CHAPTER 7 A CONCLUDING VISION

7.1 Summary

7.1.1 On Analysis of the Present Society and Church

The main concern of this thesis is how the Korean church will fulfill public dialogue while participating in the public sphere. The research into Christian public dialogue began with the problem of binary opposition between church and society, or Christian and non-Christian. As research presented in Chapter 2 showed, the present period is characterized by "private-oriented culture," "culture of separation" and "individualization." Far from leading present society along a communal dialogic path, the present Korean church has adopted church-individualism and group-egoism, which causes three negative phases: materialism based on a church-growth centered policy, individualistic faith and privatization, and exclusivism in terms of the faith-praxis. As a result, the church is confronted by a dual crisis—one the internal crisis of identity, the other the external crisis of relevance to others (society and non-Christians). This ghettoized church within the wall implies a "displacement of goal" and "the loss of the public realm." As one became a separate and isolated individual, so the church tended toward church-individualism. What was the result? As a consequence to the indifference toward the world outside the wall, the church has suffered not only a drop in church membership but also a decline in its influence in the public sphere.

The analysis and critical reflection on present society and the church in Chapter 2 awakens the Korean church to a sense of her fundamental mission from God: "go to all," which means "go and dialogue with others in the public sphere outside the wall as well as with Christians in the faith community." In order to achieve this mission, the church should endeavor to be born again as both a spiritual and a transformative community, and ultimately as a faith-praxis community for "public dialogue" with others.

7.1.2 On Three Patterns of the Korean Church's Public Dialogue

This thesis puts emphasis on "public dialogue"—especially "art-cultural public dialogue" as a means of overcoming the binary opposition between church and society, between the private sphere and the public sphere. From a historical point of view, as explored in Chapter 3, the Korean church has shown three patterns of public dialogue toward faith-praxis in the public sphere.

(1) The first pattern is *healthy public dialogue* during the period from the beginning of the mission to the March First Independence Movement in 1919, in the sense that the faith church was the transformative community answering the needs of the times and the suffering of others.

(2) The second pattern is *unhealthy public dialogue* during the period from the 3.1 Independence Movement until the 4.19 Revolution in 1960. Under coercive Japanese imperialism after the failure of the March First Movement, the Korean church hid behind or within the wall, and submitted to the Japanese demands for Koreans to practice Shinto-shrine worship. After liberation from Japanese rule, as Korea was divided into two owing to ideological differences —South Korea and North Korea—so the Korean church was split into a number of denominations owing to an inability to "dialogize the conflict and difference" among them.

(3) The third pattern is *polarized public dialogue* which was dominant during the period of military dictatorship. After the 4.19 Revolution, the Korean church began to reflect on what had disappeared from the stage of history, and to participate in faith-praxis. The repentance and participative praxis, however, belonged only to some progressive churches concerned with social-participation. During the period of polarized public dialogue pattern, a significant new pattern of public dialogue emerged: "*art-cultural public dialogue through the Madanggŭk*."

7.1.3 On Practices of Cultural Public Dialogue

Public dialogue in the church concerns turning one's eyes from oneself to others. As examined in Chapter 4, the practices of public dialogue toward "others" in the theological domain of Korea have largely represented two directions. (1) Indigenization theology devoted its attention to dialogue with traditional culture and religions that had been ignored. (2) Minjung (populace) theology devoted its attention to dialogue with oppressed, isolated common people. This is Korean theology's public dialogue through reality-reading.

On the other hand, the minjung cultural movement in which the progressive church was involved was also concerned with the problem of oppressed common people (minjung) through various art-cultural genres. The "*madanggŭk*" as a creative form deriving from the Korean traditional mask dance (*t'alch'um*) played a particularly significant role in participation in the distorted political, social, cultural and religious context. The communicability of madanggŭk is of great value to the formulation of cultural public dialogue. Madanggŭk was based on mutual communication, as interpreted in Chapter 4, in that (1) it rediscovered the marginalized and isolated populace as participant subjects, (2) it recreated traditional folk culture founded on festivity and communal spirit, (3) it concerned the present (reality) as well as the past (tradition) and the future (vision through festivity), (4) it criticized and went out of the theatrical world in order to meet the audience.

However, the madanggŭk showed the limitations of clear societal-orientation in the binary opposition of "either artistry or sociality." The madanggŭk went beyond the resistance pattern of public dialogue, but did not exceed the limitation of dichotomization by becoming a socio-political drama. Therefore, an alternative public dialogue to overcome binary opposition was required.

