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**FROM PROTO-MISSIONAL TO MEGA-CHURCH:  
A PRACTICAL-ECCLESIOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF  
ECCLESIAL “GROWTH” IN KOREA**

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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

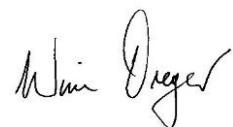
I hereby declare that, except for the references to other people's work, which have been duly acknowledged; "From proto-missional to mega-church: A practical-ecclesiological critique of ecclesial growth in Korea" is as the result of my own research and that it has not been submitted elsewhere for another degree. Additionally, I take responsibility for any inaccuracies and shortcomings, which may be detected in this work.



Dated: 1 August 2017

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## ABSTRACT

For the last couple of decades the Korean church experienced a decline of its membership. The premise of this thesis is that the mega-church phenomenon which has become prevalent in the Korean church is central in this crisis. A way forward for the Korean church is suggested from a practical-ecclesiological perspective. The methodology employed investigates the ecclesial growth in Korea in the light of the Korean church's nature and mission during the course of the Korean history from hermeneutical, historical, empirical and strategic perspectives. This is done within the paradigm of the *missio Dei*.

Throughout its meta-narrative of creation, fall, redemption and new creation, the Bible clearly says that the nature and mission of the church are to be a witnessing community that participates in the redemptive mission of a missionary God to restore his kingdom on earth. It corresponds with the missional ecclesiological explanation about the nature and mission of the church. It is also supported by micro-narratives of the Bible relevant to the church's nature and mission such as the people of God, the body of Christ, the communion of the Saints, and the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Although the early Korean church did not know the present missional ecclesiology, its ministerial manifestations clearly displayed the characteristics of a missional church. The early Korean church's proto-missional ecclesiology attracted the Korean society and that led to the church's numerical growth. Through the influence and interaction with dramatic socio-political and economic changes, the Korean church developed a distorted understanding of its nature and mission. By following the example of mega-churches, the Korean churches began to compete against each other to grow bigger through an institutional ecclesiology and ecclesiocentric missions. Although this mega-church phenomenon contributed in some ways to the quantitative growth of the Korean church, it jeopardised the integrity of the church in Korean society. Since Korean society entered the postmodern era, there have been conversations and ventures to introduce and apply missional ecclesiology to the Korean churches as church reformation to counter the ecclesial crisis.

Research shows that Korean society rates mega-churches negatively while evaluating missional churches positively. This provides an impetus for the current emerging missional movement not to fade away as a trendy church enhancing programmes, but to continue to develop in diverse ways in the rapidly changing Korean context. To commence such a task, some strategic ways should be considered by the Korean church to move forward. In the same marginal status as the early Korean church, the strategies are not to be about quick fix solutions or more programmes, but how the church could be what it already is, by following the scriptural guidelines as done by the early Korean church. To restore the integrity of the church and to resist the strong tendency to pursue the materialism of the mega-church phenomenon, the Korean church should follow the shape of its missional witness, according to the traditional four marks of the church of the Nicene Creed to be One Holy Apostolic Catholic Church.

## **A LIST OF KEY TERMS**

1. Mega-church phenomenon
2. Missional church movement
3. The missio Dei
4. Missional ecclesiology
5. The kingdom of God
6. Proto-missional
7. Theocentric mission
8. Ecclesiocentric mission
9. Incarnational mission
10. Imperialistic mission

## **A LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

GOCN - the Gospel and Our Culture Network

IMC - the International Missionary Council

WCC - World Council of Churches

JPPS - a Just, Participatory, Sustainable Society

JPIC - Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation

ABCFM - the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

FMIM - the First of March Independence Movement

KBS - the Korean Broadcasting System

CBS - Christian Broadcasting System

NCCK - the National Council of Churches in Korea

GMS - Global Mission Society

DNA - Discipline for Nurture and Assurance

GES - Goguma Evangelism School

DISC - Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, Conscientiousness

IMF - the International Monetary Fund

OECD - the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

DMI - the Disciple Making Ministries International

CMS - Church Mission Society

FxC - Fresh Expression of Church

CEM - the Christian Ethics Movement

BECs - Base Ecclesial Communities

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Problem statement

The early Korean church was an indigenous Christian community with similar characteristics than Christian communities in the first century of the Common Era (Choi 2015:18). Before the first American missionaries arrived in Korea in 1885 and started mission work through well-structured institutions, local churches with as many as 75 baptised members had already been established (Kim & Roh 2007:51). These were planted by the indigenous evangelists who came to believe in Jesus Christ after translating the Bible from Chinese to Korean (Bae 2008:33). They emphasised the propagation of the gospel and living according to the word of God as a community of disciples. Although they experienced rapid growth, they did not get stuck in church building, but rather focused on a life of worshiping wherever they were gathering at the houses of volunteer believers (Choi 2015:90).

Following Lohfink's (1984:177) analysis and description of the early church, it could be said that the early Korean church presents us with similar characteristics. It had no structures and strategies for systematic missionary activity, but practiced a Christian lifestyle based on Biblical truths. Like the church described in Acts 2:47, the Korean church was a joy to God and enjoyed the favour of all the people for its life of sharing and serving.

During the dark age of Korea, when the police authority and the sovereignty of the state were usurped by Japan in 1905 and 1910 respectively, many of the Korean people indulged in alcohol, drugs, prostitution and gambling. They were living without hope (Kim & Roh 2007:37-38). In these difficult circumstances the young Korean church had a positive influence on the Korean people, for instance through the "Pyongyang Great Awakening" in 1907 which was accompanied by remarkable manifestations of the Holy Spirit (Kim & Roh 2007:125). The Korean church became the hope of the nation in leading a non-violent independence movement and a national enlightenment during the Japanese colonial period. A number of martyrdoms happened during the colonial period and the Korean War, which demonstrated to the world the commitment of ordinary believers to the kingdom of God.

However, today Korean society rates the Korean church very low, as spiritually and morally bankrupt. Sohn (2011) described the Korean church in an interview with the *Sisa Journal* (25 February 2011) as follows: “Throughout the history of Protestant Church there has been no church corrupted like the Korean church today.” Since Korea received the gospel about 130 years ago, the Korean church has fallen from being the light of the nation to become a marginalised troublesome ghetto. Since a *Population and Housing Census* conducted by the Korean National Statistical Office in 2005 announced that the overall number of Christians in South Korea reduced by 1.6% over the previous 10 years, the situation deteriorated even further (Kil 2008:1-2).

According to congregational statistics of the Korean Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church from 2004 to 2013, conducted by Newsjoy in 2014, the General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches in Korea (Hapdong), the largest Presbyterian denomination, lost 137,808 members (4.6%), down from 2,994,873 members in 2012 to 2,857,065 in 2013. The Methodist Church lost 71,477 members, down from 1,557,692 to 1,486,215 for the same period. Considering that these two denominations initiated the mission in Korea and the number of churches belonging to them account for 79 per cent of all Korean churches, it is clear that the church in Korea is facing the most severe crisis since it was established.

A number of researchers investigated why the church has collapsed to such an extent. Extensive empirical research concluded as follows: A lack of (public) theology, anti-intellectualism, poor sermons, a cheap soteriology, a shamanic and commercial Holy Spirit movement, dualism of the secular and the sacred, mammon worshiping, ghettoised church language, gender discrimination, show-like corrupted worship services, papism (dictatorship by the senior pastor), church heredity, tax exemption, mismanagement of seminaries, malfunction of denominations, aggressive and competitive evangelism, indifference to ecology and social issues such as the reunification of North and South Korea (Kang *et al.* 2013:6-7). Shin (in Kang *et al.* 2013:228-229) argues that all the problems the Korean church is facing are only symptoms - the root of the disease is the **mega-church phenomenon**. In his definition, the mega-church phenomenon should be distinguished from a mega-church itself, a

church having more than 2,000 regular attendees every Sunday (Thumma and Travis 2007: xviii-xix).

Mega-churches emerged in the midst of the 1960s as the Korean church was reacting to various socio-cultural, economic, political and theological factors in the history of the church. In 1984 there were 7 of the 20 (about 1/3) world's largest mega-churches in South Korea (Vaughan 1984:71-75) and 24 of 50 (about 1/2) in 2015 (Kim 2015). While the Korean church was experiencing a numerical decline from 1998 to 2005, the number of attendees of the 10 largest mega-churches belonging to the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches mostly increased. According to a survey conducted by the *Gospel and Context* in 2005 (Lee 2005), the 10 mega-churches and the growth in their attendance between 1998 and 2005 are as follows: Younngnak Church 13,000 to 17,000; Myungsung Church 23,000 to 30,000; Juan Church 18,000 to 35,000; Somang Church 22,000 to 14,000; Onnuri Community Church 19,000 to 32,000; Choonghyun Church 11,000 to 14,000; Sarang Church 19,000 to 31,000; Kwanglim Church 25,000 to 30,000; Soong-Eui Church 11,000 to 10,000; Kumnan Church 25,000 to not-answered. These mega-churches have led the way for non-mega-churches to be like those mega-churches with their remarkable numerical growth and influence.

All churches under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon aim to be "bigger in size" by any means. This often creates "a regrettable spirit of competition that is more related to the capitalistic system than to the word of God in order to draw more people to their own church buildings" (Padilla 2013:120) and it directly and indirectly induces the above-mentioned side effects. According to a survey targeting non-believers, conducted by the Graduate School of Practical Theology in 2009, to the question, "What do you think that the biggest problem of the Korean church is?", about 30 per cent of answers pointed to the excessive competition for numerical growth, followed by 35 per cent indicating the discrepancy between belief and life of the Korean Christians. With growth as aim a church easily compromises to have an institutional (building-focused) ecclesiology (Lee 2014:55) and an ecclesiocentric missiology in which a church can select when, where and how to do its missionary work as the subject of mission with the power and materials

it can generate from its size and membership number (Hendriks 2007:1006).

As an alternative to the mega-church phenomenon, Shin (in Kang *et al.* 2013:245) proposes to pursue the essence of the church and dedication to it. At Shin's suggestion, about the crises of the church, there has been an increasing interest in exploring "what is the church, and what the church is for" (The Archbishop's council 2004:27), on which ecclesiology is it standing according to its definition: "Ecclesiology is a theological discipline that seeks to understand and define the church." (Niemandt 2012:1). Dreyer (2015:3), borrowing Bart Oberholzer's word, says that "the growing interest in ecclesiology is an acknowledgement that the church has been busy with many things without really listening to God." In the process of attempting to establish a contemporary ecclesiology, missional ecclesiology emerged as one of the significant trends in mission studies in the past couple of years (Niemandt 2012:1).

Missional ecclesiology developed from the *missio Dei* set forth by the International Missionary Council (IMC) held in Willingen Germany in 1952 (Bosch 1991:370). Chung (2007:233) summarised what changed before and after the Willingen IMC as follows: "Before the Willingen IMC, the church was the one who took charge of missions so that it played the major role in mission. However, after the Willingen IMC, the thought of mission was redefined in relation to the nature of the Trinitarian God in that the concept of the church as the subject of mission was changed to God as the subject of mission." God sent Jesus to earth. God and Jesus sent the Holy Spirit. The Triune God sends and is sent. "He is a missionary God." (Bosch 1991:390). From him and from his mission, the church was born (Lee 2014:3). Thus, the essence of being church is to be found in its participation in God's mission to the world (Dreyer 2013:4; Van Gelder 2011:149).

In this understanding, the church, not only the clergy but all members of the church, ought to be missional and completely committed to embodying the mission of Jesus, proclaiming the kingdom of God through their words and deeds, following the model of Jesus Christ, in any given context, as a faithful instrument of God (Chung 2011:235). In a missional ecclesiology, a church understands itself not as a building or institution, but as a community of



witnesses (Hooker 2008:1) with a theocentric understanding of mission. A report of the Anglican Church (*Mission-shaped Church*), formulates five values of a missional church as follows (The Archbishop's council 2004:81-82):

- A missionary church is **focused on God the Trinity**. Its chief inspiration and primary purpose is to love and know God as Father, Son and Spirit. It worships and serves a missionary God, and understands itself to share in the divine mission.
- The church is **incarnational**. It seeks to shape itself in relation to the culture in which it is located or to which it is called. The church evaluates itself in its relation to the culture of the community it serves, and strips away whatever is not required by the gospel. It seeks to be responsive to the activity of the Spirit in its community.
- The church is **transformational**. It exists for the transformation of the community that it serves, through the power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit. It is not self-serving, self-seeking or self-focused. The kingdom of God is its goal, and the church is understood as a servant and sign of God's kingdom in its community.
- The church makes **disciples**. It is active in calling people to faith in Jesus Christ, and it is equally committed to the development of a consistent Christian lifestyle appropriate to, but not withdrawn from, the culture or cultures in which it operates. It engages with culture, but also presents a counter-cultural challenge by its corporate life based on the world view and values of the gospel. When reaching out to the people it identifies itself with them in all ways possible without compromising the truth of the gospel (Frost & Hirsch 2013:57). The church encourages the gifting and vocation of all the people of God, and invests in the development of leaders.
- The church is **relational**. In a missionary church, a community of faith is being formed. It is characterised by welcome and hospitality. Its ethos and style are open to change when new members join. Believers are encouraged to establish interdependent relationships with fellow

## Christians as they grow into Christ.

According to what has been observed thus far, it can be said that the Korean church was established on the basis of a missional ecclesiology from its initiative stage, and it was inherently a missional church. The early Korean church did not know the recent missional ecclesiology. Nevertheless their faith thinking and attitude to Christian life clearly displayed the characteristics of a missional church (Choi 2015:22-23). Following Karl Barth, Dreyer (2015:1-2) argues that “the real crisis of the church is more than external circumstances such as the decline of membership and financial hardship.” It would rather be found internally. The inability of the church to true to its own nature and calling makes it progressively more irrelevant.

In this regard, the real solution of the crisis in the Korean church can be the restoration and application of the ecclesiological principles which it had during its foundational stage and the years of hardship and persecution. This is not a reductive attempt arguing that we must go back to the way of the early Korean church since the present Korean church is in a different context. It is, however, an endeavour to find the way forward for the Korean church to restore its integrity as of the church to be whole, to be what it is supposed to be (Dreyer 2015:8) by analysing and assessing how it could follow the scriptural guidelines about the nature and mission of the church, to transcend its contextual difficulties as applied and practised in the early Korean church.

How and why the Korean church has come to a distorted understanding about its nature and mission since the early missional understanding of its ecclesiology will be investigated. This research regards the ecclesiology and missiology of the mega-church phenomenon as a departure from the concept of a missional church and missional ecclesiology. By observing the characteristics of the mega-church phenomenon and how it has emerged and progressed (background) in the history of the Korean church, this research will try to remember the height from which the Korean church has fallen and how to repent to return to the things it did at first (Rev 2:5<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup>All the references in this thesis to the Bible are taken from the New International Version (NIV).

As the church is being marginalised in Korean society, there have been conversations and ventures to return to a 'missional' way of being church since 2000. After examining the different ecclesiological interpretations of the Korean mega and missional churches and how it affects their ministries and how the Korean society rates the Korean churches depending on those understandings and ministerial expressions, some strategic suggestions will be made for the Korean church to ensure those missional conversations and ventures will not disappear as a short time trend, but will restore the essence of the church to fulfil their mission from God.

The present study is located in the field of historical theology, but more specifically mission history (see Dreyer & Pillay n.d.:8-9). The basic point of departure is to be found in an ecclesiology which understands the church as part of the *missio Dei* and as essentially apostolic, in short - a missional ecclesiology. From a historical perspective the study will show how the Korean church has been involved in Korean society since the very beginning.

## **1.2. The purpose of this study**

The purpose of this study is:

- To establish the scriptural ground of missional ecclesiology and its scope.
- To find historical evidence of how the Korean church understood and practiced being church in terms of a missional ecclesiology.
- To investigate how and why the Korean church lost its integrity to have a distorted perspective on being a church.
- To examine different interpretations of ecclesiology by the churches in Korea and how it affected their ministries.
- To describe how the Korean society rates the Korean churches and how it depends on their ways of understanding and practice of being a church.
- To seek the best way forward for the Korean church through the result of this research.

### **1.3. Research questions**

The questions this research will ask are:

- Can the research extract missional ecclesiology from the Old and the New Testaments of Bible and set its scope?
- Can the research figure out how missional ecclesiology was understood and practised by the early Korean church?
- Can the research find out how the Korean church has been influenced by the mega-church phenomenon to lose its missional understanding of the essence and mission of the church (being church)?
- Can the research detect the different ecclesiological perspectives of the Korean mega and missional churches and how it affects their ministries through case studies?
- Can the research present a general perception of the Korean society toward the Korean missional and mega-churches by collecting data?
- Can the research propose the way forward for the Korean church?

### **1.4. Scope and Limitations**

#### 1.4.1. Scope

This research will address the 130 years of Korean church history from the perspective of missional ecclesiology. Due to the long period and its various events, some important historical events which had an effect on the formation of the Korean church will be selected and examined in chronological order to understand their impact on the system story of Korean churches.

#### 1.4.2. Limitations

- This research will proceed from the premises that the current crises of Korean churches are the result of their weakened missional calling,

caused by the prevalence of the mega-church phenomenon.

- The terms missional church and mega-church as movements and trends or phenomena are to be used in this research to indicate the Korean churches in general rather than to particular churches, but represented through some sample churches that display the characteristics of the missional movement and the mega-church phenomenon.
- To avoid a superficial and generalised description, the scope of this research will be limited to two mainstream Protestant denominations: the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches. Both are initiators of the Korean mission in 1885 and represent about 79 per cent of the number of all Korean churches. Historical events and statistics will be described and presented based on information from those two denominations.
- Data availability (some references from Korean books not translated).
- Willingness of participants, especially from mega-churches.
- Relative general ignorance on missional matters within Korean churches.

### **1.5. The research methodology**

The research will be carried out using a methodology which Dreyer developed for studies in what he calls a 'practical ecclesiology' (see Dreyer 2011; 2016). This methodology allows the researcher to study the history of the church, enriched by systematic and exegetical reflection on the nature and calling of the church as well as the implications for ecclesial praxis and strategy. This methodology has the specific intent of producing research results which would benefit the church in its practical situation (Maseko 2015:9). It is intentionally multi-disciplinary in approach, looking at the church through different lenses and perspectives. These perspectives are as follows:

- Hermeneutical perspective

- Historical perspective
- Empirical perspective
- Strategic perspective

#### 1.5.1. Hermeneutical perspective

In reformed theology, the scriptural grounding of any specific aspect of Christian faith is of the utmost importance. In this regard, this research will ask, “What does Scripture say about missional ecclesiology?” A full diachronic survey of the whole of Scripture will not be feasible, but a limited synchronic study will deal with several relevant passages from both the Old and New Testaments. There are two extreme views on missional ecclesiology in the Korean church. One argues that missional ecclesiology is from the liberal theology and causes anarchy in the church, while the other insists that all the existing churches must be dismantled and reconstructed by it, like the “Revisionists” in Belcher’s grouping (2009:456). In a hermeneutical approach this dissertation will try to find a balance by looking at scriptural references about the concept of the *missio Dei* and set the scope of missional ecclesiology for further research.

#### 1.5.2. Historical perspective

Following the method Frost and Hirsch (2013:23) utilised in order to address the change of the church’s understanding regarding mission in each period of the history of the church, the history of the church in Korea from its initiative stage to the present will be divided into three different modes in terms of missional ecclesiology as follows:

- Apostolic mode (1879-1945)
- Pseudo-Christendom mode (1945-2000)
- Missional mode (Past 20+ years).

A historical perspective will be developed by means of a literature study with a

considerable volume of literary sources available pertaining to how the Korean church was and is in these three modes.

### 1.5.3. Empirical perspective

Due to the complexity of the church and the dialectical tension between its true nature and its empirical manifestation this research will not only be concerned with the church we discover in Scripture, but also utilise data gained from primary sources like newspaper articles and particular churches in the Korean context.

Firstly, newspaper articles will be collected and analysed to find out:

- The public perceptions the Korean society of the Korean church with the mega-church's understanding and practice of being church.
- The public perceptions the Korean society of the Korean church with its missional church's understanding and practice of being church.

Secondly, four churches in Korea will be studied. These include two mega-churches (one Presbyterian and the other Methodist) and two missional churches (one Presbyterian and the other Methodist). The purpose of the empirical research is to see:

- How particular mega and missional churches understand to be the church
- How the churches acquired their understanding about being the church
- What kinds of ministries the churches carry out based on their understandings of being the church.

The four churches are the following:

- The ***Immanuel Church*** is well known as a Korean crystal church since its church building was benchmarked Robert H. Schuller's Crystal Cathedral in the U.S. It is one of representative churches in the Methodist denomination with about 20,000 members, but has been in conflicts for several years due to nepotism. The former senior pastor

replaced himself with his son in 2013 in controversial ways.

- The ***Jeja Church*** is located in Mok-dong a neighbourhood in Seoul the capital city of South Korea. It has around 10,000 members and is widely renowned for its resplendent building and discipleship training programmes called D.N.A. Although the church has carried out some charity ministries, it is being accused by the Korean society since the senior pastor Sam-ji Chung's embezzlement of public money was revealed in 2013.
- The ***Bundang Woori Church*** was founded in the Bundang metropolitan area, established about 10 years ago. Since its inception, it has been renting a high school gym instead of having its own building. Though it grew up very fast and reached about 20,000 registered church members, it proclaimed a movement called "Dispatching 10,000 church members" in 2012. Since then, the church started downsizing and has sent many well-trained members to small and weak churches in their vicinity.
- The ***Pillar of Fire Church*** is situated at Oido in the vicinity of a large industrial complex where a number of foreign labourers and malfunctioning families stay. The church runs a small snack bar, named "Oh Dduk Yi Uh," meaning five loaves of bread and two fishes. It is situated in front of a primary school during the week days and gathers every Sunday as a church at the same place. It tries to propagate the gospel naturally by being a friend of children from malfunctioning families after school. The church also runs a second hand clothes shop named "Flowing #" for the foreign labourers, and has a good reputation with the neighbouring local community.

Data will be gathered by means of examining books written by senior pastors and websites on each of the two Korean mega-churches and two missional churches. It will also conduct interviews with senior or assistant pastors of the four churches. The interview will select one particular method according to the development of the situation amongst the ways of face-to-face talk, telephone conversation, email and social networking service. Questions like the following



were posed to the leadership of these churches:

- What is the first priority and goal in your ministry?
- What do you see as the reason that the Korean church is having a negative reputation with the Korean society of today, which is different from its early years?
- What do you see as the merits and demerits of the mega-church?
- What do you think is a missional church?
- What is your reaction to the statement “The bigger a church grows, the more it can carry out missionary work?” Elaborate on your answer.

The data will be analysed and the implications will be related to the rest of the research to assist in the formulation of the conclusion.

#### 1.5.4. Strategic perspective

Having examined the state of missional ecclesiology in the Korean church context, this dissertation will have to formulate a strategy for the Korean church to move forward by restoring and maintaining missional ecclesiology. The importance of this cannot be overestimated because the only fundamental solution for the Korean church in crisis is to restore its ability to be church.

### 1.6. Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 examines, from a hermeneutical perspective, whether missional ecclesiology speaks about the biblical nature and mission of the church.

In chapter 3 a thorough investigation, in terms of missional ecclesiology, is undertaken into the ecclesial growth in Korea, according to the aspects of the Korean church’s nature and mission during the course of its history.

In chapter 4, some churches under the influence both of the mega-church phenomenon and of the missional church movement, were investigated as a case studies to detect how different understandings of mission and church affects the ministries and structures of the particular churches. The general

perception of the Korean society towards the ministerial manifestations of the Korean mega and missional churches represented by the sample churches are presented to provide an impetus for further research on the way forward, for the Korean church to grow in biblical ideals.

Chapter 5 suggests some strategic ways for the Korean church to restore its missional integrity as the way to overcome the crises it is facing.

In chapter 6, concluding observations and comments are made.

## 2. HERMENEUTICAL PERSPECTIVE

### 2.1. Introduction

Being church requires a fundamental understanding of the nature and mission of the church. To come to such an understanding insights of two distinct but complementary theological disciplines, ecclesiology and biblical theology, are indispensable. In Christianity the Bible is normative as source for understanding the nature and mission of the church (The World Council of Churches 2005:6; Wright 2010:20).

At the same time it is quite clear that one cannot speak of biblical ecclesiology as if it is simple or one-dimensional. The Bible reveals a complex and multi-faceted picture of the early church. Even more, the question should be asked whether it is possible to extract a missional ecclesiology from the Old - and New Testaments. Despite the complexity of such an endeavour, this research will attempt to place the church within the grand narrative of the Bible (Wolters & Goheen 2007:191). To avoid simplification and the pitfall of a meta-narrative explaining everything while it cannot be clear about anything, micro-narratives of the Bible relevant to the church's nature and mission will also be addressed. To set the scope, two extreme views on missional ecclesiology rooted in different understandings of the *missio Dei* will be presented and dealt with in the light of the original intention of the *missio Dei* as well as scriptural grounding of missional ecclesiology.

### 2.2. Missional ecclesiology in the biblical meta-narrative

The Bible presents itself fundamentally as a grand meta-narrative. Although it is not a single but a complex mixture of all kinds of smaller narratives, the Bible tells an overall story that encompasses all of its various contents and there is clearly an overarching perspective, namely the mission of God (Wright 2006:64; Bauckham 2004:92). God's missional nature is demonstrated throughout the Bible and that mission is "a major key that unlocks the whole grand narrative of the canon of Scripture" (Wright 2006:17). More than that, even, mission is

“not just one of a list of things the Bible happens to talk about... [it is] ‘what it’s all about’” (Wright 2006:22). In this sense, the nature and mission of the church can and should be extracted by figuring out the relation of the church to God in the story of his mission as it unfolds throughout the Bible.

### 2.2.1. Missional ecclesiology in the story of Creation-Fall-Redemption-New Creation

Although the quartet creation, fall, redemption and new creation is not the biblical meta-narrative itself, it is dependent at every point on the overall biblical narrative, thus it is helpful to visualise an actual line of the meta-narrative (Wright 2010:39). Wolters & Goheen (2007:186-188) describe the quartet as a drama which consists of six acts as follows:

- The first act: God created the world as his kingdom. His primary purpose of creation was revealed and he proclaimed that it was good. Man was created in God’s own image and commanded to rule the created world in fellowship with him (Gen 1:26-28; 2:15).
- The second act: The whole human territory as well as God’s good creation was corrupted by man’s treason. It caused tension between the good creation and the evil which corrupts the good.
- The third act: God set forth his firm determination that he will defeat sin and fix the destructive results caused by Adam and Eve’s disobedience (Gen 3:15). In the process of attaining his determination, God chose a nation to let it propagate his will to redeem the whole universe by embodying his good plans toward man in creation and being a foretaste of living in his reign (Gen 12:1-3; Ex 19:3-6). Although the nation had failed to play the role, God through his prophets promised that the coming Messiah will build an eternal and universal kingdom by the power of the Holy Spirit in which sin and its influence no longer work.
- The fourth act: When Jesus of Nazareth entered the stage, the promise of God was fulfilled. He proclaimed that the kingdom of God has come and the power of God to emancipate and heal the whole universe is in him (Mk

1:14-15; Mt 12:28). His death gave victory to the kingdom of God and his resurrection secured the real existence of the kingdom. The risen Christ entrusted his disciples with the ministry of witnessing to the kingdom as he had done prior to the Ascension.

- The fifth act: A group of followers of Christ Jesus, the witnessing community, has been carrying out its mission for around 2,000 years, and it will be finally ended as Jesus comes for the second time.
- The sixth act: The drama will have its finale with the final judgement and restoration of the whole universe, the eschatological kingdom of God.

In this flow of the epic drama of Creation-Fall-Redemption-New Creation, the mission of God discloses the sincere and consistent work of God for the restoration of his kingdom. Van Gelder (2000:74) says: “An understanding of the church must start with an understanding of the kingdom of God.” To understand the kingdom of God (the starting-point of understanding the nature and mission of the church), the scriptural research on the mission of God in each stage of creation, fall, redemption and new creation is necessary.

This approach follows the *Heilsgeschichte* schema of salvation from creation. Although the term was apparently coined by Von Hofmann (1810 – 1877) (Yarbrough 2004:2-3), this approach already started with Augustine in his *De Civitate Dei*, *The City of God*, which he composed in the years 413-426/7 (Van Oordt 2012:2). Augustine, in particular in the second part of the *De Civitate Dei*, wrote that the significance of all events and the narration of history are to be arranged centring on the incarnation of Jesus Christ as the guiding factor (van Oort 2012:3). The salvation-historical approach was developed by several scholars such as Von Hofmann, Schlatter and Cullmann, who had in common their dissatisfaction with a method that, on philosophical grounds, banished the involvement of God in historical events (Thielman 2007:328), as a serious attempt to explain how early Christianity arose and what it believed (Yarbrough 2004:337-338). They opposed the Cartesian and neo-Kantian epistemological paradigm that dominated historical study in European universities during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Von Hofmann found in the Bible a record of the triune God whose purpose and goal it is to redeem mankind. Since Jesus Christ is

the primordial goal of the world to which salvation history aims and from which it receives its meaning, the OT and NT contain salvation-historical proclamation. The Bible is not to be regarded as a collection of proof-texts or repository of doctrine, but a witness to God's activity in history which will not be fully completed until the eschatological consummation (Hasel 1978:37).

Using a rationalist epistemology similar to Descartes and Kant, theologians like Baur, Wrede and Bultmann held a critical view. Though their views are diverse and not necessarily part of a uniform school of thought, they criticised the salvation-historical approach to be fallacious in terms of unity and objectivity. According to their criticism, the salvation-historical approach makes a New Testament theology unacceptable to anyone who wishes to see it as a purely historical discipline to be undertaken by the methods shared by all historians (objective). It fundamentally challenges the goal of historical research because it takes its departure from the conviction that the NT testimony is unified, in spite of all its diversity, and that faith (subjective) is a presupposition for the proper understanding of the NT writings (Hasel 1978:42). Bultmann remarked, "It is a gross overstatement to say that the entire New Testament presupposes a unified conception of the history of salvation" (Hasel 1978:151-152). Evans (1971:59) referred to the defect of salvation history against Cullmann, who employed salvation history as a unifying centre and the inmost essence of the Bible itself, as follows: "It [salvation history] presupposes a kind of canal of sacred event or divine action flowing within the bounds of the world's history, with the consequent doubtful definitions and demarcations which go with determining where the canal is to be found."

Yarbrough showed that these criticisms of salvation history originated in a clash of worldviews (Thielman 2007:329). Some theologians have a modern world view characterised by rationalism, historical-critical methodologies and literary criticism (Hasel 1978:19-20), while others presuppose God's involvement in historical events. To Israel, "history existed only where Yahweh has revealed himself through act and word" (Hasel 1978:115). In this research the salvation-historical approach is regarded as a viable method and basis for the discussion of the *missio Dei*.

## 2.2.2. Creation

The Bible begins with a magnificent proclamation, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1). The whole universe belongs to God. Truly heaven is his throne, and the earth is his footstool (Is 66:1; Ac 7:49). This beginning implies that the kingdom of God is not limited to a temple built by man (Ps 24:1) and Scripture is about more than a guide to the how to solve the problem of sin and to survive the final judgment (Wright 2010:40). Wright (2006:404-407) suggests that the mission of God should be interpreted in a teleological perspective, which gives an answer to the question of ‘what is the chief end of the whole of creation?’ He refers to the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Confession, that ‘the chief end of the whole of creation is to glorify God and enjoy him forever’ rather than focusing only on the roots of the word in the Latin verb *mitto*, ‘to send’ (Wright 2006:23).

Defining the mission of God as ‘sending’ is biblical and of the utmost importance, because “if God did not send his Son, the Holy Spirit, his words, the prophets and everything needed for man’s salvation, man could never be saved to obey and worship God” (Lee 2014:89). However, reading through the Bible, especially the story of creation, with a teleological view on God’s mission undergirds the concept of the *missio Dei* as a Trinitarian sending. It sees the characteristics of the Triune God as the subject of sending and God’s primary design to restore his creation through his Son, the Holy Spirit and his church.

God created all things according to their various kinds (Gen 1:11-12, 21, 24-25) and proclaimed that it was (very) good (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). The same God preserves, guides, and rules his world by his sovereign activity. Wolters and Goheen (2007:43-44) call this ‘the law of creation’ as the manifestation of God’s sovereignty in creation. This law signifies God’s design for the world and human life from the beginning and its scope encompasses the whole range of created reality. Thus, as the first part of the Lord’s Prayer says, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Mt 6:9-10), the mission of God revealed through the story of creation is that he is building his kingdom that is “the range of his effective will, where what he wants done is done” (Willard

2011:63), and where the whole of creation, including man, praises and displays his glory through the good creation God designed (Wright 2012:187).

While God keeps his design for the world by himself as laws of nature such as the law of gravity and inertia, in terms of the human life he keeps it by giving the human the cultural mandate: to fill the earth, to subdue and rule over it (Gen 1:28). God created man in his image (*imago Dei*) and the image of God rules all created things to be multiplied and prosperous according to their various kinds as God designed. That man was made in God's image and likeness (Gen 1:26) does not refer to what man is like, but what man is to be and to do (ed. Zuck 2005:19). On the basis of Psalm 8:5-6 as an exegesis of Gen. 1:26-28, man, as a being made "just a little lower than God and crowned with glory and honour" is to be a viceroy or a feudal king and is to do rule over the works of God's hands, putting everything under his feet (ed. Zuck 2005:21). Thus, God as the monarch, rules his kingdom through man as a feudal king and it is man's existential and functional mission for making himself and the created world to glorify and to enjoy God forever.

The law of creation reflects the attributes of God. In creating the world, the Triune God co-operated in perfect fellowship and unity. God the Son as the eternal word (*logos*) was with God the Father (Jn 1:1) creating through a word (Gen 1:3), and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters to form the formless (Gen 1:2; Wolters & Goheen 2007:53). Three persons of the Godhead are in a perichoretic relation (the in-relation character of the three persons), and it represents a social reality within the Godhead (Van Gelder 2007:110). The Triune God projected this attribute of social relationship into man by creating him as them, male and female (Gen 1:27). Man in the singular form was created as male and female the plural form as the sole God created them in the expression of his plural form, "we" (Gen 1:26; Sailhamer 2005:188).

God saw that it was "not good" that man was alone (Gen 2:18) after the series of good evaluations of his other creatures. Considering that the negative evaluation was given after God had given a task to man in Genesis 2:15 and he gave a suitable helper to man, man being alone is not good for his existential relational stance as well as for carrying out his tasks. Wright (2006:428) says: "Humanity, then, is created in relationship, for relationship,



and for a task that requires relational co-operation- not only at the basic biological level that only a man and a woman can produce children in order to fill the earth but also at the wider societal level that both men and women have their roles of mutual assistance in the great task of ruling the creation on God's behalf."

