by accepting from the early mission period the Nevius doctrine for mission which emphasizes the three greatest principles (self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagandizing).

This chapter will research how church-individualism affects the Korean church. Both positive and negative aspects will be considered.

What is the positive influence of church-individualism on the Korean church? A competitive market-situation induced from multi-religious circumstance brought about a miraculous growth in the Korean church. As a result, especially after the 1960s, each local church and each denomination of the Korean church have positively executed a competitive “church-making-movement.” This movement, together with a great mission of Christendom-evangelism, contributed to an increase in the number of Christians (Lee W.G. 1992:250-251).

The Korean Tonghap Presbyterian Church enforced “the 5000 church-making-movement,” the Korean Hapdong Presbyterian Church “the 10,000 church movement,” the Korean Methodist Church “the 5,000 church and one million church member movement” and the Holiness Church “2,000 church movement” (Ju J.Y. 1983b:172; Lee W.G. 1994:185-192). In addition, the revival movement, the Holy Spirit movement, the body-healing movement, church members’ redoubling movement, and the evangelism movement helped the growth of the Korean church, combining with a quantitative expansionism of the church (Han W.S. 1982:165-232). The following table indicates a geometrical progression in the number of Korean Protestant members (Lee W.G. 1998:169; 2000:361).

Table 1

Year	1950	1960	1970	1977	1985	1991	1994
The number of Christians	500,198	623,072	3,192,621	5,001,491	6489,282	8,037,464	8,146,556
Percentage of increase		24.6%	412.4%	56.7%	29.7%	23.9%	1.4%

(Data: Year 1950, 60, 70 statistics. Korean Religious society center, *Korean Religious Yearbook* (1993)
 1977 Statistic. Cultural Information Center, *Religious Corporation & Community Situation* (1977)
 1985 Statistic. *Population & Residential Census* (1985)
 1991 Statistic. The Bureau of Statistics, *Social Index of Korea* (1992)
 1994 Statistic. The Bureau of Statistics, *Social Index of Korea* (1995)

As far as the rate of growth is concerned, the number of Korean church members increased by 24.6% over the 10 years from 1950 to 1960. It shows a tremendously rapid growth of up to 412% for the 10 years from 1960 to 1970. Over the next seven

years, from 1970 to 1977, an increase of 56.7% occurred, and 29.7% over the eight years from 1977 to 1985, and 23.9% over the six years from 1985 to 1991. This rapid growth is grounded in the church-individualism of the Korean church.

Besides such competitive church-movements, there is another important factor strengthening church-individualism and affecting a consecutive growth in the size of the Korean church. This is known as the Korean political-economical context (Lee W.G. 1994:183-185).

Since 1960, Korean society has faced unstable situations—the oppressive military dictatorship, the industrialization through miraculously rapid economical growth policy, the failure of economic justice in distribution of wealth, the destruction of community owing to the drift of population to the cities, and the loss of identity generated from mechanical labor.

These circumstances meant that the people demanded another ‘new community’ for the future. The community needed by new citizens was a solution to psychological problems such as a compensation for anxiety, relative deprivation and loss of identity. It had characteristics of a secularized and privatized community, which tends to show indifference toward public issues outside the church and to focus mainly on the activities of one’s own local church. Through this, the individualized Korean church could achieve rapid growth, by compensating for psychological concerns under the deprived political-economical situation, and by focusing on a church-centered competitive church movement under religious pluralism and in a multi-denominational situation. Therefore, the growth of the Korean church resulted from dual factors—contextual and inner factors of the church.

2.3.3 Church Individualism and Church Decline

Although it had a proper function in respect of the growth of the Korean church, ‘each

church-centralism' produced several problems.

One of the conclusions in the research conducted by the Modern Society Institute in Korea reveals clearly that a phenomenon of Korean church-individualism is as follows (Kim J.K. 1982:185): "Korean Protestant tends to have an attitude of the church sovereignty principle. Christian life of belief is oriented to the life of each individual church (not the secular), and all of church life converges on transcendentalism repeatedly. Furthermore, this church-centered attitude is connected with the tendency of church-individualism. As a result, it prevents organic integrity of a whole Protestant church."