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7.1.4 Toward an Alternative Madang Public Dialogue
—"Trinity Model"

As an alternative madang public dialogue for the purpose of shifting from monologic communication to dialogic communication, in Chapter 5 this thesis suggested "*Trinity Madang Public Dialogue*" that pursues the dialogic harmony of three models of madang public dialogue—Incarnational Public Dialogue, Critical Public Dialogue, and Festival Public Dialogue.

(1) The first model, *Incarnational Public Dialogue*, begins with a self-image of "the self is in need of the other." The other is a being who has the surplus of seeing for the "I". The Incarnation model leads the Christian community to acknowledge the other as a participant subject who has the competence of infinite interpretation. In the Incarnation model of public dialogue, an event of death and resurrection should occur: the death of the church's dogmatic pattern of communication based on monologism, and the resurrection of dialogic subjects. When fulfilling Incarnational Public Dialogue, the church changes to a dialogic community with an answerability/responsibility to others (society or non-Christian), which facilitates a polyphonic harmony that dialogizes difference and conflict. Incarnational public dialogue understands the difference and conflict between church and society as a starting point of dialogue.

(2) The second model, *Critical Public Dialogue*, meets the requirements of accurate self-reflection, reality-recognition and reality-criticism in madang public dialogue of the church. To achieve accurate critical reflection, the critical model proposed that the madang-theatre for public dialogue should deal with or contain the ambivalence (or multi-valence) of two (or more) stories/voices and contexts. This is a practical strategy for the audience to give full play to his or her ability to understand and overstand (criticism) spontaneously in a madang public dialogue. In order to reflect the two voices/stories in the madang public dialogue, the madang Christian community should develop the faculty of critical reflection. In addition, the church preparing madang public

dialogue should adopt the openness toward self-criticism as well as toward reality-criticism. When creating madang-theatre according to the critical model, the church should prepare the devices for "critical distance" so that the audience can see and participate in madang-theatre with objectivity and without identification. The critical principles are practical strategies to enable the madang Christian community to dialogue with the audience, accepting them as spontaneous, relational and participant subjects in madang (public sphere).

(3) The third model is *Festival Public Dialogue*." Madang public dialogue should be fulfilled by the combination of "mind and heart." It therefore requires the third dimension of public dialogue. That is festivity of public dialogue. Genuine festival is based on a spirit of dialogue, a spirit of play, and a spirit of madang. It means that festival public dialogue contributes to expanding dialogue from individual to public, to expanding the human being from reason and labor to play/festivity, and to expanding the place of dialogue from "behind/within the wall" to the public sphere, such as the street or public square that has been designated as "madang" in this thesis, where people can come together freely. Furthermore, festival public dialogue enables the faith community to dialogize and celebrate the present (reality), the past (tradition) and the future (new vision toward the new heaven and the new earth).

These three models of madang public dialogue cannot be separated. The Incarnation model requires and is rooted in the principles of another two models, and the other models are connected with it. If one of them is omitted, it cannot be Madang Public Dialogue. Therefore, the three models are *Trinity Public Dialogue*.

7.1.5 Toward a Dialogic Christian Community
—"Six Stages of Dialogic Praxis"

The whole procedure of Trinity Madang Public Dialogue is as follows:

a. Preparatory Procedure

If the madang Christian community intends to dialogue with the other according to the model of "trinity public dialogue," it should first of all experience the phases of transformation—deconstructing a monologic worldview, going through the phase of transition, and reaching the phase of reconstruction toward a *dialogic madang Christian community*. The reconstruction is a task for madang Christian community before it can execute madang public dialogue in the public sphere (madang).

"The Six Stages of Dialogic Praxis" were proposed in Chapter 6 as a program for reconstructing a "*dialogic*" madang Christian community.