God also named all the creatures such as day and night, sky, land and seas, and Adam (Gen 1:5, 8, 10; 2:19; 5:2). Von Rad (1972:83) says, 'Name-giving' in the ancient Orient was primarily an exercise of sovereignty, of command. However seeing Genesis 2:15 as a complementary account, naming means not dictatorial reigning, but ruling in love, watching over and looking after (Shin 2009:149-150). God brought all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air to Adam, his image, to name them (Gen 2:19). Adam named all of them with loving care, which is proved by naming his wife who is the bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh *isha* the feminine form of *ish*, man, instead of *nekebah* the equivalent word (Shin 2009:150).

As the king, God deserves to rule but humbled himself (withdrawal or self-limitation) and lifted man up to the extent of a little lower than himself among all the rest of creatures as Psalm 8:6 says: "You put everything under his (man's) feet". He entrusted man, his own image, with the ruling authority, thus man's dominion over the world must reflect the very way of God's kingship. As Murray puts it (1992:98), his kingship in the kingdom is "not tyranny or arbitrary manipulation and exploitation of subjects, but a rule governed by justice, mercy and true concern for the welfare of all". Man should humble himself and serve the world as God did for him first.

*Basileia Tou Theou* (The kingdom of God) is based on social relationships, naming and serving, which are in Psalm 145 characterised by wisdom, power, goodness, grace, compassion, faithfulness, generosity, provision, protection, justice and love (Wright 2010:51). Thus, to let the whole universe glorify God and enjoy him forever, man's ruling mission should be carried out in the frame of the attributes of God's ruling since the privilege of man as a feudal king ruling on behalf of God entails responsibility of loyalty and obedience (ed. Zuck 2005:26).

The kingdom of God was proclaimed and presented in the character and ministry of Christ Jesus and he challenged people to react to it. People who responded to the challenge were led into a new relationship with God (Yang 2005:329). As God ruled his kingdom through Adam, the first man, all God's people in the second man, Christ Jesus (1Cor 15:47) have their existential mission to rule over the world God created. Thus, the mission of God in creation flows into the mission of his people in Christ Jesus, the church. According to Ladd (1964:111-119), the relationship between the church and the kingdom is as follows:

- The church is not the kingdom itself. It is only the people of the kingdom.
- The kingdom creates the church: There would never have been the church if the kingdom had not come into the world by the mission of Jesus.
- The church is the instrument of the kingdom in which works of the kingdom are executed through its members as through Jesus himself.
- The church is the custodian of the kingdom. God will decide who will enter the eschatological kingdom and who will be excluded through its proclamation of the gospel throughout the world.

As a divinely established communion, the church belongs to God and does not exist for itself. As Barrett (2006:183) states, God's mission creates the church and gives the reason for its being. It is by its very nature missionary and its mission flows from and participates in the vision of God's great design for all creation and the kingdom of God (World Council of Churches 2013:8). As the nature and mission of the church are rooted in God's mission, the church and mission are in an inseparable relationship. "Mission is the life of the church and the church is central to mission" (Niemandt 2012:3). The church does what it is and then organises what it does (Van Gelder 2000:37), thus ecclesiology follows mission (Niemandt 2012:3).

In this missional understanding of the church, the church should reflect the attributes of God revealed in creation: in its social relationships, naming and serving in its mission in the world in order to let all the earth glorify and enjoy

God forever. Bosch (1991:391) says: “Our missionary activities are only authentic insofar as they reflect participation in the mission of God... The primary purpose of the *missiones ecclesiae* can therefore not simply be the planting of churches or the saving of souls; rather, it has to be service to the *missio Dei*, representing God in and over against the world, pointing to God, holding up the God-child before the eyes of the world in a ceaseless celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany”.

The social relationship of the church originates in the Trinitarian nature of God and has existential and functional aspects. Aloneness is not God’s will (Gen 2:18). Large crowds tend to be unrelated aggregations rather than congregations, so that the church needs to be smaller groups or churches in order to enjoy the intimate fellowship (*koinonia*) of the Trinity (Stott 2007:91-92). However, fellowship has more profound implications than simply overcoming loneliness. Stott (2007:96-100) and also Snyder (2006:75-78) state the following three aspects of the genuine fellowship of the church based on the Trinitarian nature of God:

- The church as a Trinitarian worshipping community (The common inheritance of the church is to share in it together): Fellowship is not a subjective feeling but an objective fact in its biblical usage as can be found from its adjective form ‘*koinos*’ meaning ‘common’. The church is united and empowered to serve by worshipping together through which the church comes to understand the Father’s creative love and care for all creatures, the Son’s self-giving in his *kenosis* of himself for salvation, and the Spirit’s call, guidance and sending people to go into the world as the Father has sent the Son (John 20:21). The authentic fellowship is fellowship in common worships of the Trinity and it bears witness to the common share of the church in the grace of God, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.
- The Trinitarian community is especially sent to the poor (The common service of the church, together they share with others): The early church born when the Spirit descended on earth on the day of Pentecost devoted itself to the fellowship (Ac 2:42). As seen in Acts 2:44, the fellowship was led to share their possessions with the poor and this

derives from their compassionate Lord (Mt 9:36; 14:1; 15:32; 20:34). The compassion of God is revealed throughout the Old Testament as concern and compassion of the Father on the poor. In the meantime, on account of the Spirit who helps the church remind of everything the Son has said (John 14:26), the genuine fellowship of the church must share not only material wealth but also spiritual wealth which is the knowledge of the gospel.

- The church's ministry is also grounded in the Trinity (Mutual responsibility in the church - Share with one another): In the fellowship of the church, all are recipients, and all are givers. As Apostle Paul said that the Gentiles shared in the Jew's spiritual blessings, so that they ought to share with the Jews their material blessings (Rm. 15:27), the fellowship of the church is of mutual responsibility and mutual interdependence. In this mutuality, all members of the church bear one another's burdens, care for one another and grow to become like Christ in every respect as speaking the truth in love (Ep. 4:15). In the light of this fellowship, the ministry of the church is not an organisational hierarchy (one-dimensional top-down leadership), but of decentralised and shared leadership that unleashes the gifts of evangelism, apostleship, and prophecy, as well as the currently popular pastoral and teaching gifts (Frost & Hirsch 2013:25-26), following the Trinitarian nature, "The Trinity is the opposite of hierarchy".

God named man and had him name the rest of the creatures including his wife. God served man first by humbling himself to put the man in charge to rule over the created world. Therefore man has to humble himself to serve the ecology as well as socio-cultural development (civilisation) represented by marriage and family as the most basic socio-cultural unit to serve with 'loving care'. This has become the mission of the church of Christ Jesus, the second man, that should present the serving God's kingship, which is described as God's *shalom* (Niemandt 2012:5), to the world in its mission. According to Claydon (ed. 2004:505), "*shalom* as God's peace envisions the wholeness, well-being and flourishing of all people and the rest of creation both individually and corporately in their inter-relatedness with God and with each other." *Shalom*

as God's peace encompasses all dimensions of human life, including the spiritual, physical, cognitive, emotional, social, societal and economic. *Shalom* pursues mercy, truth, justice and peacefulness through both personal conversion to Christ and social transformation.

In terms of *shalom*, the mission of the church is not only about winning of souls, but safeguarding the integrity of God's creation (Niemandt 2012:5) and challenging the powers and authorities that do not bring *shalom*-wholeness (eds. Kim & Anderson 2011:170). To reflect the kingdom of God's rule of *shalom*, the church should continue to struggle against every form of injustice and oppression, mistrust and conflict created by human beings in its prophetic and compassionate ministry to the world, and avoid to be an irrelevant religious ghetto (WCC 2013:43). "Where there is a new zeal for justice, peace and the protection of the environment, and renewed liturgy reflecting the beauties of the creator and creation" (Niemandt 2012:6), the church is to be communities of compassion and healing.

The nature and mission of the church stem from the mission of God, through which God forms his kingdom that emanates the glory of God, revealed in his creation. Thus, the church is inherently missional and its mission inherits and reflects God's kingship (his attributes to rule) to glorify and enjoy serving God forever. The inherited attributes of God are summed up as a Trinitarian community of love that has extended their community through a creation, included man in their reign over their creation, and through man to practice their leadership to serve the poor in order to restore *shalom* in the world.

### 2.2.3. Fall

In terms of the relationship between a sovereign king and a feudal king, man's ruling over the created world have to be exercised within the frame of permission ("You are free to eat from any tree in the garden", Gen 1:16) of the sovereign and his prohibition ("You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil", Gen 1:17). Satan as the antagonist and accuser had tempted man to usurp the sovereign's authority (ed. Zuck 2005:26). Man betrayed the true relationship with God and his mission as a feudal king that was entrusted

to him and rebelled against God's authority over him, i.e., he committed sin against God (Willard 2011:59). Peters (1984:16) writes: "Sin in all its reality, satanic impact and consequences encounter man, and man consciously and deliberately sides with sin against God and the command of God. At the same time sin penetrates, permeates and overpowers man. Thus man becomes a wilful sinner, entering into a state of rebellion against God and into a life of disobedience to the command of God."

Since man sinned and refused his essential function to rule according to the law of creation (God's design), the image of God became marred and defective and man could no longer represent God's sovereignty in a perfect way (ed. Zuck 2005:26). "Man was created subordinate to God, co-ordinate to the woman, and dominant over all other creatures" (ed. Zuck 2005:28). Sin, however, estranged the vertical relationship between God and man that used to be intimate (spiritual alienation), and it extended in and caused estrangement of the horizontal relationships (social alienation). The relationship between human beings and creation was also disrupted (functional alienation). Man who had been taken from the ground but given the authority to subdue it, is to return to the ground in death because of sin he committed (Gen 3:19), to become subdued by the one which was supposed to be subdued by him in the end (ed. Zuck 2005:25-30).

The fundamental characteristic of man, however, has not yet been changed since the fall. As Willard (2011:37), quoting Tolstoy, puts it: 'Man is nothing but a little lump but dreams of progress in the (distorted) memory of the cultural mandate.' According to the Bible, to commit sin is to be a slave of it (Wolters & Goheen 2007:109). Although the state of the earth has still remained the realm of man's responsibility since the fall and the very being of man is assigned to rule in whatsoever circumstances his life is, man's nature-imposed objectives (progress) that lost God's kingdom design (the law of creation), having been spiritually, socially and functionally alienated by sin, are supposed to go astray, in other words produce only evil (Willard 2011:60).

Although the part of creation, which God directly keeps and rules, has been faithfully maintained by his 'Common grace' and has been restrained from the results of man-producing evils (eds. Berkhof 1995:377-378), the other part of

creation which God entrusted to man to rule indirectly has been unable to avoid being corrupt and distorted. As Wright (2010:40) points out, “Human disobedience and rebellion against the Creator God brought disastrous results.” The influence and scope of corruption and distortion caused by spiritual, social, and functional alienations are as follows (ed. Zuck 2005:25-30; Wolters & Goheen 2007:94-98):

- Spiritual alienation – “My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal” (Gen 6:3): Man who rejected God’s rule over him, thus lost goodness and authority to rule which flows from God. The kingdom of God is no longer governed through man’s heart (Willard 2011:63) and it results in all kinds of evil as is written in Romans 1:29-31 such as wickedness, greed, depravity, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossip, slander, God-hate, insolence, arrogance, boastfulness, disobeying parents, senseless, faithless, heartless, and ruthless. Man uses his powers of rationality only to explain, excuse and normalise his own evil (Wright 2010:40), thus even the field of technology and academy, that are supposed to praise and glorify God’s creation by research on ‘the general revelation’, is corrupted by an exceeding concern over efficiency and the widespread phenomenon of scientism, sloppy methodology and fallacious reasoning. Although man, as the image of the God of creation, possesses the gift of creativity, with which he can reflect on something of the beauty and truth of God in many forms of art (The Lausanne Movement 2011:23), kitsch and bad taste in general in painting, poetry, music exemplify his perversion of creation.
- Social alienation - “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you” (Gen 3:16): Man-woman relationship was not a dominant-subordinate relationship as can be seen from the declaration of God that he gave the woman the man’s helper (*ezer*) to meet the need in the life and experience of the other (Robertson 2004:80-85). Sin, however, radically altered this serving-based relationship to scrambling-for-hegemony-based relationship to rule over one another (Willard 2011:60), and it affected every human relationship such as the sexual, parental, familial, societal, ethical, international human relationship. The marriage



and family systems have deviated from the original good creation by divorce, legal or illegal polygamy, child abuse and neglect. The state and political order, which are designed to seek and keep justice for all people they should serve, have also been distorted and deteriorated to totalitarianism and tyranny.

- Functional alienation – “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground” (Gen 3:19): Man is subject to decay and death, living within a physical environment represented by the ground (Gen 3:17) that is itself under the curse of God. Man’s work turned from enjoying God’s abundance, to borrow Robertson’s word (2004:76), “peacefully enjoying the fruits of the earth”, to sweating for the limited produce, because the ground no longer obeyed man’s work on it and produced thorns and thistles (Gen 3:18). This distortion of labour and productivity has induced exploitation of natural resources and all kinds of pollutions as well as discriminative and polarising economic structures in the world.

Because all have sinned in Adam and fall short of the glory of God (Rm. 3:23), man has been failing to lead all of the created world to praise and glorify God by ruling it as God originally intended it to be. The evil in human life in general is generated from his enmity toward God. As the tension between God’s good creation and evil trying to break it developed, as the result of man’s sin and depravity, the realm called ‘on earth’ in the Lord’s prayer is in defiance of ‘in heaven’ where the will of God is done. The ‘on earth’ symbolises the world that is hostile to the kingdom of God and enslaved by the powers of darkness, the adverse spiritual agencies and forces at work in people and through people, in institutions and professions (Padilla 2013:30-31). Its scope encircles wherever man’s sinful lifestyles, worldviews and attitudes, shaped by human self-centredness and greed, perverts and twists the good creation of God (Wolters & Goheen 2007:107; Niringiye 2014:119).

Although this sinful world is the fruit of the distortion of God’s primary good design, it is neither able to abolish the essence of the good creation nor nullify God’s faithful preservation and restoration of the works of his hands. The kingdom of God has existed from the very moment of creation and will never



cease. As Willard (2011:63) affirms, “the kingdom of God cannot be shaken and is totally good. It has never been in trouble and never will be. It is not something that human beings produce or, ultimately, can hinder.” God is a creating God who has a passion for all the world to be in the right relationship with him in the light of his creation design. Therefore the mission of the Triune God for restoration of his kingdom began in earnest from when Adam the first man had fallen and continues towards the eschatological restoration, that is the end of the curse in the new creation (Wright 2010:46).

According to Romans 8:19-22: “The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.” Since the creation was forced to be subject to frustration by the distorted ruling will of the one (Adam the first man) who subjected it, the whole creation longs for the people of God to be revealed. In his life Jesus fulfilled and demonstrated what creation, Adam and all men after him should be, which the potentialities of the un-fallen Adam would have been (ed. Zuck 2005:23). Thus, the mission of the church has to participate in God’s mission, through which he tries to restore his kingdom (kingship), by starting by discerning God’s good creation from its present fallen state to its restoration in Christ Jesus the second Adam (The Archbishop’s Council 2004:93) who recovered the failure of the first Adam and recreated something new. In this regard, mission is the essence of the church and the church is to be inherently missional by discerning God’s will and living out what Jesus fulfilled and demonstrated during his public life and ministry as by engaging in the mission of God.

As the Apostle Paul said in Romans 12:2: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”, discernment is the first act for a missional church participating in God’s mission, with which the church is seeking the movement of the Triune God in relationship with all of creation (Niemandt 2012:4). It is the ability to

listen, learn and live with ears close to the mouth of the Lord Jesus (Dreyer 2016:6). In order to discern a missional church begins, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17, 26; 16:8), with identifying the goodness of God's creation in every dimension with the critical question 'what is the law of creation of a particular organism or system?'. Following the identifying, the church also needs to clarify and interpret how the law of creation has been perverted in particular cultures, contexts, and situations and how much it has deviated from the original state that God created.

In the process of discernment, the church should put down the church-centred (ecclesiocentric) missions and be equipped with the appropriate skills and wisdom by being taught and led by the Holy Spirit who moves across the void to bring about order (Gen 1:2) as the wind or breath of God and exposes the evil spirits and confronts the forces of evil (Van Gelder 2007:30-34), for reasons such as: Rapid changing of value choices and moral decisions in a diverse and complex post-modern world (Van Gelder 2007:96-97); Destructive satanic powers and principalities of the world which seek to twist and spoil the good creation of God (Tennent 2010:490).

The mission of a missional church is the entire fallen world. The missional church has to refuse the Gnostic 'two-realm' theory (dualism) that sees the world as divided between the sacred (religious) and profane (non-religious). It rather sees the world and God's place in it as holistic and integrated (Frost and Hirsch 2013:25-26). Snyder (2001:154) says that understanding God's kingdom is to abolish the line between the 'sacred' and the 'secular', admitting that all things are within the sphere of God's sovereignty. The missional church has to sublimate the division between the sacred and the profane and to participate in the mission of God through the Holy Spirit not by attracting people to the church, but by discerning where God works and be an example of God's reign wherever it is sent. The mission of the church, therefore, "is not locked in an unapproachable point, which separates the church and the world, but is defined in the church's ability to exist in every level of reality and to point to its Lord from those places" (Bentley 2009:32).

In this holistic perspective on mission, the church is understood as a community of people discerning what God is actively doing in the world around

them and then participating in God's work. Its mission is not carried out by the clergy or missionary only, but it is essentially connected to the community. Wherever community members live their daily lives, they are learning the way in which to easily, naturally, and routinely embody, demonstrate, and announce God's life and reign for the sake of the world around them (Niemandt 2010:411). Since the mission of the missional church starts from the local community where its members live among the fallen world, it is not limited by the traditional concept of a church-centred foreign mission whereby the church in strong and powerful countries (the 'haves') gives out something to the church in weak countries ('have-nots') (Son 2012:45; Padilla 2013:70-71). Since classic distinction between domestic evangelism and foreign missions has collapsed, the mission field is now everywhere (Tennent 2010:24). Ducker (2008:9) says: "It is a fact to be greatly celebrated that Christian mission now goes 'from everywhere to everywhere' or if not quite, then at least it is more varied, inclusive and cross-national than during the long centuries of Christendom."

Despite the fall of man, God faithfully continues his mission by sustaining and restoring the essence of his good creation. God cares about all persons, desiring to see them reconciled into a right relationship with the living and true God and with one another, even as they take responsibility for the stewardship of all of creation (Van Gelder 2007:31). Therefore, it is the calling and mission of the church that they, as the community reconciled with God, participates in his mission with all of its members by discerning God's original intention for all created realities and unmasking and confronting the destructive satanic forces against the kingdom of God in dramatically changing contexts it is situated, relying on the guidance of the Holy spirit.

#### 2.2.4. Redemption

Since every area of the fallen world, where God's will is not done cries out for liberation from the bondage of sin and its results (Rm. 8:21), God starts his redemptive mission to restore his original creation of which he proclaimed that it is (very) good by faithfully continuing and fulfilling the cultural mandate through the persons he called and sent throughout history, because the will of God who is in heaven can only be revealed to created man in space, form and

person (Kang *et al.* 2015:127). In the initiative stage, God in his sovereignty called Abram from where his fathers used to worship other gods (idolatry) (Jos 24:2) and sent him to the land God would show him (Gen 12:1).

God gave Abram two promises (Gen 12:2-3; 15:4-5; 17:6,16), that he would build a great nation through Abram, which that will be God's agent as a microcosm of the kingdom of God for the reconciliation of creation with God (ed. Zuck 2005:39). The first part of the promise is that God will make Abram a great nation by increasing the number of his offspring like the stars in the heavens, and from those offspring kings would come. This promise is the reflection of "Be fruitful and increase in number" and "fill the earth and subdue it and rule" (Gen 1:28). The mission of the Abrahamic nation is to present the earth with God's creation purpose (ed. Zuck 2005:39).

The second part of the promise is, "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you" (Gen 12:3). The nation of Abram was called with 'the first Great Commission'- "Go ... [and] be a blessing ... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Wright 2010:41). It can be seen in Abram's name change by God from the centripetal name Abram, 'exalted father', to the centrifugal name Abraham, 'father of many nations' (Gen 17:5; Kim 2015:25). Therefore the calling of Abrahamic nation demanded more than animal sacrifices. It required the dedication of the nation to the mission of God for the welfare of the world (Peters 1984:110), thus the nation was called to be a missional community.

As a missional community, Israel the people of Abraham was to be an instrument of God to rule the created world through it. God redeemed Israel from the bondage and slavery to Pharaoh to be a model of redemption by living a redemptive live in their own society as God's witness to the nations, not to be cursed, but to be blessed. Kim (2015:24) refers to the following purposes of God in calling of Israel:

- Israel shall be a nation that receives the special revelation of God toward the world and keep it (Heb. 1:1-3);
- Israel shall be a passage through which the Saviour would come in

history;

- Israel shall be a servant of God among the nations (Is 44:1-2) and a witness (Is 43:10).

These purposes of God became more evident when God said that the reason he chose Abraham was to let him direct his children and his household (Israel) after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just (Gen 18:19), which were also the requested and requisite way of the kings of Israel according to Psalm 72:1-2. Israel was called to rule as a feudal king under the sovereign God. God also asked Israel to be his treasured possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation in Exodus 19:5-6. Israel as the treasured possession of God was to be a holy (dedicated) nation amidst the surrounding sinful nations to do the priestly work of mediation between the kingdom of God and the fallen world (Wright 1992:86). The laws of God represented by the 'Ten Commandments' were given to Israel through Moses on the Mount Sinai to live different from the worldly ways and customs that resist and distort the original law of creation (Kim 2015:25).

The nations could be reconciled with God and entered the kingdom of God only when Israel as a royal priesthood (1Pt 2:9) rules by seeking God's righteousness and justice, and with that helping the nations to taste God's ruling in advance. Israel, however, turned out to be a failed servant, blind to God's works and deaf to his word since they lost their missional nature and became institutionalised (temple centred) (Wright 2010:42). They demanded a king "such as all the other nations have" (1Sm 8:5, 20) to establish their own kingdom seeking the worldly values, ignoring or abandoning their identity as a feudal king and the laws given to them to rule with (Niringiye 2014:79). Israel was blessed to be a blessing to the nations, but they enjoyed the blessing for its own sake and for their own sakes, neglecting its universal character, possessed with the illusion that they were the only chosen nation (Niringiye 2014:33).

Israel was a chosen nation since God had the purpose of bringing the good news about God to all the nations. Israel, however, turned the focus of its election inward and built barriers to keep the nations out rather than

constructing bridges to bring them in (Am 9:7; Is 19:24; Van Gelder 2007:89-90). Although the mission of Israel was to be centrifugal as by participating in God’s mission to restore his kingdom from within Israel toward the whole world, it became centripetal. In spite of the failure of Israel, the mission of God never failed, and it continued to bring blessing to the nations and salvation to the whole world. As God saved Israel from the hand of Pharaoh, he redeemed Israel again, after their disobedience that led to their Babylon Exile and renewed the centrifugal force in their mission (Kim 2015:26). In 2Chronicles 36:23, Cyrus king of Persia who conquered the Babylonian empire sent Israel back to Jerusalem, with the following command: “The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you- may the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up.”

Following the Royal edict of Cyrus, around 50,000 Jews returned to Jerusalem in 539-538 BC, and then they finished building the temple of God under the supervision and encouragement of Haggai and Zerubbabel in 516-515 BC. Isaiah 44-46 describes Cyrus as ‘God’s shepherd’ (Is 44:28), ‘a man to fulfil God’s purpose’ (Is 46:11), as ‘God’s anointed’ (Is 45:1), which is a messiah, thus Cyrus foreshadows Jesus the Messiah (Christ) (Lee 2003:71-72). There is a significant parallel between 2 Chronicles 36:23 and Matthew 28:18-20’s Great Commission (Peters 1984:180; Beale 2004:177):

<Table 2> The parallel between 2 Chronicles 36:23 and Matthew 28:18-20

Parallel	2 Chronicles 36:23	Matthew 28:18-20
Authority given	The Lord, the God of heaven, has given all the kingdoms of the earth	All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me
Sending	Let him ‘go’ up	Go

The Lord being present	May the Lord his God be with him	I (the Lord) am with you always, to the end of the age
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The resurrected Jesus sent his disciples to the world like God sent the Jews to Jerusalem after their Babylonian captivity to rebuild the temple for the Lord by the order of the messianic servant of the Lord, Cyrus. Building a temple for God today does not mean building a church building. It would rather mean the restoration of the cosmic temple since the whole created world is God's holy place where God dwells and rules (Hab. 2:20), which means the kingdom of God (Beale 2004:25).

God never gave up his creation and accepted the sacrifice of his son to fulfil his original plan. The reason Christ Jesus came to the earth and achieved his death on the cross and his resurrection was to purify the cosmic temple, which is corrupted by human sin and depravity, and to give it back to God. The root of all kinds of evil on earth (human sin) was healed and overcome in the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus, and therefore in principle his redemption also eliminated the influence of all sin (Wolters & Goheen 2007:119). God's mission to restore his kingdom continues expanding through the people who regain life and accept his kingly rule through their faith in Christ Jesus who, being God, took the sin of the whole world on Him (Willard 2011:56)

From the people of Israel who were formed by the call and mission of Abraham, the Messiah was born as promised, and he in his ministry called the disciples and sent them to preach the good news that the kingdom of God is near (Mt 10:7). The disciples became the Jesus community since the Holy Spirit descended upon them (Kim 2015:46). As Wright (2010:43) puts it, "Just as the exodus redemption led to the creation of the covenant people of Old Testament Israel, so the Easter redemption led to the eschatological gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the birth of the church." The Apostle Paul called this Jesus community an '*ekklesia*', whose qualities are as follows (Peters 1984:200):

- It was a called-out and called unto people.
- It was a people of a special kind.



- It was a people called out and called together for a specific purpose.
- It was a people conducting their affairs on principles of equality and brotherhood.
- It was a people uniquely related to God.

Thus, the church can be defined as a community called out from the world by God, delegated with a special mission, and sent to the world for that mission. Man who broke the first mission of God (the cultural mandate) and spoiled the created world in Adam, the first manager of the garden of Eden, which is the prototype of the kingdom of God (Beale 2004:75), is given a second chance to be the manager of the world in Christ Jesus the second manager (John 20:15- John called the resurrected Jesus as the “gardener” through Mary; Wright 2014:60). The church as the disciple community was given a second opportunity to restore the temple for God, which is the kingdom of God. Mark’s version of the great commission bids the church “preach the good news to all creation” (Mk 16:15) because there is need of liberation from sin everywhere (Wolters & Goheen 2007:133).

At this point, the cultural mandate and the Great Commission coincide. To enter the kingdom of God through repentance and faith are integral, for which preaching the gospel precedes (Rm. 10:14-15; the Great Commission). This gospel, however, should not be understood in a narrow sense since it is the gospel of the kingdom (the cultural mandate). This kingdom gospel includes making all nations disciples of Jesus and reminding them of their responsibility to the whole creation (Robertson 2004:88-89). In this understanding, Matthew 28:18-20 is not about winning individual souls, but both the first and second Great commissions are given to the people of God for the blessing of all nations and creatures through the restoration of the kingly rule of God. Thus, the church (*ekklesia*) is called by God to be missional and its mission has been rediscovered in terms of their participation in God’s reconciling work to restore creation into a right relationship with God through the redemptive reign of God in Christ by bearing witness and inviting people in the world to become reconciled to the living and true God and among themselves (Van Gelder 2007:18).



Guder (ed. 1998:4) says that the mission of God “reached its revelatory climax in the incarnation of God’s work of salvation in Jesus’ ministering, crucified, and resurrected.” The ministry of Christ Jesus not only propagated the advent of the kingdom, but also actualised it (Lk 17:21; ed. Guder 1998:145). The kingdom of God came in Jesus’ person and acted in his actions (Willard 2011:68). Goheen (2007:123-124) describes the ministries of Jesus who witnessed to the advent of the kingdom with his word and deed as follows:

- Miracles: to verify and actualise that his teaching regarding the advent of the kingdom is true.
- Healing: to prove his kingship that controls disease and the power of Satan.
- Deliverance: to demonstrate that the kingdom is infiltrated into the fallen world.

Christ Jesus simply was the good news about the kingdom. His teaching had authority at the point that he said “Just watch me and see that what I say is true. See for yourself that the rule of God has come among ordinary human beings” while expert scholars taught by citing others (Willard 2011:55). Through the incarnation of Christ Jesus, God the sovereign king secured a bridgehead in his territory, and required his people to spread his authority to the whole created world (Wolters & Goheen 2007:122). Therefore, the mission of the church must focus on making the mission of God known to the world through its words and deeds according to God’s ruling to fulfil his redemptive purpose for the whole of creation (Padilla 2013:199).

Wright (2010:42) says that “the incarnation of God in Christ brings two new factors into the mission of the church: inaugurated presence of the kingdom of God and the incarnational model and principle itself.” In this regard, the mission of the church cannot be church-centred with its institutional structure and financial power; rather, the mission of all God’s people should follow the way of Jesus Christ which is the best model for missionary activity, demonstrating the presence of the kingdom of God in his incarnation (Gibbs & Bolger 2005:62). Glasser (2003:12) emphasises that all Christians on earth have to follow the mission of Jesus in their mission activity as follows: “Our mission is

none other, no more nor less, than participation in Jesus' mission. To state it negatively, when it is not Christ's mission, it may be colonial expansion, church extension, proselytism, or social services - but it is not mission. Our mission is biblical mission only when it is centred in Jesus Christ."

Stott (2010:39) says all authentic mission is incarnational mission, so that all Christians are to be like Christ in his mission. Jesus embodies the good news and through his incarnation, God's good news became wonderfully present in a specific setting (Tennent 2010:325). Thus, as Niemandt (2012:4) puts it, the missional church is an incarnational movement sent to engage with its context. The church does not pass through time and context in hermetically sealed containers but rather like yeast that takes new form and changes every culture (Sweet 2009:178). "This is the understanding that the biblical message must be shared in a form appropriate for the culture it is being shared with, and whose worldview must be taken into account" (Ducker 2008:6). In order to demonstrate God's rule (the kingdom of God) by Jesus' incarnation which is different from the rule of the world, all his followers, the disciple community of Jesus Christ are to be contextualised to that culture to which they believe they are sent (Frost & Hirsch 2013:276) and are to play the role of the light and salt of the world as witnesses witnessing to the kingdom of God.

The church needs to be contextualised and incarnational by listening to people and entering their culture (Sweet 2009:35), suffering alongside them to proclaim the gospel, which is a demonstration to the world of how the Almighty God took on the very nature of a servant. According to Frost and Hirsch (2013:109), contextualisation attempts to communicate the gospel in word and deed and to establish churches in ways that make sense to people within their local cultural context. It is primarily concerned with presenting Christianity in such a way that it meets people's deepest needs and penetrates their worldviews, thus allowing them to follow Christ and remain in their own cultures.

Proper contextualisation is of utmost importance if the church is to avoid on-going accusations of neo-colonialism against its mission. Ducker (2008:6) says: "[Proper contextualisation] recognises the validity and value of other cultures, which are seen as worthy recipients of Christ. Not only is the message

contextualised into that culture, but the form of church, its theology and hermeneutics – and even its missiology – should be permitted to develop according to its context (in accordance, of course, with biblical ‘constants’).”

Hirsch (2006:133-134) describes four Christ-like incarnational life styles the missional church should live in as follows:

- Presence is to become part of the fabric of a community and to engage in the humanity of it all, to make relationships with people whom Jesus wants to make relationships with as representatives of Him.
- Proximity assumes not only presence, but also genuine availability, which will involve spontaneity as well as regularity in the communities the church inhabits.
- Powerlessness is servant hood and humility in which the church is committed to relationship with the world. As Jesus Christ was in a plain body on the cross, the church should live a kenotic life style, giving up all kinds of privilege, position, title, and authority, to be with marginalised people (Shin 2009:280-281).
- Proclamation of the gospel is to be willingly shared by the church within their world and to be ensured by their faithful lives.

In this understanding, the missional church is incarnational, not attractional, in its ecclesiology. Being incarnational is the opposite of being attractional. It implies something of a ‘Go-To-Them’ approach to mission and evangelism, rather than asking non-Christians to ‘Come-To-Us’, to our services, our gatherings, and our programmes on our terms. The incarnational church seeks to infiltrate society to represent Christ in the world (Frost & Hirsch 2013:62). Kok and Niemandt (2009:6) also state: “Ecclesiologically, we have to be incarnational instead of attractional: Jesus’ incarnational ethos results in the bringing of the presence of God into marginalised places or spaces where such presence is usually believed not to be found”.

The missional church needs Jesus-like disciples to witness to the kingdom of God by their incarnational way of life. As Bosch (1991:421) puts it, the missionary message of the church incarnated itself in the life and world of

those who had embraced it. The redemption that Christ Jesus accomplished is rather universal than limited to a certain region in the created world in the sense that it restored (no additions of what was lacking before but returning to good state of the created world before the fall, in other words, bringing new life and vitality to what was there all along) all the territories of creation, as wide as the scope of the fall and its influence (Wolters & Goheen 2007:115-119). Because there is no domain where Christ's kingship cannot reach and he claims his ruling authority over every terrain, the created world to be restored does not only include the private sphere, but also the public one. Therefore the church as a disciple community is sent to the world to take part in God's mission as Jesus did, in the world of politics, economy, society, education, art, the mass media, law, technique, religion, wherever there is oppression and injustice to be redeemed and subjected to the rule and will of God in Christ Jesus. That is the mission of God.

To carry out this mission, as Apostle Paul urged in Romans 12:1-2, all members of the missional church are to reconcile the world with God as priests by offering their bodies as living sacrifices. For example Christian politicians govern the country as worshipping God; Christian businessmen run their business as worshipping God; Christians teachers manage educational activities as worshipping God, not in the church building, but in the cosmic temple where Christians as the royal priesthood are located and work, obeying God and fulfilling his will (Kang *et al.* 2015:131). Thus, the missional church following the way of God's mission, testify to God's rule wherever they are, in incarnational ways through their holy lives (with words and deeds represented by an ethical life) as disciples of Christ Jesus.

Hunsberger (ed. Guder 1998:102-109) characterises the church as a community, a servant, and a messenger of God's reign that is born to represent the divine ruling of God through its genuine discipleship and morality. To make Christ present in this world and reveal God's reign, the church has to correspond with the earthly life of Christ and be inherently counter-cultural with the highest standards of ethical conduct, of integrity, aiming at faithful Christian discipleship within the new context, rather than at cultural conformity (The Archbishop's

Council 2004:xii-xiii) since without ethics, all the beautiful words the church preaches, proclaiming the kingdom of God will keep falling on sceptical ears (Dreyer 2016:7).