It may be summarized that the church-individualism of the Korean church has three negative phases, namely, materialism of a church growth-centered policy, individualistic faith and privatization, and lastly, exclusivism or group-egoism.

2.3.3.1 Materialism

According to Lee Won Gue (1998:54-55), a Korean sociologist of religion, the main factors of materialization of the Korean church are the capitalistic-economy system and the religious pluralistic circumstances of Korean society. Both factors characterize the nature of competition and expansion in triggering a situation of rivalry to attain the predominant position and giving rise to the market situation. In the process, the phenomenon of materialism appears in that each church competes against others for the collection of religious customers (increase of church members), financial increase and the expansion of church powers. Furthermore, according to the church-growth principle, there is a pandemic symptom of pursuing the large-sized church. This results in the expansion of the individualistic church (Kim B.S. 1995:66).

A measure of the success of the Korean church is the number of church members, the budget limit of church finance, and the size of church buildings. In addition, laymen's faith is estimated by the amount of offering and their socio-economical status. A luxurious style prevails in church buildings and furnishings. In this way, the Korean

church began to place much more emphasis on its numbers and external aspects rather than on its quality (Lee M.Y. 1981:185).

The research on “ the image-evaluation of some religions,” (Lee W.G. 2000:292-293; 1998:198-201) which is surveyed by non-religious people, reveals that Protestant has the highest rate of response of 76.0% (Catholic 35.1%, Buddhism 36.6%) on the question that “each religion is concerned with the expansion of its power rather than the pursuit of real truth.” The tendency to overemphasize the offering is also highest (70.8%) among Protestants. These present the phenomenon of materialism in the Korean church and a loss of its original purpose.

The response rate of the attitude of intolerance to unbelievers and the negative attitude toward the social role reflects the lack of public dialogue and praxis of the Korean church. The statistical data in Table 2 indicates the fact that the communion with mutual help and interdependence has been broken down and the Korean church is instead founded on selfish church-individualism, materialism, and escapism from history and society.

Table 2. Image-Evaluation of Korean Religion (unit:%)

	Protestant	Catholic	Buddhism
More concern for expansion of church power rather than real truth	76.0	35.1	36.6
Overemphasis on offering	70.8	28.7	33.6
Emphasis on its rules very rigorously	38.4	29.2	23.8
Solving individual or spiritual matters	18.0	19.0	20.5
Being intolerant of unbelievers	33.2	18.5	14.6
Playing its social role such as charity and social work	37.8	44.8	25.3

Data: Korean Gallup, *Korean Religion and Religious Consciousness*, 1998.

2.3.3.2 Individual-Salvation-Centered Faith

The Korean church has built a religious rampart and disconnected from society while

pursuing church individualism. The privatization of the Korean church has no relationship to the cosmos or history, but only to individual existence or psychology (Berger 1969:152). The Korean church represents the phenomenon in which faith recedes from the public realm to the private realm.

Based on this background of privatization and church-individualization, the church developed an individual salvation-centered faith. This faith, on one hand, caused the Korean church to adopt transcendental faith; on the other hand, it led to an ‘individualistic blessing-faith.’² When facing the prophetic responsibility as the transformer for social issues, the Korean church chose escapism and avoided the reality of this world. When facing materialism as a social evil, it chose to follow individualistic material-blessing faith based on secular materialism as well.

The research into “why they have their own religion” (Lee W.G. 2000:168) announces the degree of privatization of the Korean church. In addition, Table 3 shows a continuous increment in respondents who gave their reasons as based on “peace of mind,” namely, as psychological causes (1984:32.9%, 1989:43.4%, 1997:53.7%). This data reveals the reasons for religious life which was based more and more on personal need, and why the psychological functions of religion became much more important.