(1) *The Opening Stage: The Focusing Activity*
    Selecting a theme of madang public dialogue
    Creating a dialogic atmosphere of hospitality

(2) *Dialogic Movement 1: Expressing and Sharing Present Voice/Story*
    Expressing and sharing participants' opinions and experiences concerning
        the selected theme
    Listening and accepting different voices/stories in polyphonic dialogue

(3) *Dialogic Movement 2: Critical Reflection on Present Voice/Story*
    Finding, remembering, reflecting critically the personal and social reasons
        for participants' voices and stories
    Seeing the vision of a new dialogic community through creative and social
        Imagination

(4) *Dialogic Movement 3: Making Accessible the Christian Story/Vision*
    Interpreting Christian Story/Vision relating the selected theme

(5) *Dialogic Movement 4: Incarnation Dialogue Between Christian Story/Vision*
                        And Participants' Stories/Visions
    Encountering and dialogizing between two stories and visions on an incarnational approach

(6) *Dialogic Movement 5: Decision/Response for Madang Public Dialogue*

Participants in a dialogic madang-Christian community choose their roles in madang public dialogue, training for madang-theatre for public dialogue with a dialogic point of view.

b. Performance Procedure of Madang Public Dialogue

After reconstructing a dialogic madang Christian community through the six stages of dialogic praxis, the madang community finally enters into madang-performance. The procedure of madang public dialogue based on dialogism is as follows:

1 Street Parade → 2 Singing &Dancing Together → 3 Main Performance → 4 Ending Play

These four procedures of madang-performance should follow the three principles of madang public dialogue: incarnational, critical and festival models.

The trinity principle is the spirit of madang public dialogue. In order to dialogue with others in the public sphere, a madang Christian community should be able to adopt an incarnational attitude, execute critical reflection, and celebrate the dialogic event, accepting different voices and visions.

c. After-Performance: Evaluating

Time for an evaluation should be arranged after performing madang-theatre with others. The criteria of evaluation depend on the trinity model of madang public dialogue.

7.1.6 Toward Incarnational-Dialogic Christian Education

Reconstruction of a Christian community to a dialogic madang Christian community, and dialoguing with others through the performing art of madang public dialogue are activities of Christian education. In fact, Christian education assumes the responsibility for the church to practice public dialogue as a faith-praxis. In Chapter 6 an *incarnational-dialogic paradigm* of Christian education was suggested as an alternative to a schooling-instructional paradigm based on monologic communication. When

Christian education changes in paradigm from monologic to dialogic, a Christian community can be reborn as a dialogic community. It could be said that the public dialogue through madang-theatre is impossible before Christian education and a Christian community are incarnated into "dialogic" pattern.

7.2 Meaning and Suggestion

7.2.1 Meaning of Madang Public Dialogue

The church's public dialogue through madang-theatre based on the dialogic principles of trinity madang public dialogue has the following characteristics.

(1) It functions as a mediating medium for a dialogic relationship between church and society, Christians and non-Christians, private sphere and public sphere.

(2) It extends the place of dialogue with others to "madang" (street, public squares) beyond the walls of the church, the school, the home etc.

: *Going-to-all Christians*

(3) It serves missionary work through the recovery of the public sphere.

: *Missionary Christians*

(4) It adopts a mutual, two-way communication through dialogue.

: *Dialogic Christians*

(5) It is Christian education for the whole man through a dialogic relationship, not through schooling-instruction focusing only on conveying messages.

: *Relational Christians*

(6) It nurtures democratization of the church through polyphony of differences.

: *Democratic Christians*

(7) It recovers both Citizenship and Discipleship.

: *Participative Christians*

(8) It promotes to change contradictions of reality through dialogue, going beyond the dimension of simply reading reality.

: *Transformative Christians*

(9) It renders the rediscovery of imagination and festivity with openness.

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: *Celebrating Christians*

In this way, the madang public dialogue based on the trinity of dialogic principles will contribute to shaping the Christian lifestyle in faith-praxis. Ultimately, it pursues an open church and open Christianity for expansion of God's Kingdom to a new heaven and a new earth.

7.2.2 Suggestion and Further Study

The suggestions for further research into madang public dialogue are as follows:

(1) Firstly, public dialogue based on the trinity principles should not be a temporary event, but a "continuous" faith-praxis.

(2) Secondly, the particulars need to be supplemented through the evaluation procedure after performing madang public dialogue.

(3) Thirdly, for pervasive madang public dialogue, "ecumenical" public dialogue should be explored, going beyond church-individualistic public dialogue.

(4) Fourthly, in addition to madang-theatre, how to make efficient use of various media for the public dialogue should also be researched.

(5) Fifthly, an alternative madang public dialogue is not a fixed, closed-ended pattern. Rather, it is open to being "reconstructed."

(6) Lastly, for a netizen of today's computer era, the relationship of cyberspace and public dialogue is recommended as an area for further research.