Koffeman (2014:215) says: “A church may be expected to require from its members, and particularly from those who bear representative or ministerial responsibilities, that they meet the highest standards of ethical behavior. If not, it cannot acquire any moral authority in society. A church that tolerates injustice in its internal life, or who is not characterised by deep respect for human dignity in its external relationships, lacks all credibility. A congregation that does not first of all show reliability fails in a fundamental way.” The mission of the missional church is not attractional but attracts people through the holy lives of its members living according to the way of the Lord in righteousness, justice and love - thus an ethical life (Niemandt 2012:8). It is to be a community shaped by God’s own ethical character and standards, so that God can bring about the blessings of the nations (Wright 2010:93-94).

In spite of the fall of man and the distortion of the whole creation caused by it, the mission of God to restore his kingdom through his people has never ceased. God commenced his mission faithfully by calling and sending of Abraham. He never failed continuing his mission despite the failure of Israel the people of Abraham and in the end his kingdom come on earth through the person and ministry of the Messiah as foretold by Moses and all the Prophets (Lk 24:27). The church as a disciple community called by the cross and resurrection of Christ Jesus is sent into the world and is, by the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, to participate in the mission of God who tries to reconcile all alienated relationships between him and the created world in Christ Jesus. Therefore, the church is essentially missional and its mission is presented in the world by the exemplary life of the disciple community wherever it is sent as incarnation of Christ Jesus.

#### 2.2.5. New creation

The Bible begins with creation of the heavens and the earth in Genesis 1-2 and ends with the new heavens and the new earth in Revelation 21-22. One

should distinguish between *Kainos* (new in terms of nature and quality as is used for 'new' heavens and a 'new' earth) and *neos* - a totally new thing in terms of time and origin (Hoekema 2006:393-395). The new heavens and the new earth which will come after the first heaven and the first earth have passed away (Rev 21:1) do not mean deforming the first good creation, but restoring it by reforming what is twisted and distorted by sin. In this regard, the Bible tells a story that begins with the origin of the whole universe (building of the kingdom of God) and ends with the completion of it (restoration of the kingdom of God) (Wolters & Goheen 2007:186).

God sent Christ Jesus to reconcile all things (*ta panta*) to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through the blood of Jesus, shed on the cross (Col 1:20). This peace (*eirene*) given first by Jesus as he reconciled the alienated relationship between God and man (John 14:27) will be accomplished as the New Jerusalem, which means 'the city of shalom' (translated to *eirene*) (Willard 2011:567), comes down out of heaven from God (Rev 21:2). Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God as present and as coming. On the one hand, Jesus proved that his coming should be interpreted as fulfilment through his words and deeds. After having cast out demons he said "the kingdom of God has come to you" (Lk 11:20) with Jesus the King. On the other hand, when his disciples asked him to teach them how to pray, he taught them to pray: "Your kingdom come... on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt 6:10; Lk 11:2; Guder 2000:36).

All the times between the first and second coming of Christ Jesus are the last days (Kim 2009:11-12). The Holy Spirit as Joel prophesied, "I will pour my Spirit on all people" (Jl 2:28), was poured upon the people of God on the day of Pentecost and formed the church in order to fulfil the salvation in the last days. The church under the leading and supervision of the Spirit is now living between the times- between the now and the not yet. "All the redemptive power of God is already present in the world and is at work in and through the church - the now, although sin is still present and its judgment awaits the final consummation - the not yet" (Van Gelder 2007:27).

All the churches, living between the already but not yet have to listen to the Holy Spirit since he is the one who speaks in the book of Revelation that was

written to show what must take place in the last days (Rev 1:1): “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says” (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22) to the seven churches in the province of Asia which are the representatives of the churches of the every generation (Bauckham 2002:55). The Spirit-led church that listens to the voice of the Spirit in between the times is to participate in the mission of God because it was created on the day of Pentecost to serve as the embodiment of the Holy Spirit for the accomplishing of the purpose of God (the mission of God) in this world (Peters 1984:199).

What the Spirit does is to convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8). The church, therefore, as the witness of Jesus who was full of the Holy Spirit and led by him (Lk 4:1) should convince the world of guilt with regard to sin, righteousness, and judgment by its words and deeds, filled with and led by the Spirit in order to restore the kingdom of God (Van Gelder 2007:38). In this sense, the church, which was given birth and is to be led by the Spirit to the last day to take part in the mission of God has a missional nature and embodies the mission of God in the world through its witnessing words and actions. Van Gelder (2007:41) says: “The presence of the Spirit and the Spirit’s teaching and leading the church give birth to a church that is missionary by nature. The Spirit-led church’s very existence in the world has to be understood in missionary terms. The church cannot help but participate in God’s mission in the world. This is part of what it means to be the church. To do less would be contrary to its nature.”

Since the missional church is being and doing in the transitional period of the kingdom, the doctrine about the church (missional ecclesiology) must be developmental and dynamic in nature based on the belief that the church is the work of the creating and inspiring Spirit of God and is moving toward God’s promised consummation of all things, thus it is eschatological (ed. Guder 1998:12). Wolters & Goheen (2007:194) describe three images of the Spirit from the Bible as follows:

- The Spirit as the first fruit - The first fruit is the sign of more fruits to bear in future.
- The Spirit as the deposit - The deposit is not a debt, but a down payment.



It contains promise and guarantee to pay more money in the future.

- The Spirit as the foretaste (Heb. 6:5)

These three images indicate the same character of the Spirit that he brings the salvation, which belongs to the eschatological kingdom of God, in the midst of history. Through the presence of the Spirit, who is the living foretaste of the kingdom (Newbigin 1995:65), the church can taste the achievement of the last day in advance. The kingdom of God is manifested to the world through the proclamation as well as through the social service and action of the church which has eschatological ecclesiology, as the community tasting the ruling of eschatological not-yet-come kingdom of God in advance through the already-come kingdom in the Holy Spirit (Padilla 2013:205). Newbigin (1980:19) says: “It is the community which has begun to taste (even only in foretaste) the reality of the kingdom which alone can provide the hermeneutic of the message. ... Without the hermeneutic of such a living community, the message of the kingdom can only become an ideology and a programme; it will not be a gospel.”

Christians and the church, as a community, striving to manifest the presence and characteristics of the divine reign as its sign and foretaste (ed. Guder 1998:101), should be the vehicle through which Christ preaches the good news of the kingdom because it is their daily lives that point to the reality of the kingdom (Skead 2009:79). The church should not be equated with the kingdom of God, but at the same time should not be separated from it (Padilla 2013:203-205). The church lives and proclaims the gospel here and now and is both a sign and promise of the kingdom. The coming kingdom is a present reality with the expectation of the future completion of God’s redemptive work, which can be visible in history through the mission of the church (Niemandt 2012:5). In this understanding, the church, as an eschatological community in its mission, participates in the mission of God by becoming an alternative community, to borrow Lohfink’s word “a divine contrast-society” (1984:157-162), living missionally against the world, being involved in the Spirit convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

As an eschatological alternative community, the impetus of the church’s self-



understanding and ministry is based on the fact that the last day is not only the Day of Judgment, but also the beginning of the new heavens and the new earth. The church lets the world come to repent as happened in Acts 2:37 and lets it not be perished but be blessed by God like Abraham, through Christ Jesus (Gen. 12:1-3; John 3:16) by declaring the world guilty because it refused to believe in Christ Jesus as its sovereign king (sin) and crucified the righteous due to its unrighteousness (righteousness) and by warning it that it would be condemned as the prince of this world already condemned (judgment) (John 16:9-11), and with which the church in the Spirit participates in the mission of God. The Bible, however, does not end with the Day of Judgment. As Wright (2010:44) says: “Beyond the purging fire of judgment and the destruction of all that is evil and opposed to God’s good purpose, there lies the new heavens and new earth, in which righteousness and peace will dwell, because God himself will dwell there with his redeemed people from every nation.”

As if the great flood destroyed not the whole world but the sinful and rebellious one by water (2 Pt 3:6-7), all the subduing and ruling ministries of the church over the earth to restore God’s good creation will remain in the new heavens and the new earth although they will be transfigured and transformed by their liberation from the curse after being purified by fire on the last day (Wolters & Goheen 2007:84-86). In the glory God gave the Son before the creation of the world (Jn 17:24) the church will actively join the reign of the new creation together with the Lord (Willard 2011: 565). This great future of the new creation generates biblical faith and hope to the church. It gives value and worth to all that the church does (Wright 2010:45) and with those the future of the church can be incorporated into the present life and the present one can be again incorporated into the future of the church (Willard 2011:562).

The church is, therefore, driven forward not only by the command of Christ Jesus, but also by the great hope of ruling together with the Lord in the new creation. The Holy Spirit provides the church, with his guidance and his power, to expect real change in lives and societies by teaching and reminding them of all the promising words of Christ Jesus (John 14:26). In this light, the church in the Holy Spirit participates in the mission of God by letting the world smell of the kingdom of God in advance (2 Cor 2:16) and be rescued from the dominion

of darkness and brought into kingdom of the Son God loves (Col 1:13) by living out Jesus' life as the eschatological alternative community.

The early churches as eschatological alternative communities, holding the great hope of the new heaven and the new earth, kept what they were (missional nature) and carried out what they were supposed to do in their daily lives with words and deeds even under severe persecutions. According to Bosch (1991:144), for the early Christians, salvation was not something that happens to isolated individuals. Although the early Christians also went to individuals and asked their existential resolution, they ultimately invited the individuals to move into the eschatological community of believers, which means the completion of the kingdom of God is given to the community of believers as a foretaste, or the church is a sign of the kingdom of God and the proleptic manifestation of God's reign both in what it is and what it does (Van Gelder 2000:99). For the early churches, salvation meant moving into the kingdom community here and now, leaving the world order.

Niemandt (2010a:3-7), based on the research of Bevans & Schroeder in 2004, describes the characteristics of the early church when it was challenged to discern how best to live the gospel in its day and in its way through the following seven stages of mission in Acts:

- Stage 1: Before Pentecost (Acts 1)

The disciples did not immediately start witnessing to Jesus in "Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth". After the ascension of Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:15). In Jerusalem, the church waited on God first to discern "What is God doing?" and "Where is the Spirit moving?" rather than questioning "What should we do?" under apostolic leadership (Ac 1:4-5).

- Stage 2: Pentecost (Acts 2-5)

The church reframed the old order, Judaism, in the light of the new community's experience of the resurrection of Jesus. God's covenants had been fulfilled in Jesus, and Christ continued to be present in the world through his word and the Holy Spirit dwelling in the church and in each member of it.

- Stage 3: Stephen (Acts 6-7)

When the church was expanding, it caused conflicts in its growing linguistic, cultural and social diversity (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:18). As to the conflicts, the church practiced reconciliation, but also used conflicts to enrich discussion, whereby it could prove its identity to the world.

- Stage 4: Samaria and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8)

In this stage, the church started covering the wider circle step by step from Jerusalem Jews to Samaritans and to a marginalised Gentile (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:22). The church crossed boundaries and welcomed the “Other”, the “Stranger”, the “Marginalised” in the community by means of hospitality because it speaks louder than words.

- Stage 5: Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:1-11:18)

“With the baptism of Cornelius and his household, a redefinition of the religion itself is in process” (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:25). The church went beyond the re-forming of Judaism and its world view and moved on to conversion, thereby posing a challenge and a viable alternative to a multicultural world and society.

- Stage 6: Antioch (Acts 11:19-26)

As the climax of Luke, in this stage, the church prepared the way for the first real encounter of the Christian faith with the pagan world (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:25). When encountered, the church willingly gave up its old identity to overcome all kinds of barriers limiting its proclamation of the gospel for the sake of God. “The early Christians did not remain culturally static, but quickly translated the gospel out of the original language and culture of Jesus, as the church was planted into non-Jewish cultures” (The Archbishop’s Council 2004:87), and as a result of it, they got a new self-understanding in dialogue called a prophetic dialogue.

- Stage 7: The mission to the Gentiles (Acts 12-28)

To carry out mission to the Gentiles, the church focused on its missional essence rather than a non-essential issue like circumcision though it was

central to Israel's identity as God's covenant people. The church listened to the sound of the old, understood the present, and discerned how to live that old way in a new day to keep being missional.

When the church as an eschatological alternative community encounters the world, it is under attack from Satan and its agents since between the times of already and not yet is the period that the satanic force and the healing and reforming works of the Holy Spirit coexist (Wolters & Goheen 2007:200). The (earthly) church on its pilgrimage will always be the church militant (*ecclesia militans*), always in opposition to ideologies and always under threat until it will meet and be united with the New Jerusalem, the (heavenly) triumphant church (*ecclesia triumphans*), in the air (1Th 4:17; Rev 21:2; Beale 2004:365-369). The Holy Spirit exposes and disarms the powers and authorities and empowers the church to keep on fighting in hope, with humbleness and compassion, like Jesus.

This kind of spiritual warfare may induce martyrdom like to Stephen in the early church. However, as Stephen's death led to Saul's conversion (Gospel Serve 2006:535) when Stephen as a man who tasted the kingdom in advance fell asleep crying out "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." as his Lord did on the cross (Lk 23:34), filled with humbleness and compassion to the end, the martyrdom would rather become the best way of witness to the Resurrection and the eschatological kingdom. The witness (*martyria*) of the church will entail the way of the cross, even to the point of martyrdom (Mt 10:16-33; 16:24-28) because the servant hood of Christ entails suffering for both individuals and for the community as expressed in the New Testament writings (WCC 2005:10). As Tertullian (Bindley 1890:82) said, indeed "Semen est sanguis Christianorum" (commonly translated into 'The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians').

The church is missional, for it is called to witness the kingdom of God by embodying the ministry of the Holy Spirit throughout its entire life between the first and second coming of Christ Jesus. The missional church lets the world return to God by proclaiming judgment with its words as well as by being foretastes of the life in the new heavens and the new earth with its deeds. The Holy Spirit makes the church to be an eschatological alternative community sticking to hope and living missionally to the point of being martyrs as the early

church did by reminding the church of all the promises that it would rule together with the Lord in the new heavens and the new earth.

### 2.3. Missional Ecclesiology in the biblical micro-narratives

Van Gelder (2000:106), borrowing a research result from Minear's book *Images of the Church in the New Testament*, says that there are ninety-six images and analogies about the church in the New Testament. Although most of them are not focusing on understanding the nature and mission of the church, this diversity of images reflects the truth that the church's nature, calling, and characteristics are multifaceted (Van Gelder 2000:107). It is obvious that the illustration regarding the mission of God and the church participating in it in the flow of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and New Creation (the great meta-narrative) does not completely and correctly reflect all the important aspects of the biblical narratives about the nature and mission of the church (Wolters & Goheen 2007:191-192).

Therefore, the micro-narratives in biblical images that narrate the nature and mission of the church need to be examined. Four frequently used core images namely the people of God, the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit (Creation of the Spirit) and the communion of Saints (*koinonia*) are chosen, for they illuminate the New Testament vision of the church in relation to the Triune God (WCC 2005:6).

#### 2.3.1. The people of God

*Ekklesia* is used for the popular assembly of the political community. The Septuagint used *ekklesia* to translate *qahal*, the assembly before of Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament people of the covenant, Israel (Lohfink 1984:77). The covenant made between Israel and God is noted in Exodus 19:5-6: "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." By the covenant-ratification ceremony of Moses (Ex 21:1-8), Israel was established as a nation of God (a political community) and given the Ten Commandments, which contains the perfect

summary of God's will, as the law to obey (Robertson 2004:190-191).

The covenant between God and Israel (the Mosaic covenant) was fulfilled in Christ Jesus who came not to abolish the law, but to fulfil it (Mt 5:17). Therefore, in the New Testament *ekklesia* is used for the nation of the spiritual Israel which obeys the law of God by being united with Christ Jesus, who accomplished the law, through faith in the Holy Spirit (Van Gelder 2000:108). Christ Jesus, as the new law giver, gave the laws for his nation to obey, saying "But I tell you" (Mt 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44) on a mountainside (Mt 5:1). Since the large crowds followed and gathered before Jesus on the mountainside were from all sections of the country: Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan (Mt 4:25), Jesus' law-giving signifies that he proclaimed "the new social order of the people of God before the whole of Israel, just as the social order of the old covenant was once proclaimed on the Mount Sinai" (Lohfink 1984:36).

This new social order is eminently political since the world, where it should be applied, is governed by politics and it challenges almost every traditional societal structure (Bentley 2009:45). The politics of Jesus was, however, "one of peace-making, of reconciliation, of justice, of refusing vengeance, and above all, of love of the enemy" (Bosch 1991:71). Of kingship Jesus said: "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place" (John 18:36). Lohfink (1984:55) says that "Jesus' kingdom is in this world. But it is not of this world, that is, it does not conform to the structures of this world." The sermon on the mountainside addressed neither the individual nor humanity in general. It was preached to the chosen people of God, Israel, or the circle of disciples which represented Israel (Lohfink 1984:38-39).

Since Jesus the king called and appointed his people to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and a city on a hill (Mt 5:13-14) to let the people of the world come and join his kingdom through his people's different political deeds, the church (*ekklesia*) is missional in its nature, and its mission should reflect the instruction on the mountainside which gets its binding force through an exemplary life, sufferings and gets its validity through the blood of Jesus shed on the cross (Bosch 1991:71). When Jesus said that my kingdom is not of this

world, this world is where divisions along racial or ethnic lines, institutionalised into national, political units, exist (Van Gelder 2000:108), and where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, and where violence and oppression from both the right and the left are escalating (Bosch 1991:11). In this world, the church, which is political by nature, involves the person and works of Jesus in its mission to demonstrate the righteousness of the kingdom of God which is surpassing the politics of the world (Mt 5:20). The mission of the church reflecting the person and works of Jesus in the world is as follows:

- The united diverse community

Jesus created a community that was able to overcome all the differences that could have separated them. Among his disciples, Simon who was called the Zealot, Levi the tax collector – to borrow Lohfink’s words (1984:11), “the most opposed forces that existed anywhere in Israel at the time” because the tax collectors collaborated with Romans, while the zealots intensely rejected them - and fishermen were together and united (Padilla 2013:162-163). The early Christian mission manifested its political nature in the new relationships formed around a different identity, one that transcends race, ethnicity, and nationalism. “Jew and Roman, Greek and barbarian, free and slave, rich and poor, woman and man accepted one another as brothers and sisters” (Bosch 1991:48).

The different identity is rooted in a reconciled relationship with God and one another through the blood of Christ Jesus who has made Jew and Gentile one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility (Eph. 2:14, WCC 2005:7). In this understanding, the church, as a new people of God, should not be driven into a community of homogeneity seeking efficient and effective ways to grow bigger in size. It, however, should be a community which shows today’s fragmented world how diverse persons can live in reconciled relationship with each other because they live in reconciled relationship with God by living visibly in the world as the newly created international people of God from every tribe and tongue (Rev 5:9-10; Van Gelder 2000:109).

- A non-violent community

Jesus clearly called for the renouncement of violence in Matthew 5:39-42: “But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek,



turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”

According to Lohfink (1984:50), what Jesus proclaimed is a “carefully planned four-part composition of sayings which build toward an anti-climax”, i.e., the worst evils range from an inordinate request and pressure to the threat of a lawsuit and naked violence. Through this anti-climax, Jesus strongly told his people not to answer violence with violence, but with overflowing goodness. According to Yoder (1994:47), Jesus had three chances to take violent rule throughout this public life just as Satan, the tempter, came three times to him in the desert (Mt 4:1-11): the first was after the feeding of the five thousand (Mt 14:13-21); the second was in the clearing of the temple (Mt 21:12-17). The third one was in a place called Gethsemane when Judas Iscariot came with a large crowd armed with swords and clubs to catch Jesus (Mt 26:47).

Against Peter’s use of a sword in legitimate defence, Jesus said to Peter: “Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword” (Mt 26:52). Jesus, then, went on to say: “Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?” To fulfil what the Scriptures say it must happen (redemption of the world), Jesus renounced the chance to overthrow the Romans soldiers by force (the crusade, the holy war) with twelve legions, which are about seventy two thousand, of angels fighting on the side of the agitated disciples (Yoder 1994:46). The teaching of Jesus was not confined to words, but it was verified by his death on the cross and secured by the genuine victory of the resurrection.

Throughout his arrest, trial, and execution, Jesus’ entire behaviour underlined his unyielding commitment to non-violence. While dying a slave’s and criminal’s death, Jesus turned in love and forgiveness to his enemies, thus living out an ethic that was completely contrary to the militant ideology of both oppressor and oppressed of the world (Bosch 1991:113). The church as the new people of Jesus is called to share this new political regime of his, which culminated in the cross and resurrection (Yoder 1994:32). There is, therefore,



no room for vengefulness and wrath in the community of Jesus (Bosch 1991:114). As Lohfink (1984:56) states that “It is not the violent structures of the powers of this world which are to rule within it, but rather reconciliation and brotherhood.” In this regard, the church should reject all kinds of aggressive and competitive evangelic activities, manipulations, and controls in order to obtain the highest number of conversions.

The people of God are living under the present pagan rule, which is like the imperial tyranny of Caesar. Caesar ruled the state by winning military victories and by putting up money for public works so that people would hail him as lord and entrust themselves to him as their saviour (Wright 2005: loc 1501-1502). The church as a community that hails Jesus as their sole saviour, who rules by love, stands against Caesar and his ruling with the unstoppable military might of Rome (politics). The church is inherently separate from the worldly order in its political nature and thus persecution is its natural result. The fight to be set apart seems to be impossible because the church can fight the world only with love. Therefore the church should risk its life by carrying its own cross (Mt 16:24-25), a cross which was the punishment of a man who threatens society by creating a new kind of community leading a radically new way of life, by the power of the Spirit, who is the empowering presence of the living God (Tennent 2010:411).

### 2.3.2. The body of Christ

The image of the body of Christ refers to the Christological dimension of the church and has deep pneumatological implications (WCC 2005:8). Jesus put to death the hostility between Gentiles and Jew, reconciling both of them to God in one body through the cross (Eph 2:16). This body is the body of Christ, which is the church, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way (Eph 1:23). Christ Jesus is appointed by God to be head over everything for the church (Eph. 1:22). Unity between Gentiles and Jews in the body of Christ is being created as a new humanity by the work of the Spirit (Eph. 2:15, 22). This new humanity functions as the body of Christ on the earth under Christ's headship through the on-going work of the Spirit who gives gifts, guides, and graces the church (Van Gelder 2000:110) in order to let all things, whether

things on earth or things in heaven, be reconciled to God, by making peace through the blood of Jesus, shed on the cross (Col 1:20). In this sense, the church as the body of Christ, which is created by the Holy Spirit to participate in the redemptive mission of God in the world, is of a missional genius and its mission should reflect its Christological and pneumatological dimensions.

The church, as carrying out its mission, is to be the community pursuing weaknesses following its head, Christ Jesus, for as Van Gelder (2007:90) points out: “All too frequently the church has sought to amass power at the centre in order to build and to maintain domain, as seen in both the established and corporate forms of the church. This domain is often more about serving the interests of the church than being the church for the sake of the world.” Jesus said in Matthew 10:16: “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” When Jesus said this, he described himself as sent into the world as the Lamb of God on the way of the cross he would walk. Elull (1967:11) commented on this Scripture as follows: “In the world everyone wants to be a “wolf”, and no one is called to play the part of a “sheep.” Yet the world cannot live without this living sacrifice. That is why it is essential that Christians should be very careful not to be “wolves” in the spiritual sense – that is, people who try to dominate others. Christians must accept domination of other people, and offer the daily sacrifice of their lives, which is united with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.”

As Elull said, the church is called and sent to be sheep in the midst of wolves. The only way for the sheep to live is to follow the shepherd (Kim 2015:35-36). To the church it means to follow the way of the cross, denying itself (Mt 16:24) is not an option, but a life given by its true nature. The church is called and sent to follow the way of the cross in its daily life (Kim 2015:36-37). To participate in God’s redemptive mission in the world is more about suffering service than privileged status as can be found from the role of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53-54 and the words of Jesus in Mark 10:45: “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Van Gelder 2007:90). The missional church is called to be where Jesus’ eyes are and struggles to embody his compassion on the harassed and helpless (the vulnerable and marginalised) people, who are like sheep without

a shepherd (Mt 9:36).

Thus, the missional church lives in a posture of vulnerability within the world to such an extent that this vulnerability often leads the church to the marginalised to mourn with those who mourn (Van Gelder 2007:90). Shifted to the margin, the missional church takes hardships for granted and even grows under the persecutions by a living missional life. The ministry of the missional church from the margins is claimed on a biblical basis that “God chose the poor, the foolish and the powerless (1 Cor 1:18-31) to further God’s mission of justice and peace so that life may flourish” (WCC 2013:52).

The Holy Spirit confers manifold gifts on each member of the church for the edifying of the body of Christ, which is the common good (1Cor 12:7). All members of Christ are given gifts for the building up of the body. According to Romans 12:4-5: “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others”, the church, as the body of Christ, which is a unit made up of many parts (1 Cor 12:12), is interdependent on all its parts in the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3). “Learning to become mutually interdependent in such a way that all persons and their gifts are honoured is an expression of being led by the Spirit” (1 Cor 12:14-26, Van Gelder 2007:44). In this sense, the church as the body of Christ understands its mission that it is to live as the new community in dynamic, gift-shaped interdependence rather than to use spiritual gifts (or talents) as means to run the church’s growing programmes more practically efficient.

### 2.3.3. The communion of the Saints

The term communion is a translation of *koinonia*, which refers to what is shared in common, and is better translated as fellowship (Van Gelder 2000:111). 1John 1:3 says: “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.” All the members of the church individually and publically enter into fellowship with God and with one another, in which they experience God and each other in reconciled relationships within the life and

love of God, through the death and resurrection of Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit (WCC 2005:9). The churches, in common, share one God the Father who chose and called them out of the world, one faith in one Lord, Christ Jesus (Eph. 4:5), and one baptism by one Spirit (Eph. 4:4).

What the church shares in common is expressed in breaking and sharing the bread of the Holy Communion (Sacrament) - a sacrament is a visible sign of God's promise of grace to believers (Sproul 1992:234) - in visible and tangible ways (WCC 2005:9). By breaking and sharing the bread together, the church is not "merely the sum of individual believers in communion with God, nor primarily the mutual communion of individual believers among themselves. It is their common partaking in the life of God (2Pt 1:4), who as Trinity is the source and focus of all communion. Thus the Church is both a divine and a human reality" (WCC 2005:5).

Through the Lord's Supper, believers' participation in the body of Christ and fellowship with God and other believers is renewed again and again (1Cor 10:16). Shin (2009:247-249) describes implications of the Lord's Supper as the essence of worship as follows:

- Consuming Jesus

Jesus said "eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood" (John 6:53). The early church understood what Jesus said in an actual way. For them, a service was the time to eat and drink real food and drink (John 6:55), which gives life, encourages hope of resurrection, and with which whoever eat and drink feels no longer thirsty and hungry (John 6:35). When worshipers of the early church met Jesus at the Lord's Supper they communed with him. By meeting them in his divine presence, they were brought into his human presence mystically, for his divine nature is never separated from his human nature (Sproul 1992:243), thus they became learned to know him and became united with him. Being united with Jesus led them to being united with God. Their eating and drinking before God, where they were consuming Jesus together became the fulfilment of the covenant meal on Mount Sinai where the seventy elders of Israel were eating and drinking before God (Ex 24:11).

- Being Jesus

After consuming Jesus, the believers (Saints) joined to be Jesus for others. Being Jesus has a twofold application with individual and communal dimensions. To an individual, it signifies a transformed life. The Apostle Paul speaks of this transformed life as being “in Christ” (2 Cor 5:17) and of Christ being in the believer, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (WCC 2005:9). United to Christ, the believer died on the cross and lived again as a new creation. For him as the new creation, his body is not his own, but Jesus’ (1 Cor 6:19-20). Jesus, therefore, is reborn and reincarnated through the body of the believers who are living a transformed life. 1 Corinthians 10:17 says: “Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.” Since individual believers eat the one loaf, they become united as a community giving expression to the body of Christ. In this sense, being Jesus should be conducted in the individual dimension as well as in the communal dimension.

- Living out Jesus

The reason for consuming and being Jesus is that the believers and the church to live out Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord’s Supper (Sacrament) is a nonverbal form of communication, thus it confirms the word of God to the world (Sproul 1992:233). The church is the communion of those who, by means of their encounter with the word, stand in a living relationship with God, who speaks to them and calls forth their trustful response toward the world (WCC 2005:4). With regard to this, the church lives out Jesus by “praying with and for one another and for the needs of the world; serving one another in love; participating in each other’s joys and sorrows; giving material aid; proclaiming and witnessing to the good news in mission and working together for justice and peace” (WCC 2005:9).

The very existence of the church as living out Jesus demonstrates to the world the truthfulness of the gospel of grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation (Van Gelder 2000:112). In this understanding, the church as the communion of the saints is called and sent to bear witness to the reconciled relationships with God and with each other to the world, thus it is missional in its existential character. The missional church carries out its mission by its Eucharistic life which is consuming, being, and living out Jesus Christ anywhere and

everywhere it is located following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who gives Christians courage to live their convictions, even in the face of persecution and martyrdom (WCC 2013:58).

#### 2.3.4. The creation of the Spirit / The temple of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 3:16 says: “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?” The relationship of the Spirit to the church is one of indwelling, of giving life from within (WCC 2005:8). The Holy Spirit so enlivens his temple, the church that it is and is to be a holy community. On the one hand, the church is already holy not because it is faultless, but because of the indwelling Spirit within it (1Cor 3:17). On the other hand, the church is to be holy because “the Spirit of life” has set it free from “the law of sin and death” (Rm. 8:2). The church is no longer subject to the demands of the flesh, but the members are to honour God with their bodies, the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19-20), by living in the Spirit and keeping in step with the Spirit (Gal 5:25). In this new way of life, the church is free to experience and express the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Van Gelder 2007:44).

The church, with this communal lifestyle seeking a different set of values in the world, is set aside by the Triune God in order to give an effective witness in the world by displaying contrasting values to those of the world: “sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like” (Gal 5:19-21), thus it is a missional community. The witnessing ministries of the church with its holiness do not depend only on God’s command: “Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy” (Lv 19:2) and church’s responsibility on it, but also on the transforming power of the Holy Spirit (Kim 2015:43).

Transforming power of the Holy Spirit has an effect on the organisational and institutional characteristics of the church to do its mission. The church is “God’s household”, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone (Eph 2:19). Believers grow into “a holy

temple in the Lord” by the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:21-22). Although the various organizational and institutional expressions of the visible church reflect the pattern of society within which the church develops (Van Gelder 2000:113), they are formed to display voluntariness and service, which are contrasting values to those of the world such as efficiency (productivity) and control. The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son in Luke 15 have a common point that the owner of the lost sheep and coin and the father of the lost son kept on ‘wasting’ their energy and time to find what they lost and also ‘wasted’ their resources more than they recovered for rejoicing together with their friends and neighbours. Given the fact that the church consists of the people who once were lost but are found by their master and father, it has to willingly participate in God’s redemptive mission to the needy and the lost in the world.

In the early church, the apostles appointed seven deacons (Ac 6:3: “seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and Wisdom”) for them to ‘serve’ the tables (their *diakonia*) while the apostles ‘served’ (their *diakonia*) with prayer and the word of God in the church (Ac 6:1-6). Their services were qualitatively the same, although the specific tasks and skills were different. Both were essential in the formation of the church, and there was no sense that one is more powerful or more spiritual than the other (Lee 2011:13-24). The organizational structure of the church, therefore, is not based on a hierarchy to control but on humility to serve (Phil 2:3). The church as the temple of the Spirit (1Cor 3:16-17) witnesses to the holy God through the Holy Spirit who is indwelling and empowering it by pursuing the above-mentioned organizational and institutional characteristics in a consumerist society, where optimisation of productivity and efficiency is strongly pursued.

#### **2.4. Scope by the *missio Dei* to the extremes on missional ecclesiology**

According to the preceding research, throughout the Bible the essence of the church is obviously mission and its mission is to participate in the mission of God in the world. Thus, missional ecclesiology has the scriptural warranty and is the biblical answer to the fundamental questions of ecclesiology: what is the



church and what is the church for? There have been, however, opposing understandings about missional ecclesiology. These different understandings lead to extreme attitudes towards the relationship between the church and mission. Given Guder's (1998:7-12) explanation regarding the emergence of missional ecclesiology that it is the encounter of the concept of *missio Dei* with the churches in the postmodern culture, a different understanding of the *missio Dei* is to be preceded in order to address extreme views on missional ecclesiology and set its scope.

#### 2.4.1. A different understanding of *missio Dei*

According to Bosch (1991:389), it is the concept of *missio Dei* that brought the most decisive shift toward understanding mission during the past half century. It is generally accepted that the concept of *missio Dei* was first advocated by Karl Barth who gave a paper at the Brandenburg Mission Conference held in 1932 insisting that mission is not primarily the work of the church, but of God himself (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:290). After the first World War, as Western civilisation and church-centric mission, based on the belief that the golden age of the millennial kingdom should be built through the reason of mankind, were thoroughly shaken (Bosch 1991:363), Barth could lay the theological groundwork for *missio Dei* by restoring the original position of the Triune God in mission, fighting 'Anthropozentrismus' (anthropocentrism) in those days' missions (Ahn 2004:337). He, indeed, was the first clear exponent of a new theological paradigm which broke radically with an Enlightenment approach to theology (Bosch 1991:399).

In the International Missionary Council (IMC) conference held at Willingen in 1952 under post second World War conditions, the term *missio Dei* was first articulated by Karl Hartenstein (Chung 2007:192-194). Hartenstein, affected by Barth, shifted the basis of mission from ecclesiology and soteriology to the doctrine of the Trinity (Bosch 1991:389-390). As can be found in his explanation about the *missio Dei*: "Mission is not just the conversion of the individuals, nor just obedience to the word of the Lord, nor just the obligation to gather the church. It is the taking part in the sending of the Son, the *missio Dei*, with the holistic aim of establishing Christ's rule over all redeemed creation"



(Engelsviken 2009:482).

Hartenstein (1952:62) clearly described the only source of mission as the Trinitarian God himself, and the goal of it as sending the Son for reconciliation of all things by the power of the Spirit. He did not deny the goal of mission as conversion of the individual, obedience to a divine word, and an obligation to gather the church, but emphasised the Trinitarian foundation and the universal redemptive purpose of mission (Engelsviken 2009:482). Wright (2006:62-63), quoting Hoedemaker's word, says that "Barth and Hartenstein want to make clear that mission is grounded in an intratrinitarian movement of God Himself and that it expresses the power of God over history, to which the only appropriate response is obedience." Kim (2001:136) evaluated Hartenstein's original concept of *missio Dei* to have both eschatological and redemptive historical perspectives. From an eschatological understanding, mission is more than activities for traditional proselytism and church planting. It is rather more comprehensive and with holistic activities in order to show the sovereign rule of God in a corrupt world. From a redemptive historical understanding, mission is understood as the working out of God's historical redemptive plan.