Table3. The Reason of Having Religion – “peace of mind” (unit:%)

	1984	1989	1997
Whole Believers	32.9	43.4	53.7
Protestant Believers	34.0	39.7	45.9

The survey on the “effort for faith-growth” (Lee W.G. 2000:296) also points to the privatization of the Korean Protestant church. As contrasted with Buddhists and Catholics, Protestants show distinguishably the tendency of individual faith or privatization: “to attend worship service faithfully (53.7%)”, “to be ardent to prayer

² It means “tree blessing” of Korean church: Peace of the Present, Physical health, and Success in the world (Lee W.G. 1998:54).

(46.2%)”, “to read the Bible diligently (45.4%)”, “to participate a discipline course (13.7%)” and “to be faithful for church work (24.7%).” From this point of view, Protestant Christians seem to be exemplary religious people with the inner faith that is confined within the wall of the church. They are immature in the praxis of public life outside the church (30.2%). Compared to other religions, the Korean church is the strongest in the religious life of the church, but is lowest in public social service.

Table 4. Effort for Faith-Mature/Growth (unit:%)

	Protestant	Buddhism	Catholic
To attend worship, or Buddhist temple faithfully	53.7	16.3	20.2
To be ardent in prayer or Zen meditation	46.2	22.7	39.4
To read the Bible or Buddhist scriptures	45.4	15.7	24.0
To participate in a disciplined course, Bible study, Buddhist scriptures study	13.7	3.0	9.6
To work faithfully for the church, Buddhist temple	24.7	3.7	22.1
To help people outside the church, Buddhist temple	30.2	43.3	42.3

Data: Korean Gallup, *Korean Religion and Religious Consciousness*, 1998.

All of the research above informs the phenomenon of privatization of the Korean church, namely, a church-centered tendency with the view of individualistic salvation, and a lack of public relationship outside the church. This means that the Korean church has given preference to the salvation of individuals rather than the salvation of society. Nevertheless, the answer about “the question of how religion solves their individual spiritual problems” (Lee W.G. 2000:292) is remarkably negative. It shows already in the survey of “Image-Evaluation of Religions” in Table 2. The three religions have very low rates of positive responses. Among them, Protestants are lowest (18%) compared to Catholics (19%) and Buddhists (20%). This means that even if it is privatized with individualistic-centered salvation, ironically, the Korean church does not give much satisfaction to Christians even in the private respect of individual spirituality that it emphasizes.

2.3.3.3 Exclusivism

The Korean church with its church-centralism has a tendency to exclusivism (Lee W.G. 1998:57-59, 97-134). In the survey of “religion leaders’ attitude toward other religions” (Lee W.G. 1998:123-124), the Protestant pastors were more exclusive than Catholic priests and Buddhist monks.

Table 5 reveals that the Korean Protestant church shows a deeper exclusivism than the Catholics and Buddhists. In the answer to the question that “other religion is regarded as a target which should be rejected,” 30.5% of Protestant pastors agreed. This is very different from the priests (0.0%) and the monks (3.0%) when answering the same question. Also, pastors (29.9%), priests (85.7%), and monks (81.7%) responded to the question of “Other religion is a companion to be coexisted with.” This clearly reveals Korean Protestant leaders’ exclusivism.

Table 5. Attitudes on Other Religions and Religious Leaders (unit:%)

	Exclusive	Competitive	Coexisted	Unconcern	Others	Total
Monk (Buddhism)	3.0	6.0	81.7	8.1	2.2	100.0 (134)
Pastor (Protestant)	30.5	10.7	29.9	16.4	12.5	100.0 (177)
Priest (Catholic)	0.0	3.0	85.7	6.6	4.7	100.0 (134)

Data: Modern Society Institute, *Research on Consciousness of Korean Religious Leaders*, 1990,

Table 2 on “the image-evaluation of some religions,” as mentioned above, disclosed that the attitude of exclusivism of the Korean church apparently occurred from individual church-centralism and finally led to “group-egoism.” The image of the Korean Protestant church, if compared with other religions, is one of over-concern towards the expansion of the church, a lack of social practical roles in the public sphere, and an exclusive attitude towards unbelievers (non-Christians). This brings one to the conclusion that the Korean church exists in exclusive isolationism without public

dialogue.

This negative image is reflected not only by non-Christians but also by Protestant Christians. An 11.7% of registered church members are nominal church members without any attendance. The first reason for their absence is that “they have no time.” However, there are more important reasons such as “church member is exclusive and selfish,” “church does not accomplish its essential role such as charity and public service, etc” (Lee W.G. 2000:295).

2.3.3.4 Goal-Displacement and Church Decline

In summary, while pursuing an external, quantitative growth in church-individualism, the Korean church fell into materialism, privatization and an individualistic inclination of faith without public praxis. In such confined conditions behind its own wall, the Korean church has finally developed a de-socialized air by adopting a tendency towards exclusivism. This is to say that the Korean church lost social participation based on a communal relationship and prophetic mission, and it gradually became more sensitive to the hierarchical system. By having as its purpose church maintenance and growth, the church fell into the group of “displacement of goal” or “loss of goal” with a reversed sense of value that the real aim of church could be thought of as external expansion itself (Roh C.J. 1995:55-56; Lee W.G. 1994:190).

In the process of church-individualism or individual church-centralism, which drove the use of most human or material resources to be concentrated only inward on the church for the aggrandizement of the church itself, the Korean church ignored the quality of maturity and social participation; after all, its social influence decreased distinguishably (Roh C.J. 1998:106-108; Lee W.G. 1994:191).

As the following Table 6 shows, there are only a few organized movements against the social irregularities and the infringement of human rights (Kim B.S. 1995:66). According

to this survey, only 4.4% of ministers and 6.1% of laypersons insist on positive participation in social matters. Most Christians, however, have a negative idea of social participation, and they urge such social participation of the Korean church to be restricted within their own church activities through kerygma and prayer. This is a result of the viewpoint of church-individualism that religious life should be performed inside each one's own church.

Table 6. Attitude on Social Irregularity and Infringement of Human Rights
(unit: %, number)

	Pastor	Layman
To take social participation and organized movements	4.4	6.1
To denounce it through Kerygma	44.0	31.6
To have prayer meeting	32.8	43.4
To do it of Christians' own free will	17.1	12.9
Do not need direct participation in it By church	1.8	6.1
Total	100.00(328)	100.0(1,040)

Data: Modern Society Institute, *Research on Faith-Type and Growth of the Korean Church*, 1982.

According to Table 7, "the expenses of Korean church finance" surveyed by Rho Chi Jun (1995:270, cf.205-273), the Korean church acts completely on church-individualism. A total of 87% were used for church maintenance. On the other hand, only 15% were used for essential missions such as mission (5.35%) and social work (3.88). Most of the budget of the church was spent on church maintenance itself, and the finance for society was insufficient.

Table 7. The Expenses of Korean Church Finance (1992) (unit: %)

Finance for church maintenance: total 87%	Expenses for Management (12.70), Administration (13.33), Building (13.16), Worship (4.02), Education (7.41), Minister's Salary (27.28), The other (10.12)
Finance for society total 12%	Mission (5.35) Congratulations and Condolences (2.75) Social Work (3.88)

What is the result of this? The Korean church that achieved an amazing growth in

numbers in the 1990s finally encountered a crisis of slowing-growth together with its decline today. Church membership increased up to 1200% between the 1960s and 1990, as shown in Table 1. But compared with this period, the growth of the 1990s stopped and there began to appear the signs of stagnancy.