Rosin (1972:5) remarked on the Willingen IMC that the biggest fruit of it was to clarify the fact that mission is based on the Trinitarian God. The church is no longer the subject of mission, but the instrument of a missionary God. Bosch (1991:399) supplemented it by saying that "Willingen recognized a close relationship between the *missio Dei* and mission as solidarity with the incarnate and crucified Christ." In attempting to flesh out the concept of *missio Dei*, the following could be said (Bosch 1991:400):

- In the new concept mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God, thus it is not the church that has a redemptive mission to fulfil in the world.
- It is the mission of the Son and the Spirit by the Father that includes the church. Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world.
- The church is viewed as a tool for *missio Dei*. There is church because there is mission, not vice versa. To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, because God is a

fountain of sending love.

Subsequent decades, however, both broadened and deepened the concept, which was surrounded by a period of confusion in the 1960s. Theologians diverged in their emphasis on the eschatological and redemptive historical perspectives of the original concept of *missio Dei*, which has brought diverse answers whether the church has a privileged position within the *missio Dei* and whether God's missionary purposes are specifically salvific, or whether his creational (and thereafter sustaining) purposes can be considered part of his *missio* (Ducker 2008:1-2). Engelsing (2009:483) points out that the differences in the understanding of *missio Dei* correspond with the differences in the understanding of the kingdom of God as the rule of God. According to Engelsing (2009:483-484), the two major concepts of the kingdom of God can briefly be sorted into: The present and final salvation that God offers in Christ (sometimes including ethical and social transformation); and the reign of God over the whole of creation (sometimes including redemption). In the former understanding, the kingdom:

- is restricted to salvation history.
- is the realm where salvation is found, through faith in Christ and participation in his church.
- is primarily a future eschatological reality, to be equated with eternal life, in a new perfect creation.
- is experienced as a foretaste of life to come in this life.
- does not deny that God is the ruler of all the world, but sees this in terms of creation and preservation rather than in terms of the kingdom of God.
- does not exclude the ethical or present aspects of the kingdom, but it emphasises that it is through the church and its mission that the peace and justice of the kingdom are worked out.

Thus, the church as the people belonging to the kingdom is God's main instrument to serve the world in all its need, both through personal service and through social and political action (*diakonia*).

In the latter understanding, the kingdom may be seen as:

- universal, relatively independent of the church, primarily ethical (i.e. the realization of the will of God in the world).
- an object of faith and hope in the present.
- something to be fully empirically realised in this world only in the future.
- Its growth includes all of history and its realisation is often seen as taking place primarily in the social and political realm.

Thus, the church is a witness to or a participant in the realisation of the kingdom, although it is not the primary or sole actor.

Since Georg Vicedom popularised the phrase *missio Dei* after Hartenstein's post-conference report by publishing an influential book of the same name in 1958, in which he mainly described the *missio Dei* in redemptive historical perspective, i.e. the former understanding of the kingdom, some theologians agreed with him and developed his understanding. Vicedom understood the *missio Dei* as *Inbegriff* (epitome) that shows God's creation and activities and the history of God's mission as *Heilsgeschichte* (the history of salvation) (Ahn 2004:340). To fulfil the history of God's mission, God the Father sends God the Son who sends God the Holy Spirit; all three send forth the church to carry out his work to the ends of the earth, to all nations, and to the end of time. The sending of the Trinitarian God, therefore, continues through the church in the world (Vicedom 1965:8). Vicedom argued that the purpose of the mission is salvation that includes both the vertical dimension of communion with God and the horizontal dimension of human relationships (Engelsviken 2009:485).

Vicedom, however, also opened up an understanding of *missio Dei* that is not confined to this combination of the Trinitarian perspective and the redemptive purpose (Engelsviken 2009:483). God in his mission restores his rule (the kingdom of God) which is the sphere of life where God's Spirit is in control, where justice peace and joy are experienced completely and permanently (Rm 14:17), where it is free from the reign of all those forces which enslave humanity (ed. Kirk 1999:29). This is, however, not divorced from the church, since the mission of the church is a response to the *missio Dei*. Both the church and the mission of the church are tools of God, instruments through which God

carries out his mission (Vicedom 1965:6). The church is a community in response to the *missio Dei*, bearing witness to God's activity in the world by its communication of the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed (ed. Kirk 1999:31). In this regard, although the church is certainly not the only agent or arena of God's mission, it cannot be seen as just one of several arenas where God is at work, but has a more privileged and special position or status within the *missio Dei* (Ducker 2008:5).

On the contrary, a Dutch theologian J.C. Hoekendijk had an eschatological perspective on the *missio Dei* and the latter understanding of the kingdom. He, through his own writings as well as his influence on others, was mainly responsible for the change of understanding of the *missio Dei* that happened during the 1960s (Engelsviken 2009:487). Hoekendijk (1967:19-20) regarded the purpose of mission as establishing 'Shalom'. In his use of terminology, 'Shalom' was more than the salvation of souls. It should rather be understood as social events among and along with people such as peace, integrity, community, harmony, and justice. He says that "This concept in all its comprehensive richness should be our leitmotif in Christian work. God intends the redemption of the whole of creation." (Hoekendijk 1967:19-20). Scherer (1987:113) says, "For Hoekendijk, it appeared, *missio Dei* had become identified with a process of historical transformation whereby humankind would gradually achieve the goals of the messianic kingdom through the processes of secular history."

Hoekendijk thought that the church could participate in the kingdom of God by building the Shalom in the world, and for this reason, the church existed. Through his understanding about Shalom, it can be clear that he emphasised the mission of God in terms of an eschatological perspective especially the present eschatological perspective (Ahn 2004:340). In the present eschatological understanding of the *missio Dei*, Hoekendijk (1952:324-336) insisted that the church can never be the subject of the mission of God because it is too deep and wide to measure, and that the church has no need of the mission of God. Shivute (1980:194) evaluates Hoekendijk's theology as a "Non-church theology". Hoekendijk pointed out that the church has to come out from its churchism and be opened to mobile groups, secularised, and fully

identified with the people in the world.

According to Hoekendijk, the mission of God is not a mission which starts from the church as a community called by God, but starts from the world to which the church was sent, and at this point, the traditional premise, the order of “God–the church-the world”, changed into “God-the world-the church” (WCC 1967:16-17). As Berentsen points out, “In the 1960s *missio Dei* becomes a comprehensive term for God’s work in general, where God’s redemptive work is seen as integrated in his creative work and his preserving work in the historical process.” (Engelsviken 2009:489). Hoekendijk’s understanding of the mission of God has significance in terms of reforming the attitude of the church toward mission (preventing church’s institutionalisation and self-centeredness), awakening the responsibility of the church toward the world (overcoming the dualism between secular and sacred), and broadening the concept of mission (prophetic and apostolic ministries for the world) (Ahn 2004:344-345).

Hoekendijk used the same term *missio Dei*, but deviated from the Trinitarian concept and saw the redemptive *missio Dei* as emphasising only the sending of God the Father, who is revealing himself in the world, who is not separated from the world, while Vicedom emphasised the sending of God the Son and the church (Ahn 2004:339). This narrow theocentric view which is out of step with a Christocentric or ecclesiocentric view is in danger of pluralism and relativism. It is because it sees non-Christian religions as great religious traditions of the world which are to be seen as legitimate divine revelations and as ways to salvation as part of the mission of God (Engelsviken 2009:493-494). There have been many groups of people who agree with Hoekendijk’s understanding of the *missio Dei*, which later on became the view of the WCC on the relationship between the church and mission (Ahn 2004:342).

The Uppsala WCC in 1968 interpreted Hoekendijk’s understanding of Shalom as ‘humanisation’. In this interpretation, the primary assignment of mission is to overcome all kinds of dehumanising phenomena, to humanise human being to be like Jesus Christ as a genuine model of humanisation (Goodall 1968:27-29). Scherer (eds. Van Engen & Gilliland & Pierson 1993:85) refers to those theologians in Europe and the US who worked on the WCC project, “The Missionary Structure of the Congregation” before Uppsala 1968. “Theirs was

a fundamentally different and non-Trinitarian understanding of *missio Dei* influenced strongly by the contemporary secularisation of theology.” The WCC assemblies held in Nairobi in 1975, in Vancouver in 1983 and in Seoul in 1990 set forth its vision for mission as “a Just, Participatory, Sustainable Society” (JPSS), “Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation” (JPIC) respectively (Lee 1999:333).

The 1991 General Assembly of the WCC in Canberra took as its theme “Come Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation.” Under this theme, the urgent need of preservation of the integrity of creation and the Holy Spirit who renews and liberates the whole creation including the natural world as well as humanity from all kinds of threats such as poverty, nuclear weapons, and the ecological collapse that threaten the life of all creation became highlighted (Cho 2004:32). As a result of this, the *missio Dei* was seen to propose a comprehensive missionary agenda, and thereafter mission theologians have had a tendency to expand the concept of mission to include almost everything “the church is supposed to do, or even more, what God is doing, particularly with regard to the contemporary world and its many needs” (Engelsviken 2009:484-485). This tendency is a theologically imperialistic way and, though the Holy Spirit was invoked in the assemblies, there has been no impetus to carry out the comprehensive missionary agenda since to them pneumatology is irrelevant to soteriology and ecclesiology.

About the *missio Dei* as Shalom in the 1960s and thereafter, Bosch (1991:401) remarked that “By introducing the phrase, Hartenstein had hoped to protect mission against secularisation and horizontalisation, and to reserve it exclusively for God. This did not happen.” The *missio Dei* has been unfolded in a different way from the intentions of the ones who first used term (Bosch 1991:392). Scherer (1987:55) criticised “Hoekendijk’s reflections that went far beyond the challenge to church parochialism and self-sufficiency; they implied a quite new, unhistorical, and methodologically unclear model for Christian mission.” Hoekendijk and other scholars in the same circle saw the world as the primary focus of God’s mission to the extent of exclusion of the church (Ducker 2008:3). In their view, the concept of *missio Dei* became seriously weakened by the idea that it referred simply to God’s involvement with the

whole historical process, not to any specific work of the church. “The affirmation that mission was God’s came to mean that it was not ours. Such distorted theology virtually excluded evangelism” (Wright 2006:63). Their view and work were labelled “worldly theology”, and quite rightly therefore came under sustained criticism.

Hoekendijk and his followers’ understanding of *missio Dei* has brought the following side effects (Ahn 2004:345-352):

- Biased conception of Shalom: An overemphasis on social and political meanings of Shalom without reconciliation with God first. The result of Shalom is overly emphasised while the root of it is neglected. Shalom should include not merely temporal wellbeing but also eternal salvation, the resurrection of the dead.
- Weakening of the church: Emphasis on abolition of dualism and full identification with the world, being secularised have confused the identity of the church although it was instituted for serving the world. The church is supposed to serve the world as salt and light within it, thus serving cannot be properly carried out without firm identity. Emphasis on other institutions and agents instead of the church, through which God works for his kingdom, has caused weakening of motivation of the church to participate in the mission of God. It, as well, denies God’s special calling of Israel and the church to complete salvation history. Bosch (1991:485) says, “Hoekendijk’s tendency to regard church offices merely as functional and therefore, in the final analysis, as contingent leads us nowhere.”
- The possibility of confusion about God’s activity: It is caused by fully identifying secular history with redemptive history. Although it may encourage social participations, it, as well, may induce an unexpected alteration of understandings such as social liberation as salvation of Christianity and political struggles as mission works. Fighting social and structural evils cannot be equated with the mission of God since there have been many activities seeking peace, but produced more no peace. Bosch (1991:396-397) says, “Even if secular history and the history of



salvation are inseparable they are not identical, and the building of the world does not directly lead to the reign of God.”

- Weakening of classical gospel propagating mission of the church caused by placing emphasis only on social salvation while ignoring individual salvation.

#### 2.4.2. Two extreme views on missional ecclesiology and setting up the Scope

After the Willingen IMC, Newbigin, who worked for the IMC as the last secretary in 1959 and as the first director after the IMC was incorporated in the WCC in 1961, developed the concept of *missio Dei* in the sense that mission and unity belong together (Kim 1999:48). Newbigin was born in Scotland in 1909, and worked as a missionary in Madurai of South India from 1947 to 1959 (Kim 1999:48). When he came back from India, he was shocked that he found England had turned from a sending country to a mission field. He started research on the Western church from a new perspective, and insisted on spreading a holistic gospel to the world. In his understanding, the church, marginalised by the Post-Christendom of the postmodern world, should live out its faith in the community through word and deed and in its very being in order to witness to and give the pluralistic and broken world a foretaste of the coming reign of God (WCC 2013:64).

North America, under the influence of Newbigin, began to recognise that they are a mission field in the post-Christendom of the postmodern era, where Christianity is no longer the mainstream religion in the West and where existing authorities, including absolute truth, were denied and lost its power (Guder 2000:xi). Scholars such as Hunsberger, Guder, Roxburgh, and Van Gelder initiated a ministry called the Gospel and Our Culture Network (GOCN) in the late 1980s (Lee 2012:52). They started analysing the reasons and processes why and how the church had lost its missionary essence, which they found to be permeated with individualism and commercialism (Roxburgh & Borren 2009:9). In the process of the analysis, they realised that it was time for the church to recover its identity as shaped by the Trinitarian God. They tried to set a direction to go by, likening the situation of the Western church of today to

that of the early church (Skead 2009:36) and began to introduce the concept of the *missio Dei* to the churches in the USA as the mission field, in order to regain the dynamic missional life of the early church and its characteristics (Lee 2014:85-86).

As missional ecclesiology flourished through missional conversations among mission theologians (Choi 2011:246), the scholars who belonged to the GOCN coined a new term, “missional church”, for the churches in the North America (ed. Guder 1998:3). All scholars who belonged to the missional church movement insisted on a new perspective on the church from “a sending church” of the traditional view to “a sent church”. Frost and Hirsch (2013:34) say: “The missional church, then, is a sent church. It is a going church, a movement of God through his people, sent to bring healing to a broken world. North America is as much a mission field as any other nation or people group on the face of the earth.”

As missional ecclesiology is applied to the emerging context (postmodern and post-Christendom), there have been formed, affected by a different understanding of the concept of *missio Dei*, three different groups of emerging missional churches (Belcher 2009: loc 441-446):

- “Relevants” are taking the same gospel in the historic form of the church but seeking to make it understandable to the emerging context.
- “Reconstructionists” are taking the same gospel but questioning and reconstructing much of the form of the church.
- “Revisionists” are questioning and revising the gospel and the church.

With the theological and ministerial influences of the US church and the WCC membership churches in Korea, missional ecclesiology has been introduced to the Korean church since the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Since the introduction of missional ecclesiology, two extreme views on it formed within the Korean church (Lee 2012:54). The two extreme views are grounded on different understandings of the *missio Dei*. One argues that missional ecclesiology is a harmful thought undermining the church, while the other insists that it is the only way for the church to tackle the problem it is grappling with and survive

the crises it is confronting.

The first extreme view contributed to the split in the largest denomination in Korea, the General Assembly of Presbyterian Church (hereafter the Korea Presbyterian Church), into two denominations: the General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches in Korea (hereafter Hapdong) and the Presbyterian Church of Korea (hereafter Tonghap). The Korea Presbyterian Church was divided in 1959 due to the issue of joining the WCC. In the process of dealing with the issue, one group opposed joining the WCC, warning that the concept of *missio Dei* of the WCC would lead the church to theological liberalism and anarchy, while the other group consented to it by emphasising the unity of the church rather than threat of its liberal theology (Park 2004b:988-995). Since the merger of the IMC into the WCC in 1961 (Van Gelder 2000:34) and the WCC inspired by Hoekendijk's missiology came to the fore (Engelsviken 2009:488), several endeavours for reunion has foundered (Park 2004b:995-999). This separation has lasted so far, and the Hapdong, the one opposed, which has become the largest denomination since the separation, leads public opinion to be strongly negative over missional ecclesiology (Park 2005).

The second extreme view focuses on the work of God outside the church, *extra muros ecclesiae* with the influence of Hoekendijk's understanding of *missio Dei* (Engelsviken 2009:489). Since the goal of *missio Dei* is to establish shalom in the world, the church discerns what God is doing in the world and where God is seen as active in the secular political and social events of the world, and then takes part in it. For this, the church is called to be "agents of God's mission in the world to identify the signs of God's presence, affirming them and promoting them by witnessing to and cooperating with all people of good will, and to be co-workers with God for the transfiguring of the whole of creation. Thus the goal of mission is a reconciled humanity and renewed creation" (Engelsviken 2009:492).

This view has a tendency to ignore the visible church and to see the classical church as a symbol of corruption (Ahn 2004:348). It refuses institutional forms of the church and questions the doctrines according to the contexts where the church is sent (Belcher 2009: loc 455-469). There emerged a group of people called "Canaan Saints", which is coined in Korean to say 'not going' backward.

Like their name, this group of people are disappointed with the existing churches and no longer attend the church (Yang 2014:30-44). They communicate online and irregularly gather and worship together at a café, library, even places of assembly for social justice, crying out “faith outside the church”. Canaan Saints refuse any order and structure of leadership of the existing churches, questioning forms of service and compromising evangelical doctrines according to the social and political issues they are fighting for such as homosexual rights and legislation protecting the rights of non-regular employees (Yang 2014:57-59) This becomes a trend and counter-movement to dismantle and revise the existing churches, as the Korean church fails to build shalom in the world.

This research disagrees with both extreme views on missional ecclesiology. It is an inappropriate attitude that brands missional ecclesiology as a non-church liberal theology based on Hoekendijk’s understanding of *missio Dei* and its influence on the WCC. According to the 10th WCC held in Busan in 2013, the WCC found a balance in its interpretation of the concept of *missio Dei*. In accordance with the WCC (2013:8-13), the relationship between mission and the church based on the *missio Dei* is as follows:

The Christian understanding of the church and its mission is rooted in the vision of God’s great design for all creation: The “kingdom” which was both promised by and manifested in Jesus Christ. According to the Bible, man and woman were created in God’s image... At the heart of the Church’s vocation in the world is the proclamation of the kingdom of God inaugurated in Jesus the Lord, crucified and risen... As a divinely established communion, the Church belongs to God and does not exist for itself. It is by its very nature missionary, called and sent to witness in its own life to that communion which God intends for all humanity and for all creation in the kingdom.

Denying the institutional church itself for its drawbacks is immoderate. As Bosch (1991:395) puts it, “even Hoekendijk, who throughout his entire life relentlessly castigated the church and argued that there was no room for an ‘ecclesiology’, found it impossible to turn his back on it.” It is certain that no organism can exist without form, structure and organisation (Peters 1984:204-

205). It is not arbitrary but shaped by the work of the Spirit that the church has organisational dimensions, though influenced by cultural and historical contexts. Since created by the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the church quickly began to develop an organisational life. This organisational life was taking on institutional characteristics by the end of the first century. In this sense, “the visible church’s taking on an institutional identity is a natural development, one the Bible anticipates and legitimizes” (Van Gelder 2000:158). The church is to organise itself to represent God’s authority at where it is located while avoiding institutionalisation, which is the process whereby particular organizational characteristics become legitimised as official forms and normative practices (ed. Smelser 1988:125-126).

With regard to setting the scope, this research is built on the Trinitarian understanding of the *missio Dei*, for the maintenance and restoration of the kingdom of God through the church, following in the footsteps of Barth, Hartenstein and Vicedom. As the mission of the Triune God, it must contain the work of each of the three persons in mission, maintaining the attribute of each without excluding the others (Engelsviken 2009:492). Evangelical missiologists, at the Iguassu Missiological Consultation held in Brazil in October 1999, clarified the direct connection of the *missio Dei* with the redemptive work of Christ as follows: “Our missiology centres on the overarching biblical theme of God’s creation of the world, the Father’s redeeming love for fallen humanity as revealed in the incarnation, substitutionary death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and ultimately of the redemption and renewal of the whole creation” (ed. Taylor 2000:17).

The person and work of the Holy Spirit is, as well, emphasised and seen as “the agent of mission” and “source of power”, leading the church into all truth and calling the believers to holiness and integrity (ed. Taylor 2000:17-18). The mission of the church is indispensable and inseparable from its role in the mission of God through the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit in order to restore the kingdom of the God. The preceding scriptural research on missional ecclesiology underscores this stance. In this understanding, missional ecclesiology in this research is a biblical church reforming discipline for ‘being the church’ by restoring and practicing the church’s nature and

mission on the basis of the Trinitarian and salvation historical *missio Dei*, with a balanced eschatological, understanding of the concept of *missio Dei*.

## 2.5. Conclusion

It has been observed thus far that the understanding of missional ecclesiology is about the nature and mission of the church based upon the Bible. The Bible narrates the essence and mission of the church in both the macro and micro views as follows.

From the Bible's grand meta-narrative:

- Creation - The Trinitarian God created the whole universe and started his mission to build the kingdom of God where all his creatures glorify and enjoy him forever. The sovereign God decided to entrust the first man (Adam) with ruling the created world according to the laws of creation (the good design of God). This delegation was fulfilled by the second man (Jesus) and inherited by the church through Jesus. The nature of the church, therefore, originates from God's missional nature and the church, in its mission, has to reflect the following of God's attributes to rule: The social relationships (created in relationship); Ruling by naming (loving care) and serving, which are embodied in the world as genuine fellowships and safeguarding the integrity of God's creation, fighting all kinds of injustice and unrighteousness.
- Fall - Despite man's rebellion, God never ceased his mission, and faithfully works through his people, from Abraham to the spiritual offspring of Abraham (the church), to restore his primary design of creation distorted and twisted by sin. The church as the community that found peace with God is called to take part in the mission of God by discerning God's original good design from the present fallen realities in the world and unmasking and confronting the principalities which aggravate evils through the eye-opening guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Redemption - In Christ Jesus, the cultural mandate and the Great Commission become harmonised. To enter and restore the kingdom of

God, reconciliation with God by repentance and faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus, for which the propagation of the kingdom gospel that encompassing the whole fallen world to be reconciled with God through the redemptive reign of God in Christ are indispensable and must precede the cultural mandate. The church as the disciple community has to focus on making the mission of God known to the world by bearing witness and inviting people in the world to become reconciled to the living and true God with an incarnational life as Jesus did wherever it is sent.

- New Creation - The church is called, between the first and second coming of Jesus, to witness to the kingdom of God by proclaiming the final judgement with its words as well as by being foretastes of the coming New Jerusalem with its practices. To faithfully carry out this existential mission to the end, under the leading and supervision of the Holy Spirit, the church becomes an eschatological alternative community living by the hope of ruling together with the Lord forever, even to the extent of being martyrs as Stephen did in the early church.

From the Bible's micro-narratives:

- The people of God - The church is called and appointed to be a political community obeying the law of God to represent the kingdom of God, which is different from the worldly kingdom where divisions exist and violence and oppression intensify. The church as a political community by nature lets the people of the world come and join God's kingdom by being an united although diverse community and a non-violent community.
- The Body of Christ - The church seeks to be a community pursuing weakness, following its head, Christ Jesus, who took the initiative of the way of the cross. It marginalised itself to be with the physically and spiritually marginalised people in order to demonstrate the compassion of the Lord upon them in the world.
- The Communion of the Saints - The church is called and sent to give witness to the world by the fellowship it is enjoying with God and each



member in a relationship reconciled through the death and resurrection of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. The fellowship of the church with God and with one another are visualised in the world by its Eucharistic life summed up as unity with its Lord, Jesus Christ, in order to let the world join and enjoy the reconciled relationship.

- The creation of the Spirit / The temple of the Holy Spirit - The church is called to be separated from the world since it is holy/ dedicated to God through the Holy Spirit dwelling within it, and to live holy as the community set free from the law of sin and death by the power of the Spirit. As the holy community, the church witnesses to the kingdom of God in its mission even through its organisational characteristics such as voluntariness and service, which are contrasting values to those of the world with its efficiency (productivity) and control.

The Bible consistently teaches that the way of being church is to know and practice a missional ecclesiology, which is the nature of the church to participate in the mission of God. In spite of the scriptural foundation of missional ecclesiology, there have been attempts, in the Korean church, to categorically refuse missional ecclesiology as well as to apply it in the extreme direction, not like the original intention of the concept of the *missio Dei*. They ignore the privileged position of the church as an instrument of the mission of God because of their different understanding of the root of missional ecclesiology, namely the concept of the *missio Dei*. The original concept of the *missio Dei* is the mission in which God intends to restore his good creation by sending the church, which is reconciled with him through the redemptive ministry of Jesus and is playing the role of his witness to the world through the guidance and empowerment of the Holy spirit, in which the Triune God becomes subject and the church becomes his instrument.

This corresponds with the biblical narration about the essence and mission of the church. Missional ecclesiology, therefore, is a biblical way of being church not to deform the church and its mission formed by the mission of God, but to reform them (Van Gelder 2007:40-41), based on the concept of “*ecclesia semper reformanda debet*”, that is, the church always needs reformation. (Tennent 2010:433). In the next chapter, the history of the Korean church will

be analysed and assessed in terms of missional ecclesiology in order to find the way forward for the Korean church in crisis in the sense that the restoration of missional ecclesiology is the way of being church.

### **3. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE KOREAN CHURCH**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

In the previous chapter, missional ecclesiology was explained by investigating the nature and mission of the church throughout the Bible as the scriptural way for the church to be the church. With this scriptural foundation, this chapter asks whether the early Korean church could be described as a 'missional church' and whether the Korean church was influenced by the mega-church phenomenon to lose its missional understanding of the essence and mission of the church. To this purpose historical analysis and deconstruction could assist the research in determining the system story, in other words, why certain developments took place (Hirsch 2006:50-54). Some significant historical events related to the nature and mission of the church will be selected in chronological order to guide and determine the analysis and assessment of the understandings of missional ecclesiology that the early Korean church knew and practised and how and why the Korean church has lost its missional ethos and praxis.

Although the Korean church has had a short history compared to the Western church, it has experienced a variety of events passing through the Japanese colonial era, the Korean War, military regimes and dramatic economic growth (industrialisation), etc. It is a risk to explain the history of the Korean church only through the lens of missional ecclesiology, due to possible reductionism. However, this research tries to shed new light on the history of the Korean church which has been described from other perspectives, and will address how the Korean church's understanding about its nature and mission has been changed by dividing the 130 years of its history into three different stages according to political and economic changes as well as different modes of mission of the church as follows (Choi 2015:29):

- The Apostolic and Post-Apostolic mode (1879-1945)
- The Advance and Triumph of the Pseudo-Christendom mode (1945-

2000)

- The Missional mode (Past 20+ years)

### **3.2. The Apostolic and Post-Apostolic mode (1879-1945)**

The early church had the apostolic attribute of the church, which is “being sent by God to the world to participate in God’s mission” (Van Gelder 2000:55). As the church was established in Jerusalem for the first time by the Holy Spirit sent from God the Father and the Son and as God’s redemptive mission was spreading through the church sent to the world, the early Korean church was, as well, established by the mission of the Triune God and sent to present and restore the kingdom of God in Korea. Their witness to Jesus often resulted in persecutions as well as martyrdoms under the rule of Korean government which served Confucianism as the national religion and the iron-fisted reign of Japan for 36 years, but it also led to the spread of the faith and to the establishment of the churches in every corner of Korean soil. The emergence of local churches which received the gospel and spread it where they were was a characteristic of the early Korean church (Lee 2014:78). The mission of the Korean church in the apostolic and post-apostolic mode will be observed in the following two periods:

- Initial stage (1879-1903)

There has been a dispute on the starting point of the Korean church (Oak 2013: xv-xvi). The receptive historical perspective, also known as the missionary perspective, placed the starting point in 1884 when the first Western missionary arrived in Korea. The national church perspective counts it from 1879 when four Korean men were baptised to form the first Korean faith community in Manchuria, the north-eastern part of China sharing the border with Korea (Oak 2013:7). The approximate end of this period could be placed at the start of the revival movement which began in Wŏnsan<sup>2</sup> in 1903 (Choi

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<sup>2</sup> Korean words in the text are rendered using the McCune-Reischauer system. Korean names follow the standard order – family name first – unless a particular name is traditionally rendered in Western

2015:25-26). The characteristics of this period is the spontaneous formation of the church by local evangelists who voluntarily participated in the mission of God; the development of the church by indigenous, holistic and kingdom-oriented united mission of the early Western missionaries.

- The revival movement and the Japanese colonial period (1903-1945)

This period lasts from 1903 to 1945 when Korea were under Japanese rule (Choi 2015:25-26) and is characterised by the revival movement with prominent manifestation of the Holy Spirit; the explosive growth of the church which was connected to their leading influence on the reformation of the Korean society (enlightenment by education) by being together and sharing the pain of the national tragedy of the Korean people as the church sent to the world with martyrdom and the church as an alternative hope community (Kim 2015:91).

To display that the Korean church in general was in the apostolic and post-apostolic mode, statistical references such as the number of churches and members of the Presbyterian and Methodist denominations during the period will be presented. The Presbyterian and Methodist Churches have been part of the five mainstream churches in Korea since the very inception of the Korean church history. They were the only denominations which carried out missionary work in Korea during the late 19th century, until The Korea Baptist Convention, Korea Evangelical Holiness Church and The Assemblies of God of Korea were established in 1906, 1907 and 1933 respectively.

### 3.2.1. Initial stage (1879-1910)

#### 3.2.1.1. Circumstances of Korea

##### **(i) Receptive circumstances toward the gospel**

Korea's once strict policy of seclusion gave them the name of the "hermit nation". It, however, could not long remain a hermit nation (Griffis 1885:10) and

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order.

became the arena of the struggle among the world powers, especially the neighbouring countries, China, Japan and Russia, since Korea was forced to conclude the Japan-Korea Treaty of Amity and Commerce (also known as the Treaty of Ganghwa Island) on 27 February, 1876 (Hong 2008:76). The Korean government failed to cope properly with this radically changing world situation. Politicians were in conflict and were separated into *Gaehwapa* (a radical reformist party) and *Sugupa* (an extreme conservative party). Government officials plundered and wielded tyranny over the people. Revolts stirred up by the Korean people were all over the country and led to the Donghak Peasant Revolution of 1894 that was nationwide in its scope. The Korean government was not able to settle it and laid trouble for itself by asking the intervention of the Chinese army. As soon as Japan, who was looking for an opportunity to monopolise an economic and political hegemony in Korea, heard that 3,000 Chinese reinforcements arrived in Korea, they sent their army in the name of protecting their legation and residents in Korea. A war between China and Japan, the Sino-Japanese war, broke out on Korean soil in the middle of 1894 and a number of Korean people lost their lives (Park 2014a:645-653).

In these socio-political turmoil and economic impoverishment the Korean people experienced a feeling of helplessness and longed for change. The Korean traditional religions such as Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism were impotent to help the people who were in agony. This caused a religious vacuum and the Korean people were seeking new religious beliefs which could be the basis of their thoughts and actions and could provide value and meaning to their social lives (Choi 2015:47). Pak Yŏnghyo, one of the members of *Gaehwapa*, while sojourning in Japan, saw how fast the Japanese reformation was progressing after receiving the Western culture and Christianity. Whenever he met Western missionaries working in Japan he requested them: “Our old religions sit lightly, and the way to Christian conversion is open. An army of Christian teachers and workers should be placed in every section of our country. Our people should be educated and Christianised before they undertake any constitutional reform” (McKenzie n.d.:54-55).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mission activities were regarded as an imperialistic invasion because the Western Christian countries competitively colonised African and

Asian countries in the name of Christian mission. However these negative views on Christian mission were not that severe in Korea since the countries carrying out mission in Korea (Western countries, especially America) were unusually different with a country under colonial rule (Japan) (Oak 2015e:2). With an implicit anticipation that America might save Korea from national crises caused by the invasion of the surrounding countries, the Korean government did not actively persecute the Christian mission when the American missionaries came to Korea, although it was officially prohibited (Choi 2015:48). The medical work of the first American medical missionary H.N. Allen also greatly assisted the Korean mission to settle down in Korea. As Moffett (1962:156) pointed out: "It was Allen's miracle of healing that first began to remove the aura of menace that clouded the image of the foreigner in the Korean mind." Allen came to Korea on 20 September, 1884 as a medical missionary, but he could not start his missionary work due to the political condition. He waited for God's intervention (God's mission) as by holding a family prayer meeting (Park 2014a:373).

On 4 December, 1884, Gapsinjeongbyeon, a coup d'état by radical reformists, the bloody emeute (riot), to borrow Allen's (1908:68-72) expression, took place and many government personnel belonging to the conservatives, including Min Yŏngik, a nephew of Queen Min as well as the acting prime minister, were seriously wounded or died. Min Yŏngik's severe sword wounds were not curable by the oriental medical treatments, but Allen healed him with western medical science. Min Yŏngik was fully recovered after three months of Allen's sincere care. He appreciated Allen calling him as "a doctor came down from heaven" (Oak 2016c:1). Through this event, Allen could win the favour of the king and could start his medical mission on 10 April, 1885 by opening Kwanghyewŏn, named by the king Kojong himself, meaning "a house widely spreading the grace", the first Korean modern hospital with 40 beds for patients (Park 2014a:388). Kwanghyewŏn naturally became a basecamp for the Korean mission. Griffis' (1885:451) opinion was that Allen's healing of Min Yŏngik through the event of Gapsinjeongbyeon was clearly God's divine providence to open the gate to start his redemptive mission in Korea through uncertain political circumstances at that time.



All these socio-political and religious circumstances made the Korean people to have receptive attitudes (Huntley 1984:122) and the gospel was rapidly spreading to their hearts like the seed that fell on good soil (Mt 13:8) (Choi 2015:49). According to Oak (2013:xv), by 1900 there were already more than twenty-five thousand Christians in Korea, and it became about two hundred thousand during the next ten years.

## **(ii) Spontaneous formation of the church**

The Korean people were not only passively receptive to the gospel. The gospel was already spreading through the translation of the Bible and local evangelists who voluntarily participated in the mission of God.

The first long-term missionary who came to Korea in September 1884 was Horace N. Allen. Although he was a medical missionary, he came to Korea as a physician of the United States Legation because the Korean government did not allow entry of missionaries or the propagation of foreign religions (Lee 1992:75). On Easter Sunday April 5, 1885, Horace Grant Underwood from the Presbyterian Church and Henry Gerhard Appenzeller from the Methodist Church landed at Chemulpo, a small open port to Seoul, to be the first American clerical missionaries (Hong 2008:76). In his report written on April 9, 1885, Appenzeller (1885:328) closed it with a prayer, quoting Psalm 107:14: “We came here on Easter. May He who on that day burst asunder the bars of death, break the bands that bind this people, and bring them to the light and liberty of God’s children.” When Appenzeller prayed for the Korean people to come to the light and liberty of God’s children, he intended to “make this end of the city a little bit of America” (Griffis 1912:101). It was the initial mission method and policy of Appenzeller that he attempted to transplant Christian religion and civilization (Western culture) by destroying traditional superstitions which bind the Koreans to be heathens (Lim 1998:111-112).