Of course, the decline in church-growth is a result of not only some inner factors of the Korean church caused by church-individualism, but also outside factors as well, namely, the context of the times (Lee W.G. 1998:204; 1994:186-193). Since 1990 Korea has been under the situation: political democratization, economical abundance and social welfare and the eradication of military dictatorship. Meanwhile, “alternative functions” or leisure industries—such as sports, TV, videos, Karaoke, hobbies, entertainment, Internet, etc.—started to appear in more developed forms. Consequently, so many people no longer seek their compensation for deprivation from the church, but rather from the democratizing politics, the developing economy, social welfare and leisure activities (Lee W.G. 1998:191-194; 1994:239-240,242). For whatever reason, they have departed from the church. In addition, the fall in population among the youth together with an increase in the population of the elderly, and an increased number of career women are other reasons for the Korean church experiencing a decline in church-growth (Lee W.G. 1998:189-190).

However, the inner factors of the church related to church-individualism have had a greater effect on the slowly-weakened growth of the Korean church, rather than the context of the times. This is because the contextual factor is somewhat inevitable, while church factors are chosen on its own initiative (Lee W.G. 1998:194). The greatest obstacle to church growth is the church itself. Compared with the affluent manpower, material resources and facilities of the church, as mentioned above, it is due to the fact that the praxis on social participation of the Korean church is largely deficient.

There is a survey that reflects the respondents’ desire for the reformation of the Korean church (Lee W.G. 1994:81-82, 274-277). Of the respondents, 54.3% answered that the

church does not play the role of salt and light for society; on the other hand, only 19.7% answered that it does well. A total of 42% of them answered that the most necessary function of church is social service; 25.3% mission, 25.6% education, 5.9% koinonia and 5.0% church maintenance. In addition, 45.9% of them replied that if the church has extra finance, this should be spent on social services rather than on other aspects; 20.3% said it should be spent on mission, 8.5% on education, 17.7% on church work, and 5.0% on church maintenance.

However, going against these demands, the Korean church was indifferent to its reformative responsibility in a capitalistic and individualistic society. Far from reforming social evils, it showed a greater tendency towards church-individualism and individualistic faith instead. Although church-individualism had the positive aspect of an increase in numbers, its negative aspects outweighed the positives. The Korean church, thus, became very weak in the public system of communication for society. As mentioned above, the system of church-individualism and privatized structure inclines the church to pursue religious and psychological satisfaction individually, disregarding social practices. Social participation as well as religion in the case of the Korean church became a matter of choice according to the decision of the church itself.

2.4 Diagnosis of the Korean Church and Suggestion

2.4.1 Primary Problem of the Korean church

The Korean church has been criticized as a representative hopeless group of group-egoism, and is called “an empty and broken shell” (Bellah 1970:168) even though it takes pride in so many church members. If so, what is the basic problem within the Korean church? What is the primary reason for the criticism leveled at the Korean church and its crisis of decline? In order to answer the question it is helpful, first of all, to summarize the common problems of materialism, individual-salvation-centered faith,

and exclusivism derived largely from the negative factors of each church-centralism.

At first, the materialism of the Korean church, concentrating on church-growth, reflected that the church had fallen into the survival ethos by taking advantages of the thought of the times rather than revising or reforming the present chronic evils of society, including the principle of economical growth-centralism and an acquisitive society. In the process of church-enlargement, the Korean church structure became so bureaucratic that it lost solidarity and personal relationships even within the church (Kim B.S. 1984:21-22). Moreover, materialism caused unbalance and disharmony among churches, and avoidance of socio-historical issues outside the church.

Secondly, the attitude of individual salvation-centered faith led the Korean church to adopt transcendental faith and material-blessing-centered faith, while ignoring the responsibility of social salvation. In other words, faith did not develop toward the praxis of public affairs, and focused primarily on private affairs and church boundaries. The privatized Korean church resulted in the loss of communal solidarity within churches, denominations, religions and society.

Thirdly, the exclusivism of the Korean church is based on group-egoism and mutual antagonism against the outer group (Lee W.G. 1998:59-60). It promotes the struggle and division among other churches and denominations, and lastly, the loss of relationships with other religion and society. As a result, Korean churches are moving away from their basic purpose of harmony and unity.