With the influence of revivalists like Dwight L. Moody, who emphasised the impending apocalypse and urgency of world evangelisation in premillennial eschatology (Bosch 1991:315-317), a number of Christians dedicated themselves to their premillennial vision of the evangelisation of the world in their generation (Chung 2007:186). Both Underwood and Appenzeller were

the same. Oak (2013:2-3) describes the foreign missions of the pioneer North American Protestant missionaries who had a predominant belief in white supremacy, religious triumphalism, cultural imperialism, and a mechanical worldview of body-soul dichotomy as follows:

In fact, both the liberals and the evangelicals of the late nineteenth century attempted to conquer 'heathen religions' in Asia and Africa. A new Anglo-Saxon imperialism armed with the idea of social Darwinism advanced with a sense of the 'white man's burden' toward 'inferior' races.... The audacious, ambitious, and arrogant enterprise of Christian foreign missions in East Asia functioned as a part of American cultural imperialism in the name of manifest destiny.

Although Underwood and Appenzeller arrived in Korea, they had to spend their first year at the hospital named Chejungwŏn, the first Western medical institution established by Allen, without any direct evangelism toward local people due to the linguistic barrier and government policy. It took one year until they gave the first baptism to a Korean man named Ro Ch'ungyŏng on 18 July, 1886 (ed. Lee 1985:287-288). It is, however, hard to say that the conversion and baptism of Ro Ch'ungyŏng were the result of the missionaries' work since he first visited the missionaries to ask about Christianity after reading anti-Christianity books written in classical Chinese such as *Bixie jishi*, which ridiculed Jesus, calling him a pig came down from heaven according to the similar pronunciation between *Tian Zhu* (Heavenly Lord) and *Zhu* (Pig). Out of curiosity, Ro Ch'ungyŏng, through his visit, secretly brought a Chinese translation of Mark and Luke to his place and read through them the whole night through. The following day, he revisited the missionaries and told them the good things he found from the Bible. He, then, asked them to teach him more about what the Bible says. The missionaries were surprised by how the word of God worked on him and gave him a Chinese version of the four gospels and lent him some commentaries and tracts after he finished reading the gospels (Oak 2015a:3).

On Saturday 3 July, 1886, Ro Ch'ungyŏng visited them again and asked Underwood if he could join the Sunday service in which only missionaries inter-denominationally gathered at that time. Having experienced the Holy

Communion, he decided to be baptised though it was illegal by national laws and passed the catechism. Underwood (Paik 1973:144-145) remarked at the baptism of Ro Ch'ungyŏng that "I did never say anything about this issue (baptism). His decision was a product of his own will." On 27 September, 1887, 14 baptised men from all over Korea and two missionaries, John Ross from Manchuria and Underwood, gathered together in Seoul on invitation of Underwood and officially established Korea's first organised church at his Chŏndong residence, and named it the Chŏndong Presbyterian Church (the predecessor of the Saemoonan Presbyterian Church). The 14 baptised members consisted of 4 men from Seoul and 10 men from the North-western provinces of Hwanghae and P'yŏg'an (Oak 2015g:5). John Ross, in his first visit in Korea, was surprised when he recognised that all the members there except for Ro Ch'ungyŏng were led to Jesus by the evangelism of the four Korean men who were baptised by him and used to help him translating the Bible in Manchuria before American missionaries officially arrived in Korea in 1884 and 1885 (Park 2014a:511-512).

John Ross with John Macintyre, his brother-in-law, though both were missionaries sent from Scotland to China, decided to translate the Bible from Chinese to Korean with the help of Korean merchants to introduce the word of God to the Korean people after he visited and met Korean people at *Funghwang* (the Korean gate) in 1874, the only open door for Korean merchants to freely trade with foreigners before the first Treaty with Japan was confirmed in 1876 due to strict closed-door policy of the Korean government (Ross 1875:472). As the translation was progressing, the Korean participants, Paek Hongjun and his unknown friend, Yi Ŭngch'an and his unknown relative, converted to Christianity and requested Macintyre to baptise them in 1879. According to Macintyre's report (Lee 1991:35), while Ross had his first sabbatical years in Scotland (May 1879 – May 1881), there was formed the first Korean Christian community gathering for worship every evening in Manchuria with at least eight members, led by one of the Korean translators. Though it is difficult to say that this is the first Korean church in terms of an institutional church like the Chŏndong Presbyterian Church organised by the Western missionaries, the spontaneous evening meeting of the Korean translators had embryonic features of a number of churches to be planted in

Korea in the near future (Choi 2015:39). In April, 1882, Sŏ Sangnyun and Kim Ch' ŏngsong, both members of the translation team, were baptised by Ross (Bae 2008:178, 188).

A rough draft of the New Testament translation was completed in 1879. As going through a series of revisions, 3,000 copies of the gospel of Luke were published for the first time in March, 1882. It was followed by 3,000 copies of the gospel of John in 12 May, 1882, though 5,000 copies of the first Korean New Testament, *Yesu Sŏnggyo Chŏnsŏ* (The Complete Work of Jesus' Holy Teachings), were printed in 1887 (Bae 2008:217-218). Some members of the translation team became colporteurs and went back to Korea with the copies of the gospel of Luke and John they translated. They went to their native villages, where propagation of foreign religions was strictly prohibited. They planted churches, lived the life of evangelists and witnessed. Through their activities, the gospel was spread amazingly quickly all over Korea by Koreans (Park 2004a:355). As Grayson (1985:127) pointed out, the growth of the church in Korea was from the very beginning dependent on the efforts of Koreans themselves. The fact that Christianity spread into Korea through local evangelists without the assistance of any foreign missionaries clearly shows that the indigenised Korean church was established by Koreans themselves (Grayson 1985:127).

Kim Ch'ŏngsong accepted Jesus as his Lord while working as a printer for the printing of the gospel of Luke. As soon as the gospel of John was printed, in the spring of 1883, he went back to where he came from, with the positive support of Ross, with thousands of copies of the gospel of Luke and John. He came from a "Korean valley" in the west Jiandao literally meaning "a neutral zone" located in non-occupied area between China and Korea. According to Bae (2008:187), there were more than 30,000 Koreans resident in about 28 Korean valleys in the west Jiandao. Kim Ch'ŏngsong preached the gospel and sold copies of Luke and John cheaply. When Ross, on Kim's request, came to the Korean valley to give baptism in the middle of April, 1884, he found 75 people waiting for him to be baptised (Ross 1886:150-152). With the baptised people a church was established named Yiyangja and thereafter it became the mother church for about one thousand Korean churches around that area

(Park 2004a:350-360). When American missionaries finally came to the northern part of Korea on their evangelism journey in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, they found a number of indigenised Christian communities already existed (Webster 1915:395-396).

Sŏ Sangnyun also left Manchuria for his hometown, Uiju, with about 500 copies of the gospels and the same volumes of pamphlets for evangelism, but started his work in Sorae in the Hwanghae province. He was arrested at the border because of the illegal books of a foreign religion, but could sneak away from the prison at night with the help of his relatives with only 10 gospel books regained. Although he arrived in Uiju, he moved to Sorae, where his relatives lived, to stay with his younger brother Sŏ Kyŏngjo, because he was afraid that he might be traced by government officers (Bae 2008:251-252). As a result of his enthusiastic evangelism in Sorae, several months later he could win 18 converts and start to meet together for worship service every Sunday from 16 May, 1883. This is the Sorae Church, the first church established on Korean soil, though some disagree because no sacraments were conducted by clergies as an organised church (Min 1991:32).

The Sorae Church rapidly grew as a spontaneously formed self-supporting layman-oriented church (Choi 2015:41). All church members participated in propagating the word of God with their testimonies (through changed words and deeds after receiving the gospel) to their village people and voluntarily opened their houses for worship services. Their first church building was fully supported by themselves and humbly built in 1886, in local style, and not luxurious to attract people. Arthur J. Brown (1919:510), the general secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Mission, praised them: "Sorai (Sorae) became a transfigured community. Think of a village of fifty-eight houses, in fifty of which all persons over fifteen years of age are Christians; a community in which there is no liquor, no brawling, no vice of any kind; where Sunday is scrupulously observed, and the entire population attends church, Sunday-school, and prayer meeting!"

The understanding of the early Korean church about being the church was not an institutionalised church-centred and clergy-centred mission, but rather a volunteer movement witnessing to Jesus by all ordinary people called and sent

by God. Since the believers of the Sorae Church wanted to be baptised, Sŏ Sangnyun asked Ross to come to Korea to baptise them, but Ross could not because he was in the middle of the Bible translation. According to Underwood's (1893:816) report, three years later, Sŏ Sangnyun visited Underwood in Seoul and asked him to come to Sorae and give baptism to new converts as follows: "Mr. So Sang Hyun (Sŏ Sangnyun), now the trusted and tried chief helper of our mission, came to me in 1886 (seen by me then for the first time) and asked me to go down to his village and baptise some men who for some time past had been believing in Christ. At that time Mr. So was not in any one's employ, but had learned of Christ from Mr. Ross in China and had been baptised by him."

Although Underwood refused because he could not violate a curfew placed to foreign missionaries in Seoul, Sŏ Sangnyun was not disappointed and returned to Seoul with a delegation of four believers including his younger brother to let them be baptised by missionaries (Bae 2008:252-253). After thorough examination by missionaries such as Allen, Heron and Underwood, three of them, were baptised on 23 January, 1887. After that Underwood went down to Sorae to baptise seven more candidates late the same year. As Shearer (1966:43-44) pointed out, his visit to Sorae was not for direct propagation of the gospel, but to baptise and teach the people who already met Christ Jesus. As Choi (2015:49) said, at that time Korea was in the position that the people who already received the gospel before the arrival of the Western missionaries had been waiting for administration of baptism by the missionaries. The foreign missionaries found themselves to be harvesters, not planters. By having experienced the rapid growth of indigenised churches by local evangelists with the locally translated word of God, Underwood and other early missionaries in Korea acknowledged that God had been at work in Korea before they came. They put down their initial goal of radically displacing Korean heathenism and otherness with Western Christianity in the sense of superiority in race, religion, and civilization, which can be summed up by a term imperialistic mission (Oak 2015:xvi) and changed their attitudes and methods to mission (Choi 2015:49-50).



### 3.2.1.2 The development of the Korean church by the early Western missionaries

After a process of adjustment and adaptation, the early Western missionaries adopted as their mission policy for indigenisation mission the three-self principle, a Holistic mission (Oak 2013:307) and a Kingdom-oriented united mission.

#### **(i) Indigenous mission**

Many scholars refer to the three-self principle as the first requirement for the indigenisation of Christianity in Korea (Oak 2015e:4). The three-self principle was advocated by two mission theorists. Although one was born in America and the other was in England, they both were born in the same year 1796 and worked for the worldwide mission organisations as leaders. Rufus Anderson was the secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and Henry Venn was the chief secretary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Both of them contended that the last stage of foreign mission must be a local church's self-propagation, self-government, and self-support (Bae 2008:45-69). This theory was exercised by two practitioners, John Ross and John L. Nevius. They both belonged to the Presbyterian Church and were missionaries working in China though Ross was from Scotland, while Nevius was from America. While working in China, they occasionally met and had fellowship and sharing their mission methods (Bae 2008:89). This mission method was introduced to the Korean mission field and had a great influence on the early missionaries in Korea in the formulation of their mission policy set upon it. The three-self principle was called Nevius-Ross methods or simply Nevius methods in Korea (Underwood 1908:109), for the majority of early missionaries in Korea were American as Nevius was (Bae 2008:308-317).

Nevius (1899:7-9) criticised the "Old System" of mission, in which missionaries by the use of foreign funds paid native agencies to foster and stimulate the growth of the native churches, that it would make the church dependent on materials instead of faith although it might easily attain some tangible improvements in the first stage. He insisted that the "New System" of mission,



in which missionaries entrusted the native people to govern the church without any outside supports, being left in their original employments, would make the church grow faster as time went on because it imbued the native church with principles of independence and self-reliance from the beginning. Underwood (1908:109-110) summarised the Nevius methods as follows:

- First, let each man “Abide in the calling wherein he was found”, teaching that each was to be an individual worker for Christ, and to live Christ in his own neighbourhood, supporting himself by his trade.
- Secondly, to develop church methods and machinery only so far as the native church was able to take care of and manage the same.
- Third, as far as the church itself was able to provide the men and the means, to set aside those who seemed the better qualified, to do evangelistic work among their neighbours.
- Fourth, to let the natives provide their own church buildings, which were to be native in architecture, and of such style as the local church could afford to put up.

The early missionaries in Korea were enthusiastic but young and had no experience in being missionaries. When they arrived in Korea, Gale was 25 years old, Underwood 26, Appenzeller 27, Allen 27, and Scranton the eldest was 29 years old (Hunt 1980:34). In an uncharted territory, they were praying for a way-wise missionary to come and help them to move forward. They had been struggling to spread the gospel by extension and transplanting of mainstream American Protestantism together with American capitalism and their middle-class culture (Oak 2013:316), but could win only three converts with their mission methods by the end of 1890 (Bae 2008:318). God sent Ross and Nevius to Korea and through them helped the young missionaries to change their imperialistic style of mission to an indigenous one. When Ross visited Seoul in 1887 on Underwood’s invitation, he initiated Underwood into the three-self principle (Oak 2015g: 4). After Ross went back to China, Underwood tried to study the three-self principle by himself and apply it to the Korean mission field. He found a series of articles about the three-self principle in a periodical journal named *Chinese Recorder* in 1885 and a book titled *The*

*planting and development of missionary churches* in 1889, both were written by Nevius (Bae 2008:89-90), and was then applied by Underwood. As senior pastor of the Chōndong Presbyterian Church, in the late 1888, he started running an intensive Bible training class with eight church members in his house for a month to strengthen and equip them starting with the three-self principle. Underwood knew that the three-self principle must be founded on the truth (Bible studying) and carried out by the disciples living out the truth with their words and deeds (Park 2014a:620-621).

The three-self principle was fully adopted by the Presbyterian missionaries as the rallying methods for mission in Korea after Nevius visited Korea on Underwood's invitation. On his way back to America for his sabbatical years, Nevius stopped by Korea in June 1890 and stayed for two weeks sharing and discussing about the mission methods (Park 1992:111). Since the method was adopted, it became adjusted and developed by the Presbyterian missionaries to be the product of the contextualisation of the Nevius methods to the Korean context (Choi 2015:210-211). Compared to the original Nevius methods, the one contextualised to Korean circumstance emphasised Bible study and the self-support among the three-selves (Underwood 1900a:386). C.A. Clark, one of the early missionaries working in Korea from 1902 to 1941, pointed out in his PhD thesis *Korean Church and Nevius Methods* that the essence of Nevius methods was Bible study and it brought actualisation of self-propagation, self-government, and self-support (1994:320-324). H.M. Conn said: "the centre of the Nevius plan was not the three-self principle, but training through Bible study" (Kim 2014:384). Though the Korean church was already self-propagating, self-supporting and self-governing like the Sorae Church (Oak 1998:154), the contextualised Nevius methods helped those characteristics of the Korean church to be fostered and facilitated.

The early Korean Christians who were trained and equipped through Bible study believed that teaching others with what they learned was not only their mandate but also their privilege. Not only clergies but all the people baptised in the church were regarded as preachers (Bae 2008:295). They voluntarily preached the gospel testifying to the joy of salvation among their family members, relatives and friends wherever they were located. As an apostolic

community sent to the world by Christ Jesus, they did not wait for non-believers to come to the church building, but went out to where the non-believers were. Through street preaching, house to house visitation, sarangbang (guest-room) evangelism and relationship evangelism, they delivered the message in incarnational ways according to the context they were sent with the vernacular of the non-believers (Choi 2015:72-75). As Soltau (1932:37) said, “The Korean church has been to an unusual degree ‘a witnessing church’ and ‘a church of personal workers’.” Some of the Korean Christians, when they were proved to be good at propagation, were called by the missionaries to fully dedicate their lives to evangelism as colporteurs, helpers and circuit riders. It was a matter of course that they should get paid for their mission work since many of them gave up even their bread-and-butter jobs for it. Many of them, however, proved that they were not employees of the missionaries but the fellow workers of God by refusing pay.

Han Sökchin, who later became one of the seven first ordained Korean pastors in 1907, left a well-known anecdote. He had been a helper (assistant pastor in today’s church) of an American missionary named S.A. Moffet since he became a Christian after receiving the gospel in 1891 through Moffet in his home village Uiju. When Moffet tried to pay him, Han Sökchin refused it saying, “How I can get paid by a westerner for preaching the gospel to my own countryperson” (Kim 2015:158). Not only Han Sökchin, but also many colporteurs survived without any remuneration from the missionaries by selling quinine, a medication used to prevent and treat malaria, as well as selling the Bible at the markets (Oak 2016b:7-9). The self-propagation of the early Korean Christians was efficient and resulted in many converts that spontaneously formed local churches (Choi 2015:227). It was because their propagation was carried out not only with words, but also through their changed lives. The early missionaries preached the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible and set it as the standard of all ethical issues in the Korean society (Park 1992:113). They strongly urged the Korean Christians to keep the Lord’s Day holy and their family relations healthy, especially between husband and wife while forbidding drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes and gambling. Filial piety and integrity in the working place were also emphasised (Park 2014a:629-630). Through the ethical life of the Korean Christians as the disciples of Jesus, the Korean

people, who were losing their hope passing through a very confused period for Korea, could see hope as the tasting of the kingdom of God in advance.

As soon as a church was established, the church members began to support the Korean leaders and lay preachers and helped the churches newly planted by those workers to be self-supporting. As can be seen from the Sorae Church that refused a kind proposal of Underwood's financial help for construction of a new church building in 1895, although they experienced political and financial instability (Kim 1995:103-104), the early Korean church tried to stand alone without outside support. For this, not only some people in positions, but all church members tried to take part in propagating the gospel among their own countrymen by any means. Men sold cows and ploughed their fields with their own strength. Women sold their golden rings and hairpins which they had kept as their wedding present. Some of them even cut off their hair that it might be sold and the amount devoted to the spreading of the gospel (Oak 2016b:3). According to Underwood' (1900b:449) report in 1900, there were 286 Presbyterian churches fully self-supporting out of 288 established churches with more than 3,000 baptised church members. John R. Mott (1910:77), at the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910, paid his tribute of praise to the Korean church as seeing more than eighty per cent of them self-supporting and growing healthy. The self-supporting spirit of the early Korean church kept them voluntarily participating in the mission of God through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They stayed away from being a man-oriented church with planting and growth programmes which could be manipulated with the aids of the missionaries (Choi 2015:104-105).

The early Korean church became a self-propagating, -governing and -supporting community through the lives of disciples who knew and practised the truth. This led the Korean Presbyterian Church which focused on direct propagation of the gospel and church planting through Nevius methods to experience a dramatic church growth in the early stage of mission in Korea as can be observed from the following table.

<Table 3> Number of the Presbyterian Churches and members (1884-1903)  
(Choi 2015:53):

Year	Number of churches	Number of members	Year	Number of churches	Number of members
1884	1	6	1894	8	286
1885	1	9	1895	14	530
1886	2	25	1896	27	2,530
1887	2	65	1897	74	3,276
1888	3	104	1898	206	4,899
1889	3	110	1899	263	6,265
1890	5	119	1900	289	14,509
1891	6	127	1901	328	21,126
1892	7	141	1902	371	11,965
1893	7	236	1903	430	22,662

These statistics are limited since it only reports the number of organised churches, which have sessions, consisting of pastors and elders, and their members without the number of unorganised indigenous local churches like house churches. Nevertheless, considering that statistics normally indicates the one of a year before, it clearly shows that the number of the Presbyterian churches and their members started growing fast after the Nevius methods were officially adopted in 1893.

## **(ii) Holistic mission**

McConnell (ed. Moreau 2000:448) defined a holistic mission as follows: “Holistic mission is concerned with ministry to the whole person through the transforming power of the gospel. While holistic mission affirms the functional uniqueness of evangelism and social responsibility, it views them as inseparable from the ministry of the kingdom of God. Therefore, holistic mission is the intentional integration of building the church and transforming society.”

A holistic mission can only be actualised through incarnational service (Choi 2015:93). In the Korean mission, incarnational service was practised in two ways: medical mission and education mission (Park 2014a:538). It was the

Methodist Church that tried to integrate medical and education missions with the establishment of the church in Korea. Although Korea was not officially open to Christian mission until the Korean government finally decided to allow the freedom of religion in 1 May, 1899 (Bae 2008:319), medical and education missions were supported by the Korean government which was attempting to build a modern nation by accepting the Western civilisation (Oak 2015e:3). Following the first medical missionary H.N. Allen, many medical missionaries such as William B. Scranton and William J. Hall came and settled down in Korea. With the favour of the royal court, the medical mission could be the top-down type of mission relying on money and power. However, through the incarnational service of the medical missionaries, the medical mission in Korea could open even the heart of the ordinary Korean people. The medical missionaries never discriminated against the poor and displayed the loving care and healing of Jesus through their humble serving and voluntariness, which were contrasting values to the spirit of the imperial age with its productivity and control.

Scranton was a medical missionary sent by the Methodist Episcopal Church. While working in Kwanghyewŏn, which was a royal hospital, he decided to move to Sangdong near Namdaemoon, the south gate of Seoul, where the poor people were (Park 2014a:543). Scranton opened a hospital for the poor and vulnerable in Sandong in 1896, which the King Kojong later named Sibyŏngwŏn, meaning “universal relief hospital” and Scranton began his medical mission there. Scranton cured 522 patients during the first eight months and 2,000 during the next one year (Park 2014a:543-544). Meta Howard, a female medical missionary sent by the Methodist Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society, established the Pogu yŏgwan, meaning “caring for and saving woman’s hospital” in 1886. It was the first modern hospital for the Korean women and looked after about 5,500 poor women during the first three years. Howard had to go back to America because of the deterioration of her health. William J. Hall was appointed as Methodist medical missionary working in Pyongyang in 1891. When Pyongyang became the battle field of the Sino-Japanese war in 1894, he worked day and night caring for the wounded and patients and died of overwork and an infectious disease (Kim & Roh 2007:188). The medical missionaries worked in the middle of the suffering life of the

people and sacrificed their lives for the sick and dying people. This incarnational service of the medical missionaries moved the heart of the Korean people (Choi 2015:99). They witnessed to the kingdom of God with their lives by obeying Jesus, who was incarnated to serve to death, and God, who sent Jesus to earth. As a result of the ministry of the medical missionaries, there were churches established such as the Sangdong Methodist Church established by Scranton in 1901 (Oak 2015c:3). Having seen the incarnational service of the medical missionaries, the Korean people could accept the gospel, the life and death of Jesus, without hostility.

The beginning of the education mission was not as splendid as the medical mission to the poor and marginalised (Park 2014a:551). Appenzeller began his school on 3 August, 1885 with two students in a guest-room of his house. In May, 1886, Mary F. Scranton, mother of William B. Scranton, started the first school for the Korean woman in her guestroom, but she had to struggle with only one student who was a concubine of a government officer and with handful students for the next couple of years (Kim & Roh 2007:207-208). Although the early educational missionaries were hampered in their works due to the Korean misunderstanding and fear of foreigners and ignorance of the modern school system, they were in the end able to build trust with the Korean people through their continuous humble service and voluntariness. Appenzeller's school was given the name Paejae Haktang meaning "a school fostering talented people" by king Kojong in 1887 and grew to be a representative Methodist mission school in Korea. Scranton's school, as well, was named by Queen Min Ewha Haktang meaning "pear flowers" that symbolises woman's purity. It became the leader in modern women's education (Park 2014a:549-552). Following the above-mentioned pioneer educational missionaries, almost all the early Methodist missionaries except for the medical missionaries joined the stream of education mission.

They started with primary schools, followed by the secondary schools and then the higher educational work as the students were growing up. The schools founded and run by the educational missionaries were not ordinary schools but mission schools with a policy of teaching the Bible and carrying out religious disciplines (Soltau 1932:47-58). Through the mission schools, many



Methodist churches like the Chöndong first Methodist Church established by Appenzeller in 9 October, 1887, were founded (Oak 2015b:2). Although the educational missionaries used the mission schools as a point of contact for propagating the gospel, it was not their only purpose. Through Christian education offered to the Korean students at the mission schools, the missionaries intended gradually to transform the Korean worldview into the Christian worldview by teaching them Christian ethics and science in order to let them see the primary good design of God and for the glory of God participate in the restoration of the kingdom of God on the Korean soil (Kim & Roh 2007:230-231). Through the efforts of the educational missionaries, the Korean society could drop the illiteracy rate and slough off superstitions. The holistic mission carried out by the medical and educational missionaries with humble voluntary service willingly participating in God's redemptive mission to the needy and the lost in Korea had great influence on the Korean church and its mission afterwards to do the same holistic mission with the same spirit of incarnational service.

Esther Park (1877-1910) was born as the third daughter of Mr. Kim in Seoul. Her name was Kim Jömdong but she received a baptismal name, Esther, when she was baptised by Rev. Franklin Ohlinger at the age of 15 on 25 January, 1891. At that time, most girls had no proper names in a society being dominated by the idea of the predominance of men over women formed in the agricultural background and feudalistic convention and thus received a baptismal name (Oak 2015f:1). Because of severe poverty, her parents could not afford to provide for her education. In 1886, however, her mother heard of Ewha Haktang which was founded by Scranton and offered food, clothing and shelter for female students and decided to send her there as its fourth student. She studied very hard and was outstanding in English. Due to the resignation of Meta Howard the first woman medical missionary of the Pogu yögwan, a new woman medical missionary, Rosetta Sherwood came to Korea from New York in 1890. With no nurse to assist her, she needed an assistant who could speak English because she had to start looking after patients from the very next day after arrival. Esther as the best English speaker among Scranton's pupils began to work as an interpreter and an assistant of Sherwood for several hours every day (Oak 2015f:2).

Esther decided to be a doctor to help people after she saw women living new lives through Sherwood's operation on their cleft lips. Sherwood opened a medical class and taught Esther. When Sherwood went back to America in December, 1894 after eruptive typhus bereaved her of her husband, William J. Hall who worked with her as a doctor missionary, she took Esther to America for further medical study. Esther studied at Baltimore Woman's Medical College from October, 1896 to May, 1900. As soon as she completed her study, she was sent to Korea by the Methodist Woman's Foreign Missionary Society as the first Korean woman medical missionary (Kim & Roh 2007:191). She took the first step as a missionary where she used to work with Sherwood, the Pogu yŏgwan, and looked after about 3,000 patients during the next ten months. Esther moved to Hall Memorial Hospital in Pyongyang in 1901. For the next nine years, until she died of overwork and tuberculosis in 1910, Esther attended 5,000 patients every year with excellent medical technics and a warm serving heart (Park 2014a:544). She did not only wait for the patients to come to the hospital. She knew that there were a number of people in the outskirts of Pyongyang who were bound by superstitions and rather go to a shaman than come to the hospital when they were sick.

Although she encountered the double difficulty of the disregard of women and the refusal of medical treatment, due to ignorance and superstition, she personally visited those people and witnessed to the kingdom of God by healing them (Kim & Roh 2007:192). Not only Esther Park, but also many other Korean medical and educational missionaries witnessed to the kingdom of God through their incarnational service following the footsteps of the early western missionaries, empowered by the Holy Spirit. It contributed to the modernisation and enlightenment of Korea. According to Lee (1928:201-202), "The Korean Protestant Church reformed conventional vices and national spirit. The main things of it can be exemplified in the abolition of evil-spirit worshipping and class distinction, the advance of the status of women, Puritan work ethic, simplification of wedding and funeral ceremonies, introduction to democratic ideology, etc."

While the Korean Presbyterian Church focused on direct propagation of the gospel and church planting, the Korean Methodist Church conducted indirect

ways of spreading the gospel by socio-cultural transforming mission through medical and education missions, and that it was intentionally integrated with the building the church as can be seen from the following statistics:

<Table 4> Number of the Methodist Churches and members (1892-1903)  
 (Choi 2015:56):

Year	Number of church	Number of member	Year	Number of church	Number of member
1886		100	1895		
1887		150	1896		478
1888		165	1897	4	865
1889		165	1898	4	1596
1890		165	1899	7	2462
1891			1900	38	
1892	4		1901	51	4542
1893			1902	67	4862
1894	5	261	1903	87	6873

The statistics of the Methodist Church in the early stage is rather insufficient. They started to report regularly from 1897 and the number of churches and members is less than the one of the Presbyterian Church during the same period. Most analysts say that it is because the Methodist Church focused on indirect ways of evangelism. However, according to the facts that the number of churches grew five times in 1900 and the number of members became doubled in 1897 and 1898, it is clear that building the church by a holistic mission worked for the restoration and expansion of the kingdom of God in Korea though its effects were produced slower than the direct evangelism of the Presbyterian Church.

### (iii) Kingdom-oriented united mission

Although the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches used different styles of missionary methods, a direct evangelism through an indigenous mission and

an indirect evangelism through a holistic mission, those methods worked together for the expansion of the kingdom of God in Korea. At the dawn of the mission in Korea, when the direct propagation of the gospel was not officially allowed, the incarnational service of the Methodist medical and educational missionaries, by opening the heart of the Korean people and reducing the illiteracy rate, set up an effective environment for the mission of the Presbyterian Church that emphasised Bible training.

This kingdom-oriented united mission was specifically presented by the effort of the Presbyterian and Methodist missions to compose a council for the achieving of cooperation among the different churches within the denomination and to establishing one united interdenominational church in the Korean peninsula (Park 2003:98). Starting with the United Council of the Missions of the American and Victorian Churches formed between the Northern Presbyterian Mission and the Australian Mission in 1889, the ecumenical efforts to be united for the kingdom of God developed by absorbing all mission societies that practised the Presbyterian form of government in 1893, which was named The Council of Missions Holding the Presbyterian Form of Government, and came to fruition in 1905 establishing the General Council of Protestant Evangelical Missions in Korea (Park 2003:98). Although their efforts to form one united evangelical church in Korea failed in the end due to different theological backgrounds, the activities of the Council such as Comity of Missions and Literary Mission and Bible Translation brought rapid growth to the Korean church (Choi 2015:279).

#### **(a) Comity of Missions**

According to Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopaedia (n.d.), the term “Comity” refers to “arrangements mutually agreed upon by the mission organisations working within a given area or country. These agreements specify where each group is to carry out its ministries of witness and service.” The Presbyterian and Methodist Missions sent to Korea made agreements about “the Comity of Missions” in an effort to prevent unseemly rivalry between missions and to avoid unnecessary duplication of missionary activity to economise on their limited resources for a common goal, namely the expansion of the kingdom of God in Korea (Kerr & Anderson 1970:30).

Since first proposed by Appenzeller in 1888 to promote cooperation and unity of missions for a more speedy and efficient evangelisation, it had been achieved within denominational lines (between the Presbyterian missions in 1892) and then across denominational lines (between Presbyterians and Methodists in 1893) (Park 2014a:601-603). Although the agreement was not signed due to opposition of the Methodist Mission in the U.S., among the Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries in Korea, the agreement was highly regarded and practiced as if it was a norm (Clark 1928:154). There was a growing need for the agreements due to the rapid growth of the Korean church. The six missions of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches: the Northern Presbyterian Mission, the Southern Presbyterian Mission, the Canadian Presbyterian Mission, the Australian Presbyterian Mission, the Methodist Episcopal Church North and the South gathered at Seoul YMCA centre and officially signed the Comity agreements in September, 1909. It was, however, not a new arrangement but one which the Presbyterian and the Methodist missions had observed, that was ratified (Park 2014a:605).

The practice of the comity agreement in Protestant missionary circles was understood in terms of a territorial division and non-interference among the different denominational missions. The six missions divided the country into several regions and assigned a separate region to each mission as follows (Park 2003:98):

<Table 5> Comity Arrangement among Missions (Soltau 1932:21)

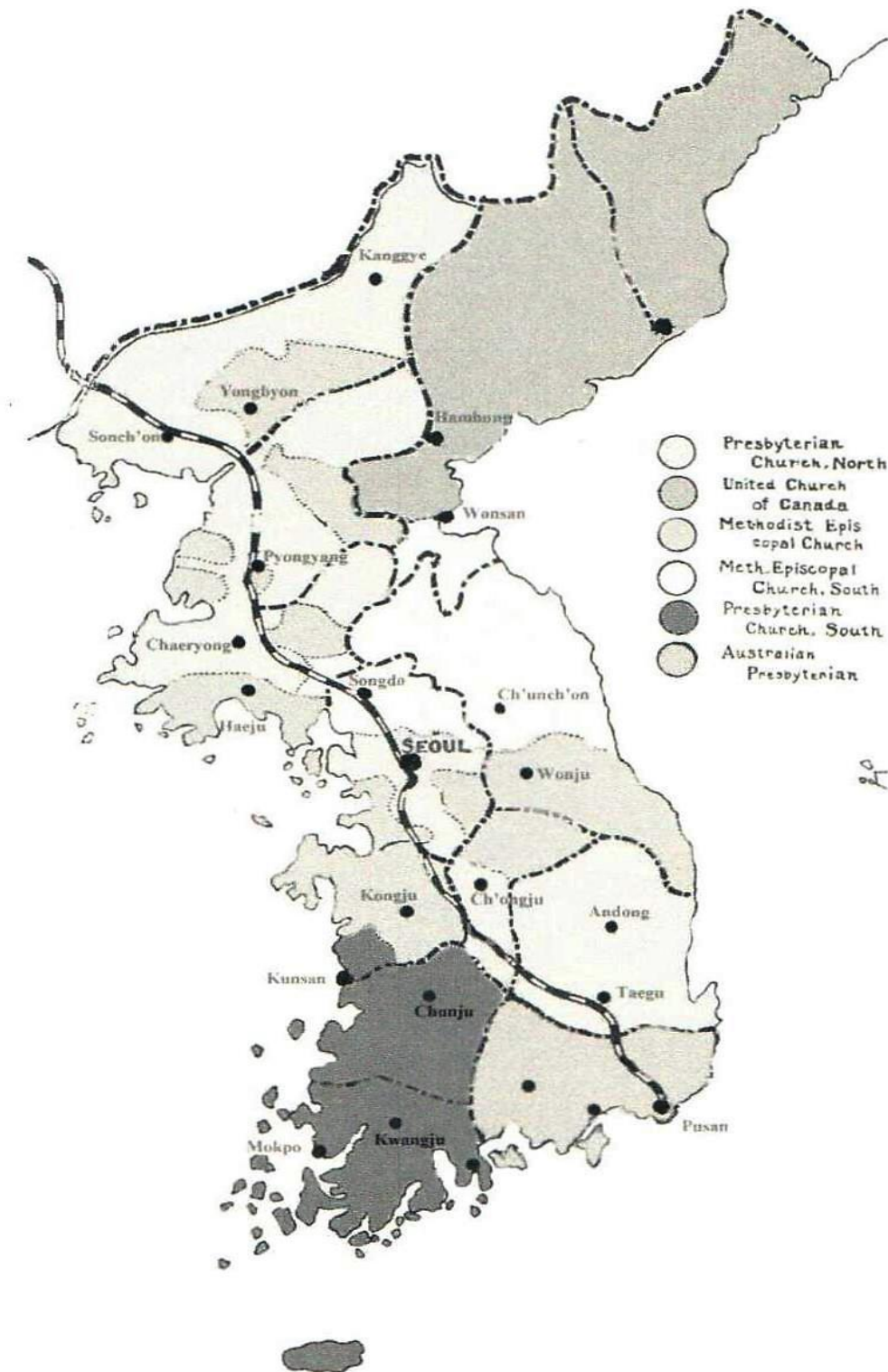
Mission	Regions
Northern Presbyterian	P'yŏng'an, Hwanghae
Southern Presbyterian	Chŏlla
Australian Presbyterian	Kyŏngsang
Canadian Presbyterian	Hamgyŏng and Kando (Chientao)
Methodist	Kyŏnggi, Kang'wŏn

As a result of the agreement, each denomination tried to avoid expanding mission work in the already occupied regions and took more interest in pioneering unoccupied regions (Choi 2015:280) like Apostle Paul said in Romans 15:20: “It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation.” Some Christians changed their denominations according to the agreement for example 2,000 Presbyterians, including 460 baptised members belonging to 43 Presbyterian Churches, in Hwanghae Province transferred to the Methodist Church in 1909 while 200 Methodists moved to the Presbyterian Church in the same province in the same year (Shearer 1966:172).