In conclusion, a common feature in materialism, individual-centered faith, and exclusivism is the absence of praxis on public affairs outside the church. As church-individualism restricts the concerns of church leaders and followers within the church, finally the value of their concern for society and history deteriorates. Rho Chi Jun (1997:26-27) describes this Korean church-individualism as another form of individualism expanded to make difficulties in cooperation among churches or

denominations. This deficiency in cooperation wasted resources and caused inefficiencies so that the Korean church could not play its social role effectively. Finally, the public influences over society have decreased. Thus, a common problem of the Korean church is the deficiency of praxis outside the church.

What is the main reason for this problem? It is actually based on the disconnection between “faith and praxis,” namely the disconnection of text-context, the discontinuity of theo/christo-praxis, and the spilt between faith and public life. This distorted form is the core problem of the Korean church. It means that the church did not perceive the context in which it was placed, the gospels did not answer the need of the times, and faith did not take the practical responsibilities in relation to public affairs.

Consequently, the present Korean church is confronted by a dual crisis—the internal crisis of identity and the external crisis of relevance. As the Korean church became church-individualized and privatized, it avoided the joint liability (or communal responsibility) to society. As a result, the Korean church is now encountering a decline in church growth or an identity crisis from inside the church, and the crisis of social persuasiveness and public confidence from outside the church. Therefore, it could be explained that the crisis of the Korean church came from the phenomenon that it looked inward and not outward. This is because the crisis of the non-true church (crisis of identity) occurred, when the church built an isolated castle and could not exist for others (the loss of public relationship). The lack of praxis or the loss of a relationship with society is a basic problem as well as an essential cause of the crisis in the Korean church.

One of the representative church historians, who researched the cause of church-crisis in historical contexts, is Walter Bulmann. In his book *The Coming of the Third Church* (1978), Bulmann explores the causes of church crisis, dividing it into 1st church, 2nd church, and 3rd church according to the historical stream.

The first church is the period of Orthodox Church up to the 11th century. It did not attempt any reformation. It avoided the responsibilities of its relationship with the world. As it deteriorated into anti-historical religion, the first church was faced with its crisis. The second church includes the Roman Catholic church from AD 1000 to 1500 and the Protestants of Europe and North America from 1500 to 1950. It explored new changes through the reformation of ecclesiastical authority by the second Vatican Council in 1963, and through the theology of “Missio Dei” by the W.C.C. in Uppsala, 1963. In spite of such renewals, the second church faced a serious crisis in institution, building, and organization, leaving the glory of Christendom behind.

The quickening of the third church, compared to “a rising sun on a new horizon” (Bulmann 1978:24), moved the location of the spiritual center to Africa, South America and Asia. This is because they formed dialectic relations with the historical question of painful life and answered that in resurrection-hope. Adding to this, Bulmann explains that they are the people experiencing suffering. They have spiritual energy with which to change in the hope of resurrection. In this, he points out a common reason of the worldwide decline of the church due to “enervation about history” and “dullness about innovation of the church.”

This means that the church cannot continue to exist as long as it turns away from reality—history and society. A basic cause of crisis lies in the church’s unconcern for praxis about socio-historical reality.

The current stream of church ministry generally takes the direction of emphasis on spirituality. An absence of social and public relationship is evident. David Schuller (1980:6-7) explains that three stages of change relate to the purpose of American church ministry. At first, church ministry put its purpose in individual counseling or pastoral care. The church ministry of the second stage focused on social change in order to cope with unexpected social revolution, the church transfigured as an agent for social change. The third stage is fairly new. It stresses a spiritual ministry, and it helps

one's spirituality and intensifies internal life.

How is the Korean church? The purpose of Korean church ministry also follows the process of the American church. The purpose and image of the Korean church changed constantly from pastor to revivalist, from revivalist to social change agent, and then from a manager of church growth to an awakener of spirituality. The overemphasis on spiritual ministry caused the Korean church to "escape from reality and society." The trouble lies in the accentuation of biased-spirituality that implies the disconnection of spirituality with history and society (Un J.K. 1999a:54-55).