Although there was a limitation that minor denominations were not considered enough since the agreement was made by the six major denominations, all their efforts to cooperate being united demonstrated the characteristics of a missional church witnessing to the kingdom of God as the body of Christ transcending diverse denominational interests.

(See map)

<Map 1> Territorial Comity among the Presbyterian and Methodist Missions in Korea, 1912 (Oak 2015:335)





## (b) Literary Mission and Bible Translation

When the mission in Korea began, Confucianism had dominated Korean spiritual and social life. In order to infiltrate into people's lives, the early Western missionaries, instead of insisting that "the suitable relationship of Christianity to heathenism is not compromise but conquest" (Park 1966:5), decided to coexist with Confucianism by searching points of contact with which they could link up with the gospel while maintaining the finality and superiority of Christ in relation to Confucianism (Oak 2013:xvi). Underwood had "the theory of two sides" which maintains that Confucianism and Christianity are in a relationship of interdependence and inter-reliance (Oak 2016a:2). He highly appreciated Confucianism in a weekly newspaper named "The Christian News" published on 15 December, 1898 as follows: "Confucianism is the utmost law for ethics and morality. It is a great platform through all ages to come. It is an utmost treasure to teach *Sŏnbi* (ideal intellectuals in Korea) and a trustworthy virtue to sincerely fear the heaven. There is great wisdom in it to do *ewu zhizhi* (gaining knowledge by the study of things in the world)."

Missionaries and Korean Christian leaders said that Christianity came to Korea not to abolish Confucianism but to make it a better Confucianism, i.e. Christianity, by fulfilling it on the basis of Jesus' word: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them." (Mt 5:17) (Oak 2016a:3). They explained the moral rules to govern the "Five Human Relations" of Confucianism: justice and righteousness between king and subject; affection between father and son; etiquette between husband and wife; discrimination between young and old; faith between friends can only be functioning when the relation between God and man is reconciled by Jesus whom Christianity preaches and teaches. Oak (2013: xvi-xvii) says: "The missionaries' combination of confrontational and conciliatory approaches, cross-cultural sensitivity, and moderate fulfilment theory encouraged Korean Christians to create an indigenous Christianity that grew rapidly in the liminal space of turn-of-the-twentieth-century Korea, where transnationality, translations, traditions, modernity, and coloniality interacted."

In this understanding of Christian indigenisation, the Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries together formed Korean Religious Tract Society in

1890 since Confucianism dominating Korean's spiritual and social life was a religion of books, compelled all its followers to study its classics represented by Confucian Canon, the Four Books and the Five Classics (Oak 2013:23-24). The society with the participation and support of the United Council of Missions published and distributed many religious books, tracts and evangelism pamphlets either written in Chinese or later translated into Korean for Korean people to read and understand regarding Christianity (Park 2014a:554-556). *Miaozhu wenda, Conversation with a Temple Keeper* in English title, was written by Ferdinand Genähr, a German missionary working in Gwangdong province in China in 1865. It was translated into Korean by the Methodist missionary Appenzeller in 1895. The book deals with the vanity of idolatry of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism and urges people to worship the genuine God through salvation by Christ and to live the Christian life by keeping the Ten Commandments. *Chilli jji, Easy Introduction to Christian Doctrine* in English, written by an American missionary working in China, Divie Bethune McCartee, in 1853 was translated into Korean by the Presbyterian missionary Underwood and became a widely-read book.

The literary mission reached a climax with the translation of the Bible by the Permanent Executive Bible Committee formed in 1893 under the United Council of the Missions. There was already a Korean Bible, translated by John Ross and distributed by the Korean colporteurs, before the American missionaries arrived in Korea. "It was and is unusual to have the Bible translated into a language prior to a full-scale mission, but this enabled Christianity to spread more easily in Korea" (Hong 2008:78). Ross' translation was, however, strong in local colour with dialects of the North-western part of Korea since all his Korean helpers were from that region (Park 2014a:557). The Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries decided to carry out the Bible translation ministry jointly for a more systematic and accurate translation. Though the Bible Committee tried to newly translate the Bible, they were heavily influenced by Ross' perspective on Bible translation. John Ross in his first translation of the Bible, adhered to the perspective of theological contextualisation, which can be defined as a discourse that seeks to the link text with context using logic, tradition and cultures, aiming at finding the meaning of the gospel in a new context and at making the Christian faith

meaningful and relevant to people who live in the given context (Hong 2008:14).

John Ross' translation conducted with the perspective of theological contextualisation had great influence on the next Korean Bible translations carried out by the Bible Committee in terms of the following two factors: Translation into Han'gŭl (the Korean alphabet) instead of Chinese characters; Selecting and using the term *Hananim* as the Korean name for God. Although Han'gŭl was invented by King Sejong in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it was ignored by the upper classes in Korea due to political, economic and cultural attachment to China and the social class system of Korea. Ross knew that Han'gŭl, which is a phonogram with only 28 letters in the alphabet, compared with the Chinese characters, which are ideograms and requires to know at least more than a thousand letters for reading, was far easier to learn and therefore preferred by the lower classes and, for the same reason, was ignored by the upper classes who wanted to keep their social position. John Ross selected Han'gŭl for Bible translation since he wanted Christ Jesus (the truth) to be incarnated through the vernacular spoken daily by the ordinary and marginalised groups accounting for more than 80 per cent of all classes in Korea (Bae 2008:188-199).

<Table 6> The Social Class system of Korea (Bae 2008:195)

Classification of class	Korean terms for classes	Occupation	Characteristic	Preferred character
Upper class	Yangban	Civil service Military service	Qualification for state exam	Chinese
Middle class	Chungin	Astrologer, Artist Lawyer, Doctor	Technical officer	

	Yangmin	Craftsman, Farmer Merchant	Tax payer	Han'gūl
Lower class	Sōmin	Servant	Socially discriminated	
	Ch'ōnmin	Dancer, Butcher Slave	Untouchable	Illiterate
	Yōja (Women)	Housewife	subordinate to man	Han'gūl

When the Permanent Executive Bible Committee decided to re-translate the Bible in 1893, they confirmed the following two policies under Ross' influence: "It must be our goal to use the pure Korean, without Chinese styles and nuances in all literary missions"; "It is better to target the working class (middle and lower classes) than the upper class" (Bae 2008:321). Using pure Korean, i.e. Han'gūl in the Bible translation naturally helped the working classes, which were marginalised from the opportunities for a better social status and education compared to the upper class and therefore open to reforming of the old social structure, and to return to Jesus (Park 1992:55-56). This led to the dramatic growth of Christianity not by a top down power-based evangelism but by an incarnational relationship-based one carried out by the majority of the Korean social classes accounting for 80 per cent. For example the Korean women who turned to Jesus set their primary goal the conversion of their husbands and children in their family (Lee 1992:88).

John Ross found the purely Korean term *Hananim*, which is a compound of *haneul* (heaven) and *nim* (honorific suffix), meaning the ruler of heaven. Considering the factors that Korea borrowed and used Chinese characters and Ross as a missionary working in China used the Chinese Bible as the primary source for his translation, he was supposed to select *Tianzhu* (Lord of heaven) or *Shangdi* (Emperor in high), both Chinese names for God, as the Korean

name for God. He, however, surprisingly chose to use *Hananim* (Hong 2008:96-97). He mainly worked with Korean helpers and replaced *Shangdi*, the original Confucian and Manchurian Taoist monotheistic god, with the Korean vernacular equivalent term *Hananim* for the sake of Koreans' easier reception (Oak 2013:311). Lillias H. Underwood (1918:125), wife to H.G. Underwood, evaluated Ross' selection of the term *Hananim* as follows: "Our people said, 'The Koreans understand the word *Hananim*; they worship him already; we have only to teach them that he is the one and only God, to tell them what his attributes are, and it will be easy'. The Koreans also liked the idea; they knew about their old god, *Hananim*; it was easy for them to understand that he must receive supreme worship, and that all other gods must be ignored."

Following in the footsteps of John Ross, the Bible Committee accepted the term *Hananim* as the Korean name for God, developed and improved it by research on the Korean traditional religions to understand the spiritual mind-set of the Korean people better. There had been some dispute to select a Korean term as the name for God (the term question). Some American missionaries like H.G. Underwood and D.L. Gifford expressed their concern that by using the existing name of god like *Hananim* might put the infant native church in danger of syncretism though it is easier for natives to understand (Underwood 1918:104), while other missionaries disagreed with them saying that creating a new term as the Korean name for God could be an attempt to introduce a totally strange Western god to the natives and might result in being irrelevant to them. The term question was rounded off since Underwood withdrew his claim after discovering in his research that there is a monotheistic conception in the term *Hananim* (Hong 2008:68), as can be seen from his wife's report:

In delving into books on Chinese and early Korean religions, he found that, at a time when only one god was worshipped in the Kingdom of Kokurei (part of early Korea), that god was called *Hananim*; the word was a descriptive term, signifying the great and only One. This was different from anything he had hitherto discovered as to the Korean understanding of their use of the word '*Hananim*'; but as it was

unquestionably the original meaning of the word, from which they had drifted away, Dr. Underwood concluded it might be used with propriety with this meaning – that is its original sense might be easily recalled to the minds of the Koreans (Underwood 1918:126).

Not only Underwood but other members of the Bible Committee displayed their openness toward Korean religions and culture as well as their ability to Christianise them, while rejecting and avoiding syncretism (Oak 2013:315). Daniel L. Gifford, in his research on ancestral worship, found out that the Korean people blended multiple religions such as Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism for their ancestral worship and those religions could coexist in harmony by their faith in the shamanic high god, *Hananim* (the head deity of Korean folklore). Homer B. Hulbert presented the Christian idea of the Trinity in his translation of the Korean founding myth of Tan'gun (the progenitor of Korea) which was formed mainly in shamanism though it later mingled with some other religious elements (Hong 2008:61). The story of the Tan'gun myth translated by Hulbert (Hulbert 1901:33-35) from *Samguk yusa*, a collection of legends, folktales and historical accounts relating to the three kingdoms of ancient Korea says:

In the primeval ages, so the story runs, there was a divine being named Whan-in, or Che-sök, 'Creator'. His son, Whan-ung, being affected by celestial ennui, obtained permission to descend to earth and found a mundane kingdom.... A tiger and a bear.... They ate and retired into the recesses of a cave, but the tiger... could not endure the restraint..., but the bear, with greater faith and patience, waited the thrice seven days and then stepped forth, a perfect woman. The first wish of her heart was maternity, and she cried, "Give me a son." Whan-ung, the Spirit King, passing on the wind, beheld her sitting there beside the stream. He circled round her, breathed upon her, and her cry was answered. She cradled her babe in moss beneath that same pak-tal tree (sandalwood tree).... This was the Tan'gun, 'The Lord of the Pak-tal Tree'.... At Mun-wha there is a shrine to the Korean trinity, Whan-in, Whan-ung and Tan'-gun.

Hulbert described Whan'in as Creator, the Heavenly Father, thus *Hananim*;

Whan-ung as the Spirit like the wind; Tan'gun as the Son conceived by the Spirit (the wind) and born of the bear woman. The woman symbolises the ancient Korean tribe having a bear as their totem and has great faith and patience like the Virgin Mary. Tan'gun was regarded as the head of the mother bear tribe since Tan'gun etymologically denotes a sacerdotal head in the ancient theocratic society (Hong 2008:57). Through this interpretation and application, Hulbert could Christianise a monotheistic concept of the high god *Hananim* and his Trinitarian attribute in the Korean shamanism, as well as its deep relevance with the Korean nation (Oak 2013:70-71). James S. Gale introduced a new etymological perspective on the term *Hananim*. Through discussions with a Korean linguist, he found that the Korean people already knew the term *Hananim* as a compound of *Hana*, meaning heaven, one and great, and *nim*, meaning lord, master, king, thus "The Ruling One", "The Honourable One" and "The Great One", "One Great Lord of Creation" (Oak 2013:67-68). By these efforts of early missionaries to integrate Christian transcendence and enculturation, *Hananim* the contextualised term for God could naturally infiltrate into the Korean people's spiritual realm as the term with the following five-fold meanings and it brought the rapid growth of Christianity on Korean soil (Oak 2015d:5)

- Indigenusness: *Hananim* is the holy creator in heaven. He is a merciful God who sends his son and rain on all people.
- Primitive monotheism: *Hananim* is an aboriginal high God whom the Korean people has served and prayed to from ancient times.
- Trinitarian oneness: *Hananim* is in a Trinitarian relationship with his Spirit and his Son, Tan'gun the founder of Korea.
- Etymological monotheism: *Hananim* is a heavenly and one great and glorious God.
- Historicity: *Hananim* is a national God fighting Japanese colonisation and the polytheism of Shinto (the national religion of Japan) since 1905.

Accepting an indigenous term, formed in shamanism, for the Christian God could be said to mean the acceptance of the idea that Korean history prior to



the Western missionaries belongs to Christ Jesus in the holistic perspective on mission in which Christ is not only the head of the church, but also the governor of the secular world (Hong 2008:32). It was a proclamation of the universal lordship of Christ to the Korean people. It also displayed the ability of Christianity to be translated in the Korean context as Jesus was incarnated into human life on earth, especially in the Hebrew culture and worldview (Hong 2008:141). While the Roman Catholic Church, which started their mission in Korea about 100 years earlier than the Protestant Church, limited priests' use of the Bible and was passive to distributing their Scripture that became hindrances for their mission works and growth, Protestant mission could satisfy Korean people's desire to seek the true teaching and religion by active distribution of the vernacular Scriptures among the people (Kim 2015:260).

### **3.3. Comprehensive assessment**

In his redemptive will to restore his kingdom through his church, God made the Korean people have a receptive attitude towards the gospel through political, cultural and religious confusions. The early Korean Christians with the joy of salvation voluntarily testified to the gospel by their changed words and deeds. In this way the indigenous Korean churches were spontaneously established. They did not get stuck in the church building but governed the church by themselves without the clergy. They could stand alone and help other churches by giving beyond their ability like the Macedonian churches (2Cor 8:3). As a self-supporting church, they tried to participate in the mission of God by following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, while refusing that the mission of the church should be controlled and manipulated by external support and man-oriented programmes.

God sent John Ross and John Nevius as his instruments to help the early Western missionaries in Korea, who were young and confused with contemporary imperialistic mission plans, to change their attitude toward mission and to participate in God's indigenous, holistic and united mission. In this sense, John Ross confessed several times that it was God's providence (Bae 2008:320; Park 2014a:632). Through the indigenous mission represented by the three-self principle firmly based on Bible teaching, all

Korean Christians came to be faithful witnesses of God participating in God's mission as disciples of Jesus with the truth wherever they were sent by living the truth with words and deeds.

The medical and educational missionaries, despite their civilising ministries which were recognised as a part of process of colonisation, tried to avoid being imperialistic relying on money and power. They rather, by incarnational service, tried to open the hearts of the Korean people and restore the integrity of the relationship between God and the Korean people, man and woman, and even further social relationships by transforming distorted feudalistic social structures and superstition connected to culture and traditions. The united mission as the body of Jesus Christ demonstrated how the kingdom of God is. It also restored the kingdom of God on Korean soil by discerning and identifying God's original good design (religious heart to glorify God and enjoy him forever) from the present fallen state (idolatry and syncretism) and proclaiming the lordship of Jesus Christ over the church as well as secular history.

Considering the factors observed thus far, although there was no term like missional in the initiative stage of the Korean church, the understanding of the early Western missionaries and the Korean Christians about the nature and the mission of the church was the same as that of missional church and its missional ecclesiology. The rapid growth of the early Korean church through the Holy Spirit and attitude of the Western missionaries and the Korean evangelists and a number of unknown Korean witnesses towards mission was the result of their thorough obedience to the redemptive will of God and participation in his mission to expand his kingdom (Choi 2015:106).

#### **3.4. The revival movement and Japanese colonial period (1903-1945)**

In the era of imperialism, "Korea's geographic position was unfortunate. The country was a peninsula which was located strategically between rival empires." (Latourette 1976:446). Marching in step with expansionism of the world powers, Japan persistently tried to make Korea a stepping-stone to advance into the continent (Park 2014a:786). Japan secured its monopoly

status in Korea by winning the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 and the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-1905 (Choi 2015:112). Both wars broke out within Korean territory so that many Korean people lost their lives. In 1905 Korea yielded under the pressure and signed a protectorate treaty with the Japanese government (Hong 2008:80). Since then, Korea had practically been ruled by Japan as a colony with all kinds of efforts to assimilate Korea into Japan culturally, politically and economically, though it was still theoretically an independent country (McCune 1950:29). The process of Japanese colonisation of Korea was a heart-breaking experience for Koreans. The Korean people came to the church in frustration and despair since “many Koreans saw in the church the only hope for their country” (Blair 1909:39).

In these circumstances, there happened a small revival movement in Wŏnsan in 1903 and it ignited the fire of the Great Revival in Pyongyang in 1907. The flame of the revival rapidly spread from Pyongyang all over Korea (Hong 2008:81). Although the Korean church was experiencing an explosive growth through the significant manifestation of the Holy Spirit, in 1910 Korea was finally annexed to Japan. The Japanese colonial period lasted for 36 years and the Korean church had to pass through severe persecutions during the period. Kim (2015:115) states that the Holy Spirit working through the revival movement was a gift from God to the Korean church to persevere the 36 years of the Japanese colonial period like the early church endured the great persecutions of the Roman Empire for about 200 years by the power of the Spirit of God. Although the Korean church was under persecution during this period, it grew in numbers being organized and matured through these bitter times by the empowerment and guidance of the Holy Spirit to witness to the kingdom of God (Oak 2013:271).

#### 3.4.1. The Great Revival Movement

##### **(i) The revival movement in Wŏnsan**

The revival movement was initiated by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit through a prayer meeting of women missionaries in Wŏnsan in 1903 with Mary C. White and Louise H. McCully’s visit to Korea from China. It gained

momentum when seven women missionaries from different denominations started gathering and praying together for the revival movement to break out in Korea. From 24 to 30 August, 1903, they had a united Bible study and prayer meeting with a Methodist medical missionary named Robert A. Hardie as the main speaker. As Hardie prepared for three sermons about prayer for the meeting as the main speaker, he looked into himself and found that he lacked spiritual power and had racism (Park 2014a:829-230). On the last day of the meeting, he confessed his failures in mission due to his ethnic superiority looking down on the Korean people as savages, and his arrogance by relying on his own ability rather than on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He repented in tears before his fellow missionaries. In the following Sunday service he confessed and repented again before the members of his church (Park 2014a:831-832). Hardie's repentance by the illumination of the Spirit called for repentance of the Western missionaries and the Korean churches in Wŏnsan.

The spiritual revival in Wŏnsan was in line with the revivals that happened all over the world in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century such as the Welsh revival and the Mukti revival in India (Choi 2015:139). It was, however, distinguished from other revival movements in that the Bible class played a key role in the Korean revival movement. While the other revivals tended to lead to sectarianism, by emphasising the superiority of their spiritual experience over church structure, sacrament, tradition and even the Bible after experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit, the revival movement in Korea could develop into unity and growth of the church since the people were cut to the heart (Ac 2:37) by the truth as they studied the Bible. They proceeded to confess their sins and to repent through their experience of the Spirit and the manifestation of the Spirit (Min 2008:62-63). At that time the Bible class was the foundation of the three-self principle and the most important church programme to equip the believers spiritually through intensive Bible teaching and training classes. Hardie, as soon as experienced the strong presence of the Holy Spirit, held a Bible class in his church seeking the same manifestation of the Spirit for the church members. As the church members shared the same spiritual experiences with Hardie and spread it to the neighbouring churches, many churches in different regions rushed to invite Hardie, opening Bible classes with spiritual thirst (soul hunger). The Bible class was then called a

revival meeting or a revivalist Bible study meeting (*Buhung sagyung-hoe*) (eds. Ro & Nelson 1983:322).

In 1905 when Korea lost its sovereignty by confirming the protectorate treaty with Japan, the Western missionaries in Korea saw that the Korean people would rather come to church under the strong influence of the Wŏnsan revival movement. Through the guidance of the Spirit of unity (Eph 4:3), the Presbyterian Missions and the Methodist Missions organised the General Council of Protestant Evangelical Missions in Korea and resolved to simultaneously open revival meetings in the major cities of Korea on New Year's Day in lunar calendar of 1906 (Park 2014a:843). Under the influence of the nationwide revival meetings and Hardie's timely return from his Sabbatical retreat late in 1905, the spiritual atmosphere was conducive going on ripe for the Great Revival in Pyongyang early in 1907.

### **(ii) The Great Pyongyang Revival**

The revival movement initiated from Wŏnsan climaxed with the strong manifestation of the Holy Spirit in Pyongyang during the winter revivalistic Bible study meeting for men. The revival meeting took place for about ten days from 6 to 15 January, 1907 at the Changdae hyŏn Church led by missionaries and Korean church leaders. In the evening prayer meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> of January, when a Presbyterian missionary W. N. Blair who had been working in Pyongyang preached on 1Corinthians 12:27 as follows, the participants were stung in their consciences and repented of their lack of love for others (Hong 2008:81): “Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof”, endeavouring to show that discord in the church was like sickness in the body, ‘and whether one member suffereth all the members suffer with it’, striving to show how hate in a brother's heart injured not only the whole church but brought pain to Christ, the church's head” (Blair 1909:44).

In the confused political context, the Korean people hated Americans as well as Japanese. When the United States hastened to recognise Japan's control over the Korean peninsula by signing the Katsura-Taft agreement in 1905 (Park 2014a:809), a violent anti-foreign, especially anti-American, storm swept over the land. The Korean people suffered under a great disappointment in the

Americans whom they had regarded as their special friend. Many Korean Christians grew cold toward their American spiritual leaders and the message of love and forgiveness was unwelcome (Blair 1909:40). On the last evening of the meeting, after a Korean preacher named Kil Sŏnju delivered the word of God and called upon the audience to confess sins and repent, an elder of the Changdae hyŏn Church, who was one of the officers in the Pyongyang Men's Association, of which Blair was the chairperson (Park 2014a:865), publically made his confession: "I have been guilty of fighting against God. As an elder in the church I have been guilty of hating not only Kang You-moon, but Pang Mok-sa (Rev. Blair)." While repenting to God, he also sought the forgiveness of Blair. When the elder asked Blair, "Can you forgive me?", "Can you pray for me?", he could not give any answer, but both bitterly wept hugging each other seized by "a mighty avalanche of power upon them" (Blair 1909:46). Through the revival meeting, the Holy Spirit brought a reconciliation of the Korean believers and the Western missionaries in order to restore Shalom, God's peace.

The confession and repentance of the elder triggered a chain reaction with the other participants' public confessions and repentance of sins. Not only broken relationships due to hatred, but all kinds of sins including practical ones such as fraud, embezzlement and theft were confessed with heaviness and great sorrow (Park 2014a:873). Kim (1971:86-87) described the scene as follows: "The audience.... [C]onfessed all their sins they had committed before God. Without consideration of losing face, they confessed their sins and cried to the Lord who they once had refused. They were not afraid of being arrested by the police because of the revealing theirs sins. The only thing they desperately asked in their prayers was forgiveness from God." No one could avoid the Spirit of God falling upon the guilty souls, and it was horrible to see as if seeing the scene of the last judgement (Park 2014a:873). As sinners standing before the judge on the last judgment day, all people could not stand for fear before the work of the Holy Spirit exposing all sins even the most deeply hidden ones (Blair 1964:18). According to Blair's (1909:47) description, "Then began a meeting the like of which I have never seen before, nor wish to see again unless in God's sight it is absolutely necessary. Every sin a human being can commit was publically confessed that night. Pale and trembling with emotion,

in agony of mind and body, guilty souls, standing in the white light of that judgment, saw themselves as God saw them.”

Although the characteristic of the Great Pyongyang Revival was a thorough repentance as Underwood (1918:229) observed, the revival movement was more than just confessing sins and shedding tears (Kim 2015:113). It was followed by practice in the daily lives of the people who experienced the presence of the Spirit. According to Blair’s report (1909:48), “All through the city men were going from house to house, confessing to individuals they had injured, returning stolen property and money, not only to Christians but to heathens as well, till the whole city was stirred. A Chinese merchant was astonished to have a Christian walk in and pay him a large sum of money that he had obtained unjustly years before.”

As the Christians who were at the scene returned to their homes and churches, the same Spirit flamed forth and spread everywhere the story was told and bore the same fruits of words (witnessing and testifying) and deeds (changed life). F.A. Mckenzie, war correspondent of the *London Daily Mail*, reported:

I believe in foreign mission because of what I have seen of the lives and records of the churches in distant lands. In northern Korea we have today one of the most remarkable examples of what the modern missionary movement is succeeding in doing.... I have tested the converts of this church. I had several of them in my employment for months during the testing times of the Japanese war. I had to trust them largely and they could have fleeced me at many points. I found them the most faithful and most enthusiastic and the most daring native servants I have ever known (Hong 2008:82).

Trusted relationships between foreigners and locals, employers and employees could not be built in the Korean society because of their dishonesty caused by their hopeless contexts. The revival movement, however, brought the restoration of broken relationships as can be seen from Mckenzie’s testing of his Korean employees. As Kim & Roh (2007:148) said, the Great Pyongyang Revival played the role of a medium for the unity of the Korean society and resulted in the restoration of all kinds of broken relationships between Korean



and Korean, Korean and Western missionaries, enemies and enemies, nobles and the lowly, man and woman, and brothers and sisters. Through emphasis on Bible study and prayer for the presence of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit came down upon the church in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, the Korean church experienced the Korean Pentecost (Park 2014a:858). In the strong manifestation of the Holy Spirit, the Korean church passed through the judgment day as well as tasted the Shalom of the kingdom of God in advance. They as the embodiment of the Holy Spirit testified to the kingdom of God by their words of proclamation against sin, unrighteousness and judgment and deeds of living out the kingdom life as the ones who tasted it in advance.

The empowerment of the Holy Spirit through the revival movement became the impetus for the Korean church to keep its integrity and to practice what it is supposed to do during the Japanese colonial period in terms of the following three factors (Oak 2015e:5):

- The Korean church kept its missional verve (Bosch 1991:39) as a witnessing community while being organised and institutionalised, and that led to quantitative and qualitative church growth.
- The Korean church shared the sufferings of the nation and demonstrated the righteousness of God
- The Korean church became an alternative community proving the heavenly hope by keeping their purity in faith of martyrdom under severe persecutions.

#### 3.4.2. Japanese colonial period

##### **(i) Church growth through the revival movement**

Since the gospel was introduced to Korea for the first time, the churches planted randomly centred on families, relatives and neighbours had begun to be structured and organised. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Korean church passed the pioneering stage and was entering the settlement stage. The revival movement started in Wönsan kept the Korean church from settling down to be institutionalised and fossilised. It refreshed and strengthened the

missional ethos and praxis of the Korean church so that it could continue growing as a self-propagating, self-governing and self-supporting church. Oak (2013:271) says that “The direct effect of the Great Revival Movement was the emergence of self-supporting, self-propagating, self-governing, and evangelical Korean Protestant churches.” The revival movement itself did not aim at direct church planting. But the stirring up of enthusiasm for evangelism, brought amazing growth to the Korean church (Park 2000:400). The Christians who experienced internal and external changes of their lives through the strong presence of the Holy Spirit naturally came to have a passion to share the grace of God, and that resulted in the increase of conversions through their witnessing and churches were planted and have grown through the converts (Choi 2015:144).

Although the Korean Christians were already propagating the gospel, as Han (1991:136) pointed out, the revival movement significantly increased their testimony and evangelism, and it produced a number of converts. According to Hardie’s report, there were 17 churches established within the year 1908 in the Kang’wŏn province where Hardie’s mission had failed before the initiation of the Wŏnsan revival movement (Choi 2015:145). In Taegu, there was also an amazing report of church growth from J.E. Adams. On the request of the church members, he opened a revival meeting for 10 days in the church he had served. On the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the church experienced the flood-like presence of the Holy Spirit and as its result churches in the Taegu region grew very fast, gaining 1,976 converts in 1905, 3,867 in 1906 and 6,344 in 1907 (Kim & Roh 2007:143). As Choi (2015:146) says the revival movement bore conversion, and conversion turned believers into evangelists. It was revivalist Bible study meetings that played a decisive role in the revival movement that led to the evangelism movement. Though the primary purpose of the revivalist Bible study meeting was Bible study, it also strongly emphasised evangelism. Generally the revivalist Bible study meeting had Bible study and prayer discipline as its programmes in the morning and all participants went out to the neighbouring villages to preach the gospel in the afternoon. There was a revival meeting for spiritual awakening in the evening and most participants took part in there with the people to whom they testified to Jesus (Choi 2015:151).

Although the revivalist Bible study meeting placed emphasis on Bible study as a vehicle of the revival movement, it was not a study that only pursued academic achievement, irrelevant to the people's lives, but as a guiding principle for salvation and the daily lives of the Korean people (Shearer 1966:54-55). With the influence of the Bible study, the early Korean church thought it a shame not to change their lives according to the word of God and not to testify what they believed through their mouths (Kim & Roh 2007:139-141). In the early Korean church, when a convert wanted to be baptised, evangelism was regarded as one of the important conditions to discern whether a person is a true believer or not (Soltau 1932:38). Candidates (catechumens) had to be able to point to more than one church member whom they brought to Jesus in the church to pass the catechism questions when they were asked, "How many people have you brought to Jesus", "Can you point to the people you brought to this church if there are any?" (Jones 1909:10). This shows how seriously the early Korean church was a self-propagating community which emphasised witnessing to the truth with words and deeds.

The self-supporting of the Korean church also became more stable through the revival movement. According to Park (2014a:972), the total amount of offerings of the Korean church in 1908 became double compared to 1907. The early Korean Christians offered as much as they could with delightful hearts like the Israelites offered to build the tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex 36:1-7) and felt sorry that they could not give more (Kim & Roh 2007:144). Meanwhile the revival movement served as a momentum for church government to move from Western missionaries to local church leaders. Although some Korean churches were governed by their own local leaders without intervention of the Western missionaries, the overall Korean church and its mission were under the governing of the foreign missionaries in their contemptible notion that "the East is East and the West is West, and that there can be no real affinity or common meeting ground between them" (Moore 1907:118). Through their own spiritual awakening, the Westerners began to overcome their cultural imperialism and religious paternalism as R.A. Hardie did in Wönsan (Oak 2013:295). The Korean spiritual leaders, especially Kil Sönju, emerged during the period of the revival movement and proved their sincerity in repentance and depth of spirituality. When Kil Sönju successfully led the revival meetings

on invitation of the Presbyterian Churches in Seoul in March 1907, a missionary described him with full of admiration as follows: “His preaching is in power and in demonstrations of the Spirit. In his mouth the word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than a two edged sword. His prayers are wonderful. People broke down and wept under a burden of sin... Even the leaders in the church confess that they were guilty of horrible sins.... I am reminded of the history which records the results that followed the powerful preaching of Wesley and Whitefield” (Oak 2013:296).

The profound spirituality of the Korean spiritual leaders, as well as the language they used during revival meetings, had a major impact on the population. The mother tongue and local dialects of Korean leaders in the leading of the meetings could appeal to the hearts of the Koreans more than the interpreted words of famous American revivalists or fumbling foreign accent of missionaries (Oak 2013:297). In light of this the Western missionaries’ assumption that “Koreans were different from Westerners, that Koreans could not lead a higher spiritual and ethical life” was refuted (Oak 2013:298).

During the shift in leadership, the Korean Presbyterian Church organised the first independent presbytery in 1907, followed by the General Assembly in 1912. As the first seven Korean ministers were ordained by the Presbyterian Council in 1907 (Blair 1909:50), the Korean church took the big step to be a fully self-governing church, and it led the Korean church to the way of Christian nationalism during the Japanese colonial period (Choi 2015:111). The revival movement enhanced the three-self principle that had already been carried out in the Korean church. This shows that the early Korean church was a missional community spontaneously participating in the redemptive mission of God through the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of mission (Niemandt 2012:3). With the influence of the revival movement, not only the Presbyterian Church which had conducted the three-self principle as their mission policy, but also the Methodist Church joined the church planting through direct evangelism, and that brought explosive church growth to both the Churches during the period of the revival movement as can be seen from the table below which was made from data of the evangelism and mission department of the General Assemblies of Presbyterian and Methodist Churches.

<Table 7> Growth of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in Korea, 1903-1909 (Choi 2015:122)

The Presbyterian Church			The Methodist Church		
Year	Number of churches	Number of members	Year	Number of churches	Number of members
1903	430	22,662	1903	67	6,873
1904	470	25,356	1904	87	8,050
1905	417	37,407	1905	106	11,708
1906	584	56,934	1906	134	15,525
1907	785	72,968	1907	192	21,018
1908	897	94,981	1908	308	44,611
1909	1193	119,273	1909	351	50,145

During these six years the number of churches and members of the Presbyterian Church increased 2.8 times and 5.3 times respectively, while the Methodist Church's number of churches and members increased 5.2 times and 7.3 times respectively during the same period. This amazing church growth did not lead to continuous growth of a large individual church or of churches with luxurious church buildings, but the multiplication of a church into many churches and foreign missions. The Changdae hyŏn Church represents the church growth during the period of the revival movement (ed. Rhodes 1934:151-152). In 1903, the Changdae hyŏn Church experienced dramatic church growth and could no longer accommodate an influx of newcomers with its 1,500 seats. The Changdae hyŏn Church decided not to extend or build a new bigger building to hold all the newcomers and grow bigger, but to form many churches and to help them to be settled. Six churches were formed from the Changdae hyŏn Church and were established from 1903 to 1909: The South Gate Church in 1903, The North Church in 1905, The East Gate Church in 1906, The West Gate Church in 1909, The Outside Gate Church in 1911 (ed. Rhodes 1934:152-153). The early Korean church did never get stuck in church

individualism or in a self-centred growth ideology even in the poor conditions, but tried to form new churches by sacrificing themselves for the expansion of the kingdom of God (Choi 2015:198).

The Korean Church maintained the identity of a missionary church. No sooner had the first independent presbytery in 1907 been established, when the Presbyterian Church formed a board of foreign missions and resolved to send Yi Kifeng, who is one of the first seven ordained Korean pastors and the first Korean missionary, to the island of Quelpart (Jeju Island), at the southern end of Korea (Blair 1909:50). Although Jeju Island is part of Korea, Yi Kifeng is regarded as the first foreign missionary since the culture of the island was very different from the mainland (Choi 2015:288). The mission board sent more missionaries to Jeju Island after Yi Kifeng and dozens of churches were established by their successful missionary works. The General Assembly of the Korean Presbyterian Church on its first agenda since it was established in 1912, decided to spend every thanksgiving Sunday's offering of all Presbyterian Churches in Korea on their foreign mission to the Shandong Province in China (Kim & Roh 2007:161). In the following year the General Assembly sent three Korean missionaries, Pak T'aero, Sa Pyöngsun and Kim Yönghun to China (Kim 2015:159). Eight more missionaries were sent to Shandong after the first three and the mission in Shandong lasted until the last missionary withdrew because of communisation of China in 1949 (The Presbyterian Theological Seminary 2012:93-104). While still receiving Western missionaries and the political and economic conditions under the Japanese colonial rule, the Korean church was not just a church carrying out missionary works with human and material resources, but a missional church seeking its existential purpose in mission.

Church growth through the revival movement could not last throughout the Japanese colonial period. The Korean church experienced a slowdown of growth after Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910 due to the cunning disturbance and persecution of Japan who was afraid that the Korean Christianity was becoming the national religion. Although the Korean church began to grow again with the First of March Independence Movement in 1919, which was nonviolent resistance against Japan led by the Korean church, as

its momentum, it experienced stunted growth or even negative growth after the middle of the 1930s since the Korean church resisted the Japanese policy to obliterate the Korean culture. Japan tried to make Korea their military supply base seeking a more thorough plunder of human and material resources for their wars.

## **(ii) Christian Nationalism**

A holistic mission with medical care and education mainly carried out by the Methodist Church, enlightened the Korean nation that led to the abolition of the feudalistic social status system, gender equality and reduction of illiteracy rate. Ideologically it played an important role in that many Christians were to lead the national movements such as the Tax Protest Movement and *Sinminhoe* (New People's Association) to enhance of the nationalist sentiment through infusion of liberalism and autonomy (Lee *et al.* 1977:127). Lee *et al.* (1977:128) divides the period of Japanese rule into three sub-periods: The Military Colonial Rule Period (1910-1919), The Culture Sovereignty Period (1920-1930), The Obliteration of the Korean nation Period (Colonial policy of subjecting to imperial Japan, 1931-1945). To the Japanese militarists after 1910, the churches' rapid growth was such a challenge and that the Korean church established mission schools which had been educating national leaders. The Japanese could not help worrying about the Korean church in which they saw numerous and powerful organisations of their subjects which they did not control (Brown 1912:7). Japan promulgated a new school law in 1915 that all private schools must be registered with the Japanese government-general of Korea and all the registered schools were forbidden to teach the Bible and Christianity (Fisher 1928:14-20). This was a clear attempt by the Japanese to control everything within their dominions (Browns 1912:7). As a result of it, the mission schools started losing their distinctive religious values and the number of students in government schools outstripped the students in Christian schools three to one by 1918, which had more students than the public schools in 1910 (Moffet 1962:69).

After the annexation on 29 August, 1910, on 29 December of the same year, Japan fabricated an assassination plot against the Japanese government-general, Count Terauchi. The would-be assassins plotted to kill him at the train



station when the governor-general made his journey to Syen Chun, one of the centres of Korean Christianity in the northwest of Korea where more than half of the residents were Christians (Brown 1912:4-5). The Japanese police ordered the students of the mission school, the Hugh O'Neill, Jr., Industrial Academy, to be at the railway station in honour of the passage of the Governor. As the students went into the station, two six-year-old boys were searched by the police and deprived of their pencil knives (Brown 1912:5). With this incident, the Japanese police made a statement of the facts connected with the indictment of the accused Koreans as follows:

At Syen Chun, the conspirators proceeded on the 28<sup>th</sup> (Dec. 1910) to the station again and ranged themselves on the platform with the Japanese and Koreans who came there to welcome the Governor General. The train arrived about noon, and every one of the would-be assassins watched intently for the opportunity, having ready his revolver, or short sword under his long cloak. The Governor General descended from the train and saluting the welcomers passed within three or four steps of the conspirators. Owing, however, to the strict vigilance of the police officers and others, they could not accomplish their nefarious object (Brown 1912:5).

As the year goes by, more manufactured evidences were found and Japan spread the news that there was a nationwide conspiracy, including even American missionaries, to assassinate the governor-general by manipulating the media, including the newspapers (Park 2014b:145-146). About 700 people, including missionaries, the executive members of the *Sinminhoe* and 600 Christians from the regions of Syen Chun and Pyongyang, were arrested and ultimately 123 among them were imprisoned. The 123 prisoners were investigated and excruciating torture was used to wring confessions from them (Moffet 1962:68). In 1912, 105 of them pleaded guilty although they did not know why they were captured. Except for six Christian nationalists such as Yun Ch'ihō and Yi Synghun, 99 of the 105 were cleared of their charges and released in a retrial due to a strong protest lodged by the American government. The fact that 98 of the 123 prosecuted were Christians sustains the suspicion that the Japanese wanted to pressurise Korean Christianity (Kim 2015:117).

After the “105-Man Incident”, Japan proclaimed the Propagation Rule on 16 August, 1915. This new regulation brought the Korean church under bureaucratic controls, and voluminous reports were demanded on the teachings, methods of propagation, and qualifications of ministers and preachers (Moffet 1962:69). According to Park (1975:118), the Japanese government general deliberately delayed whenever a Korean church petitioned for evangelism or building a church building and sent police officers to watch whenever there were revival meetings, prayer meetings and religious conferences. Censorship was rigid and many preachers were often summoned and investigated for delivering anti-Japan messages (ed. Rhodes 1934:501-502). Japan’s persecutions of Christianity were systematic and premeditated and had a great influence on the Korean church (Park 2014b:152). As Moffet (1962:68) said, “The lesson was not lost on Korea’s non-Christians. It was no longer quite so popular to become a Christian.” Since Korea was annexed to Japan, the Korean church had to pass through “nine lean years” (Watson 1934:78-81) as can be seen from the following table.

<Table 9> Growth of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in Korea, 1909-1919 (Choi 2015:125)

The Presbyterian Church			The Methodist Church		
Year	Number of churches	Number of members	Year	Number of churches	Number of members
1909	1,193	119,273	1909	351	50,145
1910	1,157	140,470	1910	479	51,401
1911	1,448	144,261	1911	549	56,990
1912	1,438	127,228	1912	558	60,273
1913	1,448	144,261	1913	637	57,055
1914	1,647	121,228	1914	677	49,722
1915	1,715	145,616	1915	684	53,375
1916	1,754	146,413	1916	681	54,668
1917	1,962	149,526	1917	698	53,279
1918	1,778	160,909	1918	679	50,972
1919	1,705	144,062	1919	661	51,630

The rapid growing Korean church lost its members between 1911 and 1912, from 144,261 to 127,228. For the first time about 17,000 church members left the Korean church within a year. The early missionaries, seeing escalation of national consciousness among the Korean people in the progress of Japanese colonisation and by the influence of the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900, resolved to depoliticise the Korean church by proclaiming political neutrality in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Korea in 1901 (Lee *et al.* 1977:126). This neutrality policy of the Western missionaries lasted during the revival movement period and was strengthened to stabilise the church and to protect the church members after they saw their church members taken into police custody in the 105-Man Incident (Choi 2015:116-117). However, though the missionaries counselled moderation and sought to avoid involvement in political problems, it could not stop boiling nationalist sentiments in Christian circles (Moffet 1962:67).

As the Korean church grew in number and spirit through the revival movement, through faith they endured frustration and sorrow for their country's ruination and overcame the dualism between the independence movement and faith because they believed that mature believers had to fulfil their social responsibility. Min (2008:64) remarked that the revival movement set up the sacramental theology in the Korean church. It means that the Korean church, which had focused on winning souls and individual salvation, came to have a communal ecclesiology partaking together in the flesh and blood of Christ Jesus after experiencing "One Spirit" (Eph 4:4) through the revival movement. The Korean church was united by the Holy Spirit to follow Jesus by confirming the word of God through their bodies on Korean soil. The Korean church participated in the society by connecting the world transcending history to their historical faith, and could lead the national movement by encouraging social cohesion between the other religions and the Korean people through the unity of all churches (Min 2008:64-65).

The change of leadership also strengthened the nationalist tendency of the Korean church. Since the first independent presbytery was established in 1907, the leadership of the Korean church gradually changed from the Western missionaries to the local church leaders. Unlike the Western missionaries who

were a third party, there could not be a neutral zone for the Korean church leaders since for them being neutral meant admitting the illegal and violent usurpation of Japan and being irrelevant to the painful lives of the Korean people who lost their country and land. Although the missionaries taught not to hate, but love Japan based on Matthew 5:44 and not to resist the Japanese rule, but to obey “the governing authorities established by God” according to Romans 13:1 (Brown 1912:6), the Korean church leaders taught the Korean church to participate in the independence movement not to hate Japan, but to demonstrate the righteousness of the kingdom of God by seeking justice as the people of God and being with the vulnerable as the body of Christ (Kim 2015:118). The Korean church which experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit through the revival movement, instead of focusing only on the independence of Korea itself, took part in the national movement as a community tasting God’s ruling in advance to witness to the kingdom of God where righteousness and justice rule the Korean people not only by words but also by actions. In the socio-political participation of the Korean church the characteristics of the person and works of Jesus were displayed, and it was the First of March Independence Movement of 1919 (hereafter the FMIM) that demonstrated most prominently his characteristics (Hong 2008:80-81).

The FMIM is an independence movement that Korean people, who had been anguished under the Japanese militaristic rule, launched in 1919, stimulated by the “14 Points Peace Plan” delivered by the president of the U.S, T.W. Wilson in 1918 (Bland 1921:197). The peace plan contains, especially in its 5<sup>th</sup> clause, the national self-determination principle: “A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined” (Walker & Weeks 2010:2).

After the annexation in 1910, Japan through the power of the military police strictly strangled an anti-Japanese movement and forcefully established and conducted various unfair regulatory laws such as the company law in 1910, the fisheries law in 1911, the land law in 1912, the mining law in 1915, the

forestry law in 1918, etc., which made Korea the material supplier and product market of Japan (Park 2014b:155-158). These conditions stirred up anti-Japanese sentiment and brought the organisation of domestic and foreign national activist groups (ed. Rhodes 1934:501-502). When the First World War ended in November, 1918, President Wilson sent Charles Crane as an envoy to Shanghai, China, to account for the position of the U.S, including the national self-determination principle, before the peace conference to let the Chinese delegation participate in the Paris Peace Conference.

When the envoy arrived in Shanghai, Yŏ Unhyŏng, the chairperson of the *Sinhan ch'ŏngnyŏndang* (New Korea Youth Association) who was a Christian national activist group working in Shanghai, heard from him of the national self-determination principle and came to regard the Paris Peace Conference as a golden opportunity to win the independence of Korea (Kim & Roh 2007:265). Yŏ Unhyŏng delivered the Petition of Independence to the President Wilson through Crane in December, 1918, and in January 1919 delegated Kim Gysik as the representative of the group to the Paris Peace Conference to let him counter Japan's claim that their colonisation of Korea was carried out on Korean's own request and to let him petition for help from the international society (Kim 2015:122-123). The *Sinhan ch'ŏngnyŏndang* contacted local Christian leaders like Yi Synghun who was once imprisoned due to the 105-Man Incident, to rise against the Japanese rule to demonstrate to the world that what Kim was appealing for in the conference was representing the intense aspirations of the entire Korean people. Although Yi Synghun came from the Northwest of Korea, he made the independence movement to be the united national movement, transcending local boundaries and religious differences by meeting Christian leaders from all over the country and leaders of other religions to persuade them to take part in the independence movement (Kim 2015:123-124).

The 33 national representatives consisting of 15 leaders from Ch'ŏndoism, 2 from Buddhism and 16 from Christianity resolved that the independence movement would start demonstrating from 1 March, 1919, two days before the national burial of king Kojong, for which hundreds of thousands people will gather in Seoul, and that demonstration must be nonviolent. The

representatives of three major religions gathered on 28 February for the last time before the independence movement. They made the final review of the “Declaration of Independence” and verified that it was the will of all Korean people by signing it. Finally at 2 p.m. on the appointed day, after the 33 representatives read aloud the declaration at the Taewha restaurant, students and civilians gathering at the Topgol park started marching, shouting “Hurray for the independence of Korea”, waving national flags they secretly made in advance. The independence movement spread all over Korea from the local churches and continued for months. The FMIM was a large nationwide scale independence movement with collective will of independence of all Korean people. According to Park (2014b:165), the number of total participants was 2,021,448 and the number of times of demonstration was 1,542.

Although the FMIM was a nonviolent demonstration for freedom, as the movement rose up across the country, Japan attempted brutal military suppression of it (Moffet 1962:69). As a result there had been 7,509 dead, 45,562 injured and 49,811 arrested with the loss and destruction of 715 houses and 47 churches in Syen Chun (Park 2014b:165). According to Roberts, an American missionary who worked in Cheongju, more than 100 people were shot or beaten to death by the Japanese police in Cheongju (Kendall 1919:32-33). Christians and churches were most severely harmed and damaged since they were targeted as the centre of the independence movement. The church was particularly vulnerable to retaliation since 16 of the 33 signers of the Declaration of Independence were Christians (Moffet 1962:70). According to Moffet’s (1962:70) description, “Nearly every Christian pastor in Seoul was jailed. Police with drawn swords rushed the nonviolent demonstrators. When Christian nurses from Severance Hospital hurried out to bind up the wounds of the injured, they were arrested too. Soldiers stopped passers-by and asked, ‘Are you Christian?’ If they answered ‘Yes’, they were beaten. If they answered ‘No’, they were released. In rural areas, the brutality was unspeakable.”

The table below shows the number of the believers of each religion who were arrested for leading the FMIM. Considering that at that time the total number of members of Christians was about one fourth of that of Ch’öndöism and Christians were about 1.25 per cent of the entire population, but made up 22.5

per cent of the entire number arrested, the Korean church made a large sacrifice for and contribution to the FMIM, and the Korean Christians had a strong nationalist tendency (Kim 2015:128).

<Table 9> The Participation rate of each religions based on the number of arrests in the March First Independence Movement (Kim 2015:128)

	Chris- tianity	Ch'ōndoism	Confucianism	Bud- dhism	Others	No Religion	Total
Number of arrests	2,039	1,363	55	41	57	5,486	9,059
Partici- pation rate (%)	22.5	15	0.6	0.5	0.8	60.0	100

In the FMIM the Korean church, as can be seen from the above participation rate and its loss of life and property, demonstrated the righteousness of the kingdom of God through sacrifice carrying the cross and fighting against injustice without violence. According to Moffet (1962:69-70), “Korea’s Christians had insisted on non-violence as the price of their participation in the movement, so on March 1, as the people rose against their oppressors, they marched under instructions that read: ‘Whatever you do, do not insult the Japanese; do not throw stones; do not hit with your fist, for these are the acts of barbarians.’” The spirit of nonviolence of the Korean church, seeking justice and righteousness to restore reconciliation and peace is also revealed in the Declaration of Independence (Korean National Independence League 1919:31):

We hereby proclaim the independence of Korea and the liberty of the Korean people. We announce this to the nations of the world in order to manifest the principle of the equality of man, and we pass it onto our posterity in order to preserve forever our people’s just rights to self-preservation. We declare this in witness of our history of five millennia, and in the name of twenty million united people so as to



insure the perpetual, permanent, and unrestricted progress of our people, and to join the great movement for the reconstruction of the world order, inspired by the conscience of mankind. This is in accordance with the command of Heaven, the great trend of the time, and a popular manifestation of the principle of coexistence of all mankind. Nothing in the world can stop or suppress this.... We are not here merely to accuse Japan for her breach of numerous solemn agreements entered into since the Treaty of Friendship of 1876, nor are we here to reprimand Japan for her lack of integrity and faithfulness simply because her teachers in their classes and her politicians in their practices have regarded our civilized people as savages, seeking only the pleasure of the conqueror, and have shown contempt for the age-old tradition of our society. Indeed, the urgency of self-examination and self-innovation does not allow us time to find fault with others. Neither can we, who work at great speed to mend the wrongs of the present age, afford to spend time grieving over what is past and gone. Our critical task today lies only in self-reconstruction and not in the destruction of others. Our work is to chart the new destiny of our own in accord with the solemn dictates of our conscience and not to hate or reject others, swayed only by momentary emotions or resentment over the past. Our purpose is to correct and reform today's unnatural, illogical, and maladjusted conditions created by power-hungry and fame-seeking Japanese politicians who were bound by archaic ideas and force. Our aim is to restore conditions to be harmonious with just principles which are natural and logical.

The Korean church did not disregard the contextual situation in which the Korean people lost their country and got troubled. Choi (2015:23) says that the patriotic social participation of the Korean church represented by the FMIM was an incarnational mission to embrace and share the sufferings of the people in the days of hardship. After the FMIM, the treating of Christianity as a foreign religion lessened and a new perception of Korean Christianity as “a religion of the Korean people” appeared (Kim 2015:119). The Korean church played the pivotal role in both initiation and progress of the FMIM, and it

completely changed non-believers perspective on Christianity (Park 2014b:173). Christians planted Christian ideals to non-believers by being united with them and testified that Christianity was the only genuine hope of the nation. Through this, the Korean church could dispel the misunderstandings of the people that Christianity is an individualistic and selfish group seeking only quantitative growth and could demonstrate to the Korean people, to the other religions, and even to the world that Christianity is a community of faith which is self-giving and concerned about the future of the nation.

With this positive evaluation by the Korean people, the Korean church could start growing again as can be seen from the table below. Although the number of the Presbyterian Churches and their members decreased from 1,778 and 160,919 in 1918 to 1,705 and 144,062 and the Methodist Church also lost about 1,000 members during the same period due to serious damage they suffered as part of the FMIM, the Korean church which won the hearts of the Korean people could recover quickly and came to grow again (Park 2014b:181).

<Table 10> Growth of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in Korea, 1918-1924 (Choi 2015:176-178)

The Presbyterian Church			The Methodist Church		
Year	Number of churches	Number of members	Year	Number of churches	Number of members
1918	1,778	160,909	1918	679	50,972
1919	1,705	144,062	1919	661	51,630
1920	1,738	153,915	1920	643	45,372
1921	1,879	179,158	1921	661	49,251
1922	1,941	187,271	1922	708	59,971
1923			1923	788	63,912
1924	2,171	191,887	1924	857	68,483

As Moffet (1962:70) said “Japan’s brutal persecution of Christians for their share in the independence movement, far from discrediting them, had

precisely the opposite effect. It spotlighted them as heroes and martyrs for the whole country.” The Korean church was not only being with the people in a direct and active way like the FMIM, but also indirectly continued to be with the people by raising Christian national leaders through holistic education and medical missions. The medical and education missions mainly carried out by Western missionaries during the early stage of the Korean mission were passed on to the Korean church and its mission as can be seen from such examples as Oh Gŭngsŏn who became the director of the Severance Hospital after O.R. Avison in 1934 and Kim Hwalan who became the first Korean principle of the Ewha Woman’s University in 1939 (Oak 2015e:4). The Korean church was a missional church which shared sufferings together with the people in incarnational ways and witnessed to the kingdom of God through unity and nonviolence which are different from the worldly ways.

### **(iii) Martyrs and the church as an alternative community of hope**

Although they failed to regain their lost sovereignty from Japan, Korea through the FMIM succeeded to show its strong will towards independence to the international society and could continue more systematic independence movements through the provisional government established in Shanghai in April, 1919. As a result of world pressure over the Japanese brutal response to the nonviolent demonstrations, the Japanese government instituted a new and gentler policy with Korea (Grayson 1985:117-118). After experiencing a nationwide and systematic resistance of the Korean people, Japan recognised that ruling Korea through military suppression was no longer appropriate, and came to be clothed with a cultural rule through which they argued that they would try to promote Korean people’s happiness and benefit. According to the new policy, there followed some changes such as adopting the ordinary police system, while the military police, which was the symbol of all kinds of oppressions and exploitations, retreated and allowed the freedom of speech and the press (Park 2014b:177-178). The school law which restricted religious education at the school also changed. Mission schools could start teaching the Bible again, so that a considerable number of students came to register with the schools (Kerr & Anderson 1970:49-50). The Korean church was allowed by the Japanese government to proceed freely with their education, publication

ministries, and medical ministries (Kerr & Anderson 1970:49-50).

Kwak (1966:158) said that although there were some changes in the Japanese ruling policy, it was initiated with the real intent of the permanent colonisation of Korea through taming the Korean church, which had been raising national leaders and awakening the national consciousness, to conform to the Japanese colonial regime. This can be proved by the following facts: the Japanese government prepared in advance an institutional framework to force the Korean people to worship at Shinto shrines at completion in 1925 of the *Chosen-Shingung* (Shrine), the major imperial Shinto shrine in Korea; the Japanese government executed a “new religion policy” to make the Korean church obedient and cooperative to subjection to Japan (Park 2014b:179). Their new religion policy the Japanese government intended to promote their equational policies on the subjects of the Japanese empire by infiltrating the Japanese Union Church, which was a government-patronised church, into Korea to split the Korean church and to incorporate it in the Japanese Union Church. The Japanese Union Church had grown to have 150 churches for 21,860 Japanese members and 145 churches for 8,927 Korean members in 1921 since a Japanese missionary, Wadase, started mission work in Korea in April, 1910 (Park 2014b:180). The Japanese Union Church labelled the FMIM, not as an independence movement, but a riot mob and blamed the Western missionaries who were ruthless denouncing the military suppression by the Japanese government. The Korean Union Church came from the Japanese Union Church and became independent on 1 September, 1921. They had their first General Assembly and defined their position with as liberal theology and consented to worship at Shinto shrines.

It became clear through the policy to obliterate the Korean culture in the 1930s that the cultural rule was just seemingly a policy change. The imperial Japan, to resolve the economic crisis caused by the Great Depression of the late 1920s, formed an economic bloc binding mainland Japan and its colonies. After they occupied Manchuria (the Manchurian Incident in 1931) in the early 1930s, the imperial Japan thoroughly exploited the labour and natural resources of Korea for military supplies to wage the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 and the Pacific War in 1941 (Lee *et al.* 1977:129). They did not

stop there, but brought all the means like Shinto worship in 1935, a ban on using Korean language in March, 1938, *Ch'angssi-kaemyŏng* (Change Korean given name into Japanese name) in November, 1939, bowing to the east in deference to the Emperor, etc. (Nahm 1988:253) to assimilate the Koreans with the Japanese by completely eradicating Korean culture and tradition. The change in the Japanese colonial ruling policy had a great influence on the growth of the Korean church as can be seen from the table below.

<Table 11> The Number of churches and members of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in Korea, 1919-1942 (Choi 2015:127)

The Presbyterian			The Methodist Church		
Year	Number of churches	Number of members	Year	Number of churches	Number of members
1919	1,705	144,062	1919	661	51,630
1924	2,171	191,887	1924	857	68,483
1932	2,850	258,216	1932	938	58,532
1936	3,254	341,700	1936	935	57,982
1937	3,326	356,281	1937	903	58,503
1938	3,416	362,077			
1941	3,441	354,913			
1942	2,883	249,666			

The Korean church which had continued to grow since the FMIM, experienced a decrease in the number of churches and members from 1941 in the case of the Presbyterian Church, while the Methodist Church experienced it earlier than the Presbyterian Church from 1932. Although their decrease started not at the same time, but both occurred during the period of the obliteration of the Korean nation, it is the result of the persecution of the Korean church which had developed a national consciousness and the economic destruction of the livelihoods of the public. According to Moffet (1962:72), "Eight out of every ten Koreans, according to the census of 1928, depended upon farming for a living, but paddy field by paddy field, Korea's emerald green rice lands were slipping into the hands of the Japanese." During the 'obliteration of the Korean nation'

the Korean church could not concentrate on evangelism and mission due to divisions and confusions caused by severe persecutions as well as the devastated economic conditions (Choi 2015:127). Among the policies the Japanese colonial authorities conducted during the obliteration of the Korean nation period, the biggest threat to the Korean church was the issue of the Shinto shrine worship (Kerr & Anderson 1970:56).

Shinto is a form of the Japanese traditional and national religion that regards the emperor of Japan as the incarnation of the sun-goddess. The emperor, as the incarnation of the goddess, was believed to be sacred and the ruler of the whole world (Lee 1966:33). Therefore the Japanese were convinced that they were a superior race and destined to rule over the whole world as the country and people of the emperor, the incarnation of the goddess (Lee 1992:198). “In Shintoism, prayers of adoration and thanksgiving are offered at the Shinto shrines and petitions are offered to the gods of Japan” (Hong 2008:83). In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Japan began to use Shintoism as an ideology of imperialism, namely by their “colonial policy of subjecting to imperial Japan”, arguing that being colonised by Japan is an honourable opportunity to be the people of the emperor as a means to glorify their imperialistic expansionism. Since the Manchurian Incident in 1931, imperial Japan earnestly began to force all Koreans to worship at Shinto shrines on the pretext of national spiritual mobilisation in order to make the Korean people legally and psychologically standardised Japanese subjects (Park 2014b:682-683).

“The demand of the Japanese colonial government to pay homage to the gods at the Japanese Shinto shrine was the climatic event that either proclaimed or showed an abandonment of the Christian identity of Korean Christians” (ed. Van der Borgh 2008:381). As Park (2014b:676-677) said, “Shinto worship was an issue which more seriously and directly intimidated the Christian faith than the 105-Man Incident in 1912 and the FMIM in 1919.” The Korean church was put into the same position as the early church in the Roman Empire to give their answer to the questions: “The command of the Empire or God, to which one are you going to obey?”, “The order of an idolatry government or Christian conscience, which one are you going to follow?” (ed. Kim 1991:384). In response to the forceful order of the Japanese colonialists, the Korean church

divided into two groups, one group adapted to the Shinto worship, while the other resisted (Hong 2008:83). Despite the religious characteristics of Shinto, Japan emphasised that Shinto is not a religion, but a means of expressing loyalty to the emperor of Japan, saying that a person who do not worship at a Shinto shrine where the ancestral tablets of the emperor were set up is an unpatriotic person (Park 2014b:683).

Since the Roman Catholic Church and the Methodist Church accepted the Japanese government argument and worshiped at a Shinto shrine without any trouble, the Presbyterian Church, which represented the Korean church with the biggest number of members naturally became the target of the Japanese colonialists to pull down because they declined the Shinto worship. In the process of forcing the Presbyterian Church to worship at Shinto shrines, the Japanese government put the mission schools, especially ones belonging to the Presbyterian Mission, as their prime target. The governor of South P'yŏngan Province, Yasutakeda convened a conference of the school principals on 14 November, 1935 and demanded that all participants worship at Shinto shrines (Moffet 1962:73-74). Before the threat of Yasutakeda, who was arguing that the defiant principals would divest their credentials since opposing the worship of Shinto shrines was an insult to the emperor (Blair 1995:147), George S. McCune who was a Presbyterian missionary and the principal of Sinsŏng middle school in Synchron, with the executive members of the North Presbyterian Mission, J. Cordon Holdcroft, T.S. Soltau and H.A. Rhodes, countered to the governor as follows: "I am a Christian. As the Shinto ceremonies clearly carry religious significance, and according to the word of God I believe that such acts are prohibited, I cannot in good conscience execute such acts as an individual. I think it is unfortunate that the students were also prohibited from doing so as I cannot worship Shinto shrines myself as an individual" (ed. Kim 1991:382).

For this, McCune was removed from his position and deported to the U.S. In March, 1936, countless numbers of Koreans bid him a warm farewell in Pyongyang, praising what he had done for the Korean people (Min 1973:344-345). McCune's firm attitude against paying homage to a Shinto shrine called for other missionaries' decisive reaction to it and in the end the North



Presbyterian Mission decided to withdraw from the mission school ministries in Korea on 21 September, 1936. This led to withdrawal of 100 students who were the student leaders of the mission schools which they were attending (Park 2014b:700-702). The South Presbyterian Mission also closed down all mission schools they had run following the instruction of the general secretary of the South Presbyterian Mission in Korea, C. Darby Fulton, when they were ordered on 6 September, 1937 that all teachers and students must worship at Shinto shrines to invoke the victory of the Japanese army which was at war against China (Brown 1984:156). The Australian Presbyterian Mission set up a special committee on the issue of Shinto worship in 1936 and resolved not to allow worshipping at Shinto shrines. They put the decision into practice in 1939 by shutting down all their mission schools in Korea (Kerr & Anderson 1970:89).

Closing down of the mission schools in Korea was what the Japanese government wanted since their real intention was not the Shinto worship itself, but was the complete evacuation of the Western missionaries who were hindering Japanese rule with an iron fist. After dealing with the mission schools that opposed the Shinto worship, the Japanese militarists set the Presbyterian Churches in Korea as their next target. The Roman Catholic Church and the Methodist Church which have a centralised system already decided to pay homage to a Shinto shrine (Min 1973:345) through the instruction of the Pope (*Dictatus Pape*) namely "*Pluries Instanterque*" on 25 May, 1936 and the Methodist Mission Board in the U.S on 17 June, 1937 (Park 2014b:704). The Presbyterian Mission was also in the condition that they could not combine forces together because there were divisions between the board in the U.S.A. and the Korean field, and between local mission stations, caused by disagreement on whether running the mission schools to satisfy the condition of the Japanese government or not. These circumstances provided a good opportunity for the Japanese colonial authorities, who wanted to obliterate the national spirit by breaking the Korean church, especially the Presbyterian Church (Park 2014b:713). The Japanese government thought that it was a matter of time to destroy all resistance throughout the church, if they made the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church decide to join worshipping in the Shinto shrines.

It is such a dramatic story how the Japanese colonial authorities took control of the Presbyterian General Assembly meeting held in Pyongyang in 1938 and forced the delegates to approve of Shinto shrine worship as a patriotic act that they claimed was not religious (Poling & Kim 2012:26). All four hundred delegates, missionaries as well as Koreans, were called to local police stations before being allowed to leave for the Assembly. Police bluntly told them that the Assembly must pass an action approving Shrine worship. According to Moffet (1962:74), police came to one presbytery and said, "You already worship three Gods, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. All we ask you to do is add a fourth, the Emperor. Why balk at such a little thing?" All church leaders who opposed the police were imprisoned in advance, so that no debate and no negative votes would be permitted. In the Presbyterian Assembly in Pyongyang in 1938, there were 97 Japanese policemen sitting amongst the 206 representatives, 88 pastors and 88 elders from 27 presbyteries and 30 missionaries, to intimidate them (Lee 1992:430). Under violent pressure from the Japanese police, there was a proposal about the shrine resolution and the issuing of a statement. When the president, Rev. Hong asked the participants, "Say yes, if this proposal is approvable", less than 10 people including the proposer, the seconder and the assenters said yes and the rest kept silent according to the previously decided scenario (Park 2014b:714-716). The president did not ask the delegates, "Say no, if the proposal is not approvable", which must be asked before a decision, and proclaimed that the proposal was adopted unanimously (Park 1992:282-283). The Assembly finally made a humiliating decision to give approval of taking part in a Shinto ceremony (Moffet 1962:74-75).

However, the expectation of the Japanese government that the resolution of the General Assembly meeting would soon eliminate all opposition movements against Shinto worship proved false. The opposition movements continued. It started with Rev. Ju Gich'öl and Ju Namsön in Pyongyang, Rev. Yi Gisön in Sinŭiju and Rev. Han Sangtong, Sön Yangwön, Yi Inchaе and Sön Myöngpog in the Kyöngnam province and spread throughout all over Korea (Park 2014b:718). Although about 200 Presbyterian Churches were closed down, about 3,000 Christians suffered imprisonment for their faith and about 50 ministers were arrested and tortured for failure to attend Shinto ceremonies

and paid martyrdom by the suppression of imperial Japan, the opposition movements against worshipping at the Shinto shrine were unceasing (Moffet 1962:75). As Borgt (2008:382) said, many Korean Christians wandered in mountain villages, caves and holes in the ground, or had to leave their home behind to keep their faith pure. Especially, the Sanjunghyun Church with their senior pastor, Rev. Ju Gich'öl decisively refused to offer homage at the Shinto shrines set up by Japanese authority, not being agitated even under all sorts of threats (Poling & Kim 2012:26). Rev. Ju proclaimed the faith to be a martyr in a sermon titled "Il-Sa-Gag-O" (Single determination) when leading a revival meeting at the Pyongyang Bible Seminary in December, 1935 when the forcible demand of Shinto worship started full-scale. He strongly urged the students not to be servile to the military might but to risk their lives for the truth. As preached, he had been in the vanguard of the opposition movement against Shinto worship until he died from severe torments in prison after four times of imprisonment (Park 2014b:721-723). The Sanjunghyun Church with Rev. Ju deeply challenged all Korean churches to remain steadfast in faith even up to martyrdom until the church is forced to close.