As Farley (1976:151,169) insists, Christian spirituality in the true sense is born within the company and shared-praxis of God's people. The grace, forgiveness and love for others have all been emphasized inside the church. However, the faith community needs a clear redefinition of the church for others outside the church.

The praxis for public affairs outside the church starts with "turning onto the others" (Tracy 1990). It means the turning toward not only the others of the in-group, but also a comprehensive conversion for the others, including institutions of the out-group. This can be a real spirituality. Therefore, the restoration of true church community means regaining socio-historical responsibility with an eye of faith (spirituality), neither going to the mountain (transcendental faith) nor escaping into the fence of the church (individualistic faith or each-church-centralism).

2.4.2 Suggestion

It is obvious, however, that the church should not be evaluated only by its social praxis. If so, what is a desirable stance for the church and its ministry? It places a dialectical synthesis between spirituality and historicity, between transcendence and participation (Park B.B. 1989:249). The transcendence of religion must be maintained, but the transcendence should always be on the premise of public dialogue toward society. Also,

positive social participation of religion must always be insisted upon, but the participation should always be based on the transcendental character of religion. At this point, it is possible for the church to become both a spiritual community and a historical community (Un J.K.1999b:450-451).

Now is the time for the Korean church to wake from an illusion of church-growth, and to prepare for the coming history of post church-growth. For this, it is necessary, first of all, for the church to form a more self-critical and transformational relationship with society. Together with this, the church should recognize the phenomenon of its basic crisis of severance of the relations between faith and praxis, or between spirituality and public participation. According to Richard Osmer (1990:21-22), the reformative relevancy to society connotes a healthier tension relationship between Christianity and social context. By having an answering responsibility to the context of society and 'shared-praxis', the Korean church can be restored as a transformative community.

Perhaps a transformative community has two sides namely, a 'transformed community' which runs constantly, and a 'transforming community' which takes part in historical or social renovation. Taking negative aspects of church-individualism into consideration, a transformed community should solve the chronic troubles of the Korean church—the structures of each church-centered or church growth-oriented structure, and the attitude of individual salvation, privatization and exclusivism. A transforming community requires social responsibility and a history-directed attitude. The church should not lose its peculiar sphere; but, at the same time, it should be able to unite with others and participate in others' sufferings. On such reformative occasions, a responsible relationship of faith-praxis will be restored, and the church with an influential atmosphere is possible.

As Stephen Carter (1994) states, God is pushed from public discourse to the private parts of our life in contemporary society. At this time, the church should come out from its ghetto, end the separation of faith-praxis, and restore its social relevance. In order to

do this, the Korean church, first of all, must leave its wall, and start public dialogue. It is significant to facilitate the consciousness and abilities of public dialogue. In this context, Walter Brueggemann (1989:6,25) urges that church education must be in bilingual form: "the language behind the wall" for dialogue of the faith community and "the language on the wall" for public dialogue. It means that the dialogue behind the wall should not be restricted in its wall, but should come out to the front of the wall to participate in public dialogue.

What kind of dialogue will the Korean church practice in order to be born again as both a spiritual and historical community, in the midst of achieving 'unity with diversity' in polarized and pluralized situations? What is a practical public dialogue for the Korean church in order to be a socially participative and historically transformative community that answers the questions and needs of socio-historical reality, by overcoming church-individualism and its privatization? What kind of public dialogue will the Korean church engage in order to enter the public sphere again, and recover as a publicly influential religion?

Asking these questions related to public dialogue, the third chapter will study the patterns of public dialogue which the Korean church followed in Korean history. Has the Korean church taken a balanced posture of faith-praxis in the face of questions and the demands of the specific times in Korean history? Has the church played a proper role as both a spiritual and a transformative community? What are the types and characteristics of public dialogue in the Korean church historically? In this process of exploring the patterns of Korean church's public dialogue, the advent of *Madanggŭk* will be dealt with, which was a means used for cultural public dialogue of the Korean church in history, and will serve as a root of a study on alternative paradigm of public dialogue later in this thesis.