According to Park (1992:276), the churches and Christians, including Rev. Ju and the Sanjunghyun Church, had in common a belief in the inerrancy of the Bible and in the eschatological hope for the kingship of Christ Jesus. Bruce F. Hunt (1960:56), who was an American missionary imprisoned in Manchuria for resisting Shinto worship, said that the Korean brethren were striving unto blood against the entrance of emperor worship into the church with a strong conviction of biblical eschatology. This could be possible since the Korean church had emphasised Bible study and training from its initial stage and tasted the kingdom of God in advance through the presence of the Holy Spirit who worked through the revival movement (Park 2014b: 732-733). The Korean Christians who had the faith of a martyr regarded all the present tragedies such as flood, drought, epidemic diseases and persecutions on Christianity as eschatological omens prophesied in the Bible that will happen before the second coming of Christ Jesus and kept their hope that there will be the final judgement to destroy all corrupt authorities and the eternal ruling of the saints together with the Lord (Park 1992:275). The Holy Spirit exposed and disarmed the powers and authorities and empowered the churches in hardships to keep

on fighting to the end in strong hope, with humbleness and love of and for God. As the early church continued to grow under the Great persecutions of the Roman Empire and became a *religio licita* (Bosch 1991:401), the more severely persecuted, the Korean church grew more active and worked to be a hope community for the nation (Park 2014b:729-730).

Park (2014b:738-739) insists that the resistance of the Korean church against worshipping at Shinto shrines is a resistance against the cultural invasion of imperial Japan because Shinto worship was used as a way of a cultural invasion or of their policy of the assimilation and a means of their colonial policy of subjecting Korea to imperial Japan from the beginning. Therefore the resistance of the Korean church should be re-evaluated in terms of an anti-Japanese movement for protecting the nation. Through the Korean church as an alternative community of hope, a sign and promise of the kingdom of God, living out their heavenly hope on earth to the point of death, the Korean people could keep their hope for the liberation and independence of the nation where justice and righteousness will be restored. As Kim (2015:129) says “Christians were the only Korean community which never gave up their hope even in their miserable lives under the cruel colonial rule of imperial Japan.” The Korean church was an alternative community of hope witnessing in the Holy Spirit to the hope of their eternal ruling with the Lord in the new heavens and new earth to the Korean people, risking their lives under severe persecutions. The Korean church, therefore, was a missional church in terms of its understanding of the nature and mission of the church.

### **3.5. Comprehensive assessment**

As Niemandt (2012:3) said, “Studying missional churches presupposes an expectation that the unbound nature and unpredictability of the Spirit’s presence and activity is associated with the church.” The understanding and practice of the Korean church about the nature and mission of the church from 1903 to 1945 was deeply related with the revival movement. Since strong manifestation in Wönsan in 1903, the Holy Spirit through the revival movement had empowered and guided the Korean church to witness and expand the Kingdom of God on Korean soil as an instrument of God’s redemptive mission

and the embodiment of the Holy Spirit, overcoming the despair during the process of colonisation up to 1910 and persecutions and hardships during the Japanese colonial period up to 1945 (Kim & Roh 2007:141). The fact, that the Korean church became even more solid as a self-propagating, self-supporting and self-governing church though it shifted from the initial phase to the settlement stage, shows that the Korean church was still a missional community voluntarily witnessing to the redemptive mission of God, not being institutionalised by the guidance of the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of mission.

The Korean revival movement did not lead to sectarianism by breaking away from the existing order of the church due to an unbalanced excessive emphasis on personal spiritual experiences, but led to a thoroughly repentance movement based on the word of God. This built shalom and unity between Western missionaries and believers, social status and men and women by removing anger and hatred that surged among the Korean people against Japan and Western powers, and became a foundation for the united national movement of the Korean society afterwards. The revival movement centred on the revivalistic bible study meetings set fire in believers' hearts, that directly led to enthusiasm for spreading the gospel. When a church building became too small to accommodate the rapidly increasing stream of converts through evangelism by all believers, church leaders resolved the problem by proliferating the congregations of the church. They never got stuck to church individualism seeking selfish growth of an individual church. The reason they could divide the church despite the pain of separation of the community was their priority on spreading the gospel and the expansion of the kingdom of God. Their perspective and attitude on church growth are a missional church (Choi 2015:198).

The Korean Christians did not give in to the present circumstances while playing a significant role in all kinds of national movements in the realms of education, economy, society, art and literature and youth activities during the Japanese colonial period. It was because of their incarnational motivation to be with the Korean people in sorrow and pain that they could mature with a historical consciousness to witness to the justice and righteousness of the kingdom of God with their words as well as deeds against an unjust socio-

political reality (Lee *et al.* 1977:129-130). The Korean Christianity did not tolerate injustice and unrighteousness. At that time they did not only aim and seek salvation for the afterlife, taking a hands-off attitude toward oppression and exploitation, but shared the sufferings of the nation and stood against those evils through active social participations.

Although the Korean church tried to let the truth of Christianity be rooted in the daily lives of the Korean people through an indigenous mission from its early stage, when they were challenged to deny Christ Jesus and bow down before other gods, the Korean church, through resistance to the point of death without compromise, testified that the gospel it had preached was more than life and sublimated the heavenly hope into the hope of independence of the nation. This is the figure of an apostolic and missional church like the Apostle Paul who became all things to all men to save some by all possible means, but voluntarily sacrificed his life to testify to the heavenly hope through his martyrdom in the Roman Empire where the emperor was worshiped as a god (1Cor 9:20-22). The Korean church, which was a missional community, did not attract people with its buildings and programmes, but did become attractive by themselves as an alternative community witnessing to the heavenly hope to the Korean people in times of hardship and despair.

### **3.6. The Advanced and Triumph of the Pseudo-Christendom mode (1945-2000)**

Choi (2015:302) broadly divides the history of the Korean church into two periods: before and after the liberation from the Japanese colonisation. He says the growth of the Korean church after the liberation of 1945 took on a new aspect with unbiblical factors and unsound theology, a Pseudo-Christendom mode, which differs from the one from 1897 to 1945, which had progressed in the apostolic and post-apostolic mode. The early church grew rapidly passing through the era of apostles and the fathers of the church (post-apostle) even under the severe persecutions of the Roman Empire with its missionary zeal (Dreyer 2012:2). Like the early church, the early Korean church, though it was a small minority under the hardship of Japanese colonial rule, was a growing community witnessing to the kingdom of God, with its apostolic concept of the



essence of the church participating in the mission of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, through incarnational, indigenous and united ministries along with the spontaneous evangelism, carried out not only by clergies but also by all believers, as well as their ethical life as the disciples of Christ Jesus. This apostolic mode of ethos and praxis of the early Korean church is no more since it entered the Pseudo-Christendom mode.

According to Gibbs and Bolgers (2005:17), Christendom had an extensive period since the conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine in A.D. 313 until approximately the midpoint of the twentieth century, during which the church occupied a central position within Western societies and provided both stability and security as a key social institution. Under the interdependent relationship between the church and the state during the medieval age, called the Holy Roman Empire (Frost & Hirsch 2013:21), the Christian church was protected and privileged, and legally established with an institutional form (Guder 1998:6) with a view of the church and the God's kingdom that an institutional church is the kingdom of God as present (Snyder 2001:70).

While the territories ruled by the church and Christian kings were regarded as the geopolitical Christian world, but those outside the Christian circle dominated by heathens were regarded as enemies of Christians, which must be conquered by Christian kings for the sake of an expansion of the kingdom of God (Bosch 1991:224-226). To convert the pagans the use of pressure was seen as justified since it was argued that providing the individual with the opportunity to flee eternal damnation could not be wrong (Bosch 1991:224-225). This provided a basis for the expansion of God's kingdom by power, which was gradually moving from indirect missionary wars to that of direct wars (Bosch 1991:222-224), and thereafter became the missionary paradigm during the medieval period and even for the 19<sup>th</sup> century Protestant mission that was often turned into cultural imperialism which destroyed indigenous cultures on the mission field and transplanted Western culture and civilisation (Lee 2014:29). Mission was confined to evangelising activities carried out by the institutional church and the church recognised itself as the subject of mission to attract people with violence from the secular world to the sacred institutional church and the influence of Christendom (Lee 2014:124).



Tennent (2010:18-20) says that since Christendom was often conceptualised in territorial ways, the citizens of the state grew up as Christians with the concept of Christianity as the normative expression of their religious faith, ethical action, and even world views. According to Tennent, the Korean church has never been a state Christendom since the members of Korean society, as a multiple religious society, were never assumed to be Christians by birth but only by choice (Lee 2014:69). The Korean church, however, has experienced a dramatic growth and attained the privilege of a kind of national religion with a close relationship between the church and the state. With its central status within the Korean society, providing both stability and security as a key social institution, growing from 1 per cent in 1945 to 21 per cent of the population in 2014, it can be said that the Korean church has become a Pseudo-Christendom (Park 2016:2), or a “functional Christendom” (ed. Guder 1998:6). It clearly departed from the understanding and practice of the early Korean church, which grew according to the Apostolic and Post-Apostolic modes, according to the essence and mission of the church. To understand how the Korean church became a Pseudo-Christendom the political, socio-economic and theological aspects must first be researched.

The radical growth of the Korean church in Pseudo-Christendom mode began and has developed with a handful of mega-churches as the central figures. Thumma and Travis (2007:xxi) defined a mega-church as a church having at least a total of two thousand attendees in its weekly service, arguing that a church experiencing a significant quantitative growth having more than 2,000 members has the qualitative characteristics of a social and religious phenomenon. Thumma (1996:418) describes: “The mega-church is a new structural and spiritual organisation unlike any other. In order to understand fully the dynamics of mega-churches, they must be seen as a collective social phenomenon rather than as individual anomalous moments of spectacular growth or uniquely successful entrepreneurial ventures.”

In the U.S. churches the largest 1 per cent contains at least 15 per cent of the worshipers and the largest 20 per cent of the churches have around 65 per cent of the human and material resources (Thumma & Travis 2007:6). According to Hong (2001:31), in 1998 there were 13 Korean mega-churches

having more than 10,000 attendees and about 436,000 church members were attending those mega-churches. Thumma and Travis (2007:17) said: “The size of the mega-church proclaims the power of religion, exhibiting the prominent place of religion in the modern world. It is powerful in its influence on politics, in the courts, and in the national religious community. The success of the church translates into the success of each individual attendee. It is what they aspire to be. As such, it is a motivational element and inspirational ideal for many within the congregation.”

The Korean mega-churches with their dramatic numerical growth and influence began to be recognised as symbolic, as illustrations of successful ministry and expansions of God’s kingdom (Gyadu 2014:5), and it induced the mega-church phenomenon that made many other Korean churches set their goal to be another mega-church to become a successful model of church growth as an undeniable story of God’s grace and intervention. Hong (2001:59) argues that the growth of mega-churches is a microcosm of the growth of the Korean Protestant Church. Since mega-churches first appeared in the 1950s in the history of the Korean church, the number of mega-churches started to increase rapidly from the 1970s and ran to about 1,000 in 2013 (Shin 2015:57). Snyder (2001:72) insists that the medieval perspective of God’s kingdom is presented repeatedly by the mega-churches and their missions. He points out that the mega-churches see the numerical growth of individual churches as the front line of the kingdom’s advance and, therefore, a key sign of the kingdom (Snyder 2001:73). They regard bringing more people to the church building as the expansion of God’s kingdom, so that the overt use of power and influence that they mobilised through their size and membership to carry it out resembles the medieval church’s use of pressure to convert heathens. This perspective of the mega-churches on the church and God’s kingdom is connected to an ecclesiocentric mission and to a functional and organisational (institutional) approach to the church to carry out their missionary works more efficiently and effectively (Lee 2014:55).

The research on how the Korean church became a Pseudo-Christendom with its politics, economy and theology should indicate how the mega-church phenomenon began and became prevalent and what missiological and

ecclesiological characteristics it has developed, which will be analysed and assessed to see how they have affected the Korean church to lose its missional understanding as the essence of the church. Although it might be arguable to compare the contemporary Korean church model with the early Korean church as they have different contextual backgrounds, this research sees the characteristics of the early Korean church as a proto-missional church as well as an idealised point of reference (Dreyer 2012:1), with its missional ecclesiology that transcended its contextual difficulties by following the scriptural guidelines. It clearly demonstrates how the mega-church phenomenon with its understanding of the nature of the church and mission has deviated from the biblical norm for the church, by compromising with the spirit of the age (conforming to the pattern of this world).

Although the Korean church is still seriously under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon, this research will deal with the period of its Pseudo-Christendom mode from 1945 to the early 2000s. It is because of the following two reasons:

- In the early 2000 the Korean church saw a transition of generations as the first-generation of church growth pastors retired, who planted churches and led them to mega-churches during the industrialisation period. It was a period of maximum growth of the Korean church.
- The term “missional church” coined by the American scholars belonging to the Gospel and Our Culture Network (GOCN) during the late 1980s and their books were translated into Korean and introduced to the Korean church in the early 2000.

To display that the Korean church in general was in Pseudo-Christendom mode, statistical references will be presented about the number of churches and members of the Korean church, especially of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches as the representative denominations taking up 79 per cent of the total members of the Korean church; also the Pentecostal Church, with their Yoido Full Gospel Church, the world’s single largest church.

### 3.6.1. The church as a partner of the government

After liberation from Japanese colonisation, the Korean peninsula was divided along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, and south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel came to be ruled by the U.S. military government while north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel was ruled by the Soviet Union under the Cold War system. This led to the proclamation of establishment of each independent government, South Korea on 15 August, 1948 and North Korea on 9 September, 1948, claiming to advocate democracy and communism respectively (Hong 2001:51-52). The Korean church declared depoliticisation through “Some conditions between church and state to associate with” pronounced by the Presbyterian Council in September, 1901. Although it was to protect the church, which was becoming the centre of national movement, since the political crisis, it also aimed to keep the religious purity from secularisation which might be caused by collusion of church and state (Kim 2015:25). Article 20 of the South Korean Constitution made and promulgated for the first time on 17 July, 1948 declares freedom of religion and stipulates disapproval of the national religion and the separation of religion and politics. In principle the church is able to associate with the state as much as other religions are and is not allowed to enjoy a special status like a national religion or equivalent in the Korean society (Chung 2014:43).

However, the principle of separation of church and state was completely abandoned as the Korean church passed through the era of the U.S. military government and the establishment of an independent government of South Korea. At the first phase of building the new state the Korean church took the advantageous position compared to other religions in Korea and managed to occupy a national religion-like status by continuously seeking ways to maximise its socio-political influence through collusion with political powers (Chung 2014:44).

### 3.6.2. The U.S. Military Government and the Christian Government after liberation from Japanese colonisation (1945-1960)

In 1945, 6 of the 11 administrative advisors appointed by the U.S. military government and 7 of the 13 Korean head officials of each department were Christians (Kim 2015:26). According to Rhodes and Campbell (eds. 1965:381), 35 of the 50 high-ranking government officials nominated by the U.S. military government were Christians at that time. Syngman Rhee who was the first

president of the Korean provisional government in Shanghai, China from 1919 to 1925 became the first president of the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in 1948. His presidency lasted up to 1960. President Rhee experienced Christianity first when he studied at Paejae Haktang, a mission school of the Methodist Church, from 1895 to 1897 and accepted Jesus as his Lord during his imprisonment through the help of American missionaries visiting the prison like Underwood and Bunker in 1904. As soon as was converted, he helped the other leaders of the Dong Nip Hyeop Hoe (Independence Club) who were arrested with him by the Japanese police in 1903 to return to Jesus, which is later to be called “the Mass-Conversion Event of the Hansung (Seoul) Prison”, the first mass conversion of the upper social class (Kim 2015:110-111).

In addition to President Syngman Rhee, there were many Christians among the key members of the Rhee government and ruling party (Kang & Park 2009:95-96). In Syngman Rhee’s Liberal Party government which inherited most of the legacy of the U.S. military regime (Kang & Park 2009:92), 44 of the 208 elected members of the Constituent Assembly in 1948 were Christians, including 13 pastors. Christians continued to be a large majority in the National Assembly during the Rhee government as can be seen from the table below.

<Table 12> Distribution of Christian Congress members during the first republican government (1948-1960) (Kim 2015:27)

	The First National Assembly (1948-1950)	The Second (1950-1954)	The Third (1954-1958)	The Fourth (1958-1960)
Number of Congress members	208	201	208	239
Number of Christian Congress members	44	54	38	47
Ratio Christians (%)	21	26	19	20

Not only the congress members, but also 37 per cent of high ranking positions in the government and 47 per cent of ministers of each governmental department were Christians. Christians gained power, therefore as Kim (2015:26) says, “In those days, to be Christians was of great advantage to practice politics.” In this political background, the Korean Christianity was given preferential treatment. The opening ceremony of the National Assembly on 31 May, 1948 began with a prayer by Yoon-young Lee, a congressman as well as a Methodist pastor, on President Rhee’s request. President Rhee also concluded the oath of his inauguration with a prayer on the day of establishment of government, 15 August, 1945 (Kang & Park 2009:106-107). Following these, national ceremonies were naturally to be performed in Christian style. The way of salute to the national flag was replaced from making a bow to it to paying attention to it due to strong opposition of the Korean church which argued that paying homage to the national flag reminded them of worshiping at Shinto shrines during the Japanese colonisation (Paek 2014:41-42). On 4 June, 1949, Christmas was designated as a national holiday. Along with military chaplain introduced for the first time in Asia by a presidential special fiat in 1951 (Park 2014b:878), authority to legally conduct Christian mission in prisons and police stations was given to the Korean church (Paek 2014:45). From March, 1947 evangelism through the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), the national broadcasting system, was conducted every Sunday, and the CBS (Christian Broadcasting System) was approved in 1954 as the first commercial broadcasting since the new foundation of the country. Syngman Rhee’s efforts to build a liberal Christian democratic nation was not limited to the abovementioned examples, but continued during his presidency (Paek 2014:33; Kang & Park 2009:109-110).

Christians of the Northwest region, the centre of the early Korean church, especially of the Northern Presbyterian Church, were accused of being reactionaries and experienced severe persecutions under the rule of Soviet communism. Communists criticised Christians, arguing that Christians were acting as a means of capitalism and imperialism. As Christians of North Korea concluded that coexistence with the materialistic communism was impossible, about 100,000 of them defected to South Korea from the end of 1945 to 1953 (Hong 2001:56). Many of them flocked into the Youngnak Presbyterian Church

led by Rev. Kyung-chik Han, and anti-communist movements of the Korean church were initiated by them. The youth group of the Youngnak Church composed of the people who experienced severe persecutions from the communists developed into anti-communist organisations such as “the North West Korean Youth Association”. As the members of those organisations went into the military and the police, they dedicated themselves to eradicate advocates and supporters of communism in South Korea (Kim 2015:120-121).

After the liberation from Japan, the establishment of public order and clearing up the vestiges of Japanese imperialism like punishing the pro-Japanese collaborators, were the most pressing issues (Kang & Park 2009:109-110). In this social atmosphere, pro-Japanese entrepreneurs who were great financial conglomerates (Chaebols) at that time and pro-Japanese figures in the military and the police tried to break through the crisis they were facing through anti-communism. The U.S. military government which came into Korea as soon as the Second World War was ended was so in need of well-trained local administrators with an anti-communist spirit that they recruited pro-Japanese collaborators as government officials on a large scale in order to secure exclusive sovereign power in South Korea and effective administrative management. The first U.S. director of the Korean National Police, Colonel William H. Maglin, admitted: “The vast majority of Lieutenants (83%), Inspectors (83%), Provincial Chiefs (80%), and a majority of all ranks above patrolman had served during the colonial period. More than half of all Korean police who served during the colonial period, some 5,000 in number, formed the core of the around 25,000 police in the U.S. occupied southern Korea as of November, 1946” (Lauson 2013:2).

This composition of the U.S. military government was passed down to the Rhee government. The Rhee administration composed of many pro-Japanese collaborators attempted to secure its identity and legitimacy through uncompromising and aggressive anti-communism following the pro-America and an anti-Soviet Union policy (Kim 2015:72). The anti-communism of the Korean church represented by the North West Korean Youth Association of the Youngnak Church coincided with the government’s intentions. In those days the police of the U.S. military government overtly overlooked or supported far-



right terrorism of the North West Korean Youth Association, and pro-Japanese entrepreneurs also financially supported them (Park 2016:1).

The traditional evangelicalism began with the Great Awakening movement in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and comprised of all denominations including the Reformed churches. This evangelicalism followed the conservative and orthodox theology line with four characteristics: Conversionism, Biblicism, Crucicentrism and Activism (Shin 2012a:3). Most of the early Western missionaries dedicated their lives to mission in Korea under the influence of the Great Awakening movement and the World Mission movement (Shin 2015:133). The Korean church with the influence of missionaries belonging to traditional evangelicalism followed the conservative and orthodox theology line, which believed in the inerrancy and God's inspiration of the Bible, from its initial stage (Lee 2014:31). After 1920 the evangelical tradition of the Korean church gradually turned into fundamentalism insisting of the verbal inspiration of the Bible and with an ultimate position against challenges of theological liberalism under the influence of the second-generation missionaries who were seriously affected by the fundamental theologian J.M. Machen (Park 1992:267-271). During the Korean War from 1950 to 1953, Syngman Rhee's government and the leaders of the Korean church became strong anti-communist fundamentalists, which interpreted the worst tragedy and ordeals of the Korean peninsula as a privileged mission given by God to be a vanguard for the world in an anti-communist war. They described communism as the monsters, demons and the red dragon of the book of Revelation on the basis of the eschatology of historical pre-millennialism (Kim 2015:141). The thought that communism is the Satan became generalised in the Korean church. Due to the geographical location of South Korea, taking charge of the front line in the battle against communist powers under the cold war system, the cross became a remarkable symbol of anti-communism in the Korean church, with which they carried out their mission given by God to defeat communism, the Satan (Kang 2005:46).

In these church-state relationships, the Younknak Presbyterian Church grew rapidly since Rev. Kyung-chik Han had planted the church with the name of the Bethany Evangelism Church on 2 December, 1945 with 27 Christians that

defected from the North (The Youngnak Church 1998:21). With the influx of refugees, the Youngnak Church grew to have 1,500 members in 1946, 4,500 in 1947 and more than 6,000 registered members in 1950 before the Korean War (Hong 2001:52). The Choonghyun Presbyterian Church which was founded in September, 1953 after the armistice on 25 June, 1953 was also a church rapidly growing with the Christians that defected from the North as well as war refugees. The Choonghyun Church grew to 500 attendees in 1955 and 1,300 in 1963 (Hong 2001:54), and as a church composed with war refugees, played a role to support and strengthen the anti-communist policy of the government (Hong 2001:66). Although both churches experienced a slowdown of their numerical growth due to negative issues such as controversial leadership change in the 1980s, both of them have continued to grow having more than a 10,000 membership in the late 1990s. The Youngnak Church is the world's largest Presbyterian Church with about 60,000 members in 2015 (Shin 2015:152).

It can be said that these rapid growths of the Youngnak and Choonghyun Churches as first-generation mega-churches in Korea were rooted in the medieval Christendom's understanding of the essence and mission of the church in terms of the facts that the state approved of the church as a partner approved, and even encouraged, the use of power (violence) to protect the Christian world (Democracy) from the enemy of Christianity (Communism). The Youngnak Church regarded its numerical growth and expansion of political power as the expansion of God's kingdom. It clearly had a different view than the early Korean church which understood its essence and mission as a witness community that let the world taste the politics of Christ and God's ruling through its non-violent demonstration against the militant imperial Japan as can be seen from the First of March Independence Movement in 1919. Both the Youngnak and Choonghyun Presbyterian Churches have been at the centre of the dramatic stories of church growth with a cordial relationship between the church and the state and still provide a traditional and symbolic significance to the Korean churches in terms of church growth and influence (Hong 2001:57).

During Rhee's regime, the Korean church enjoyed various privileges through

the church-state symbiosis and to become members of the church no longer meant joining a witness community and being persecuted, but became a source of pride to be involved in a privileged community (Kang & Park 2009:118-119). People were attracted to the church by its power and influence (Frost & Hirsch 2013:20-22). Christianity was recognised as a religion of power that experienced a rapid growth as can be seen from the table below.

<Table 13> A statistical chart of the growth of the Korean Presbyterian and Methodist Churches (1951-1959) (Park 2014b:1028; Cha 1998:32)

	The Presbyterian Church	The Methodist Church
Year	Number of Members	Number of Members
1951	-	45,716
1952	231,473	63,236
1953	250,000	84,327
1954	-	97,218
1955	-	111,119
1956	-	121,395
1957	550,853	123,760
1958	-	107,203
1959	-	108,846

There is no accurate statistical data for the number of members of the Korean Presbyterian Church from 1951 to 1959 due to its conflicts and divisions into 4 denominations. However, according to a record the Korean Presbyterian Church had 550,853 members in 1957, the Christianity of South Korea, which had about 100,000-150,000 members in 1945, grew to about four to five times during the Rhee government when combining the number of the Presbyterian and Methodist denominations (Kang & Park 2009:117).

Korea was suddenly liberated on 15 August, 1945 not through its own ability but by Japan's unconditional surrender at the end of the Second World War. With the war front of the cold war system formed in the Korean peninsula, Korea was forced to choose either democracy or communism, which they had

never experienced before. At that time only Christians educated at mission schools had a clear view on the world situation and only Christians who studied in America experienced democracy (Kang & Park 2009:124-125). With the South Korean government claiming to stand for democracy many of government officers, including the president, were Christians and, as a result of it, various government policies favoured Christianity. Problems, however, cropped up as the Korean church, after tasting power, put aside the values of the Christian worldview and used politics maintaining their own vested interests (Kim 2015:27).

From the second presidential election, the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) formed “the Christian Election Polling Committee in Korea” and actively got involved in politics. The Korean church, which had struggled for Syngman Rhee, the first president as well as an elder of a Methodist Church, to be re-elected and for a Methodist deacon Ki-poong Lee to be elected as the vice-president in the second and third presidential elections, appealed to the Christian voters for support through “A word to 1.5 million believers of the whole churches in Korea”, in which they emphasised candidates’ religious background, although the fraudulent election for Rhee’s lifetime seizure of power was openly progressing on 15 March, 1960 in the fourth presidential election (Kim 2015:28). While the early Korean church witnessed to the kingdom of God through the holy life of disciples through the work of the Holy Spirit, the Korean church, after the liberation had power-oriented attitudes like the world, overlooking dishonest means for the sake of their own goal, namely church growth to expand the territorial concept of the kingdom of God. Kim (2015:29) referred to the close relationship between the church and the state at that time as follows: “Close relationship between the Liberal Party and Christianity was like a bottomless swamp.... [As] a result, Christianity became impotent to corruption and greed like salt that lost its saltiness and lost its original prophetic mission.”

This kind of ethical failure can be seen in the divisions of the Korean Presbyterian Church in the 1950s. It started digging up the pro-Japanese collaborators after the liberation, hunting down communists and eliminating political opponents by ideological disputes that continued during Rhee’s

government. It created a divisive socio-political atmosphere, and it affected divisions of the Korean church (especially the Korean Presbyterian Church) which was in a close relationship with the government (Cha 1998:32-33). Within the 1950s the Korean Presbyterian Church experienced three divisions and was divided into 4 denominations for the following reasons: Issues of attending Shinto worshipping led to the split of “Koryopa”, which named themselves the Presbyterian Church in Korea (hereafter Kosin) in 1952; different views on the authority of the Bible caused the split of “Kijangpa”, which named themselves the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (hereafter Kijang) in 1953; Issues of membership of the WCC led to the division between the General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches in Korea (Hapdong) and the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Tonghap) in 1959, which is the biggest division, called “the great schism”, throughout the Korean church history (Lim 2011:149; Kang 2007:90). Although there were some reasons for the Hapdong to oppose joining the WCC, one of the fundamental reasons was that the Hapdong believed that the ecumenical movement of the WCC was benefiting communism (Park 2014b:991).

The divisions of the Korean Presbyterian Church, a representative denomination of the Korean church, had a great influence on the Korean church and its continuing divisions. According to Cho (2008:85-102), in 2007 there were 157 denominations in the Presbyterian Church, 11 in the Methodist Church, 4 in the Evangelical Holiness Church, 2 in the Baptist Church, and 10 in the Assemblies of God. These schisms led to serious growth competitions for survival among the denominations, and it ironically provided a solid foundation for dramatic growth of the Korean church as can be seen from the table below:

<Table 14> Growth of the Korean Presbyterian denominations (1972-1998)  
 (Cha 1998:37)

Year	The Presbyterian Church			
	Hapdong	Tonghap	Kosin	Kijang
1972	607,870	-	105,179	197,807
1973	608,908	-	111,344	204,902
1974	615,000	639,605	105,941	209,084
1975	668,618	697,948	116,370	216,068
1976	730,682	757,845	121,586	222,593
1977	837,473	811,737	114,512	229,784
1978	1,015,500	902,125	183,490	214,347
1979	1,090,309	968,402	183,488	212,044
1980	1,298,285	984,192	210,518	230,280
1981	1,389,200	1,089,965	210,900	255,030
1993	3,728,266	2,047,013	385,747	329,458
1994	3,361,173	1,989,965	329,483	329,458
1998	3,700,430	2,093,967	373,897	317,647

This rapid growth of the Korean church, however, was different from the early Korean church that grew by witnessing to the kingdom of God to the individualistic world through building shalom between Westerners and locals, man and woman, the noble and lowly in the political turmoil of country's ruination. It was by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of peace, and the kingdom-oriented united mission despite diverse denominational backgrounds. The Korean church broke up into several factions as the world did. H.R. Niebuhr (1954:21) in his book, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, criticised the ethical failure of the divided churches as follows: "The evils of denominationalism do not lie, however, in this differentiation of churches and sects.... The evil of denominationalism lies in the conditions which makes the rise of sects desirable and necessary: in the failure of the churches to transcend the social conditions which fashion them into caste-organisations, to sublimate their loyalties to standards and institutions only remotely relevant if not contrary to the Christian ideal, to resist the temptation of making their

own self-preservation and extension the primary object of their endeavour.”

As denominations became random and crowded, they lost their power to control individual churches belonging to them. A full-competition among individual churches without control of denominations allowed mega-churches to emerge in the Korean church with their church individualism. Rho (1995:32) defines the church individualism as “an attitude or policy of a church with which it places its own maintenance and expansion at the top priority as setting up a goal, conducting activities, and utilising human and material resources”. With church individualism churches in Korea came to focus only on individual church’s growth and prosperity while ignoring cooperation and unity with other churches, and it made the mega-church phenomenon prevailing.

### 3.6.3. Military regimes and the Korean church (1961-1987)

Due to “the March 15 Korean Presidential Election Fraud” committed for Rhee’s long-term autocracy, “the April Revolution” broke out on 19 April, 1960, and it led to the step down of the president on 26 April, 1960. As a reaction against Rhee’s attempt at a one-party dictatorship, the constitution was revised on 15 June, 1960 and the form of government changed to a parliamentary cabinet system. Although the second republican government began with the Prime Minister Myon Chang, it could not last one year. An army major general Chung-hee Park mounted a coup on 16 May, 1961 for the following reasons: the rise of pro-communist groups, the economic crisis and the incompetence and corruption of the government. After the army’s seizure of power, Park and his allies took over the reins of government. With their “Six-Point Revolutionary Pledge” they tasked themselves with anti-communism as the first national policy, a pro-American stance, social reformation, economic development and national unification (ed. Kim & Vogel 2011:51). Although the revolutionary army promised in their revolutionary pledge that they would transfer power to new generations of conscientious politicians and return to their proper duties as soon as their missions were completed, it was not kept for the next 18 years of dictatorship until Park’s assassination in 1979 (ed. Kim & Vogel 2011:51-52).

The military government, due to their weak political base, had to be dependent



on an anti-communist ideology and needed international support, especially from the U.S. to maintain their regime. At that time, Christianity was the only private institution that could help the government to satisfy the needs of the government (Paek 2014:78-79). The KNCC welcomed and supported “the May 16 Military Coup”, justifying it with their anti-communist spirit (Kang 2005:52). After that, the Korean church could solidify the church-state relationships during Park’s military regime through active collaborations and by playing the role of a contact channel to the U.S. to earn support from the international society for the revolutionary military government (Kang 2007:95-96). When the U.S. was troubled by the Vietnam War that prolonged in 1964, Park’s military government which wanted to place Seoul-Washington ties on a firm footing voluntarily deployed the Korean army to the war. The Korean church interpreted the Vietnam War as a conflict between expansionistic powers of communism and the liberal world that tried to stop them (Kang 2005:53). The Korean church supported the government which made the decision of sending troops to the war against communist South Vietnam and held many events like public prayer meetings to invoke the troops’ success in war (Chung 2014:45-46). President Park amended the constitution in 1972 to initiate the *Yushin* regime for his life-long dictatorship. To do that, he violated the separation of legal, administrative, and judicial power by self-appointing one third of congress members and all judges. He thoroughly suppressed democratic figures standing against him by the proclamation of martial law. As the social atmosphere was flowing to an anti-despotism movement, the Korean church tried to drive it back to anti-communism through opening national prayer meetings. Four large assemblies related to anti-communism were established by the Korean church in a year of 1975 (Paek 2014:77).

After the 18 years of dictatorship were ended by the assassination of Park on 26 October, 1979, Doo-hwan Chun the Defence Security Commander, staged a coup on 12 December and became president through an indirect election in September, 1980. For the next eight years of his reign, president Chun and his new army group ran a new religious policy through which they supported the religions showing a cooperative attitude to them, while persecuting ones behaving in an uncooperative manner (Chung 2014:46). On 18 May, 1980, Doo-hwan Chun labelled the participants of “the Gwangju Democratisation

Movement” who resisted his military coup under martial law, as spies of North Korea conspiring to raise a rebellion through McCarthyism and cracked down on them by special-forces and tanks. President Chun and his military government were faced with difficulties because of this incident and asked the religions for help.

Korean Buddhism suffered the unprecedented suppression called “the October 27 Buddhist Persecution” in which 5,731 Buddhist temples across the country were searched by 32,000 military and police forces and 153 Buddhist leaders were taken to the police because they refused the request of support for the new army group while dispatching a fact-finding team to Gwangju. In contrast to the Buddhists, Christianity established a foothold to acquire the most radical growth throughout the history of the Korean church by acknowledging the legitimacy of the military government and publicly praying for Doo-hwan Chun through opening “the National Prayer Breakfast” on 6 August, 1980. The National Prayer Breakfast, in which the leaders of the Korean church pray and have breakfast together with politicians, especially the president, was broadcasted three times, including the live broadcasting on that day, and was reported at the top of the front page of all daily newspapers. Rev. Chin-kyung Chung, who was a former general president of the Korea Evangelical Holiness Church prayed the following prayer for Doo-hwan Chun who caused the death and missing of about 200 people and about 4,300 injured by the cracking down of the Gwangju Democratisation Movement: “Thank you Lord for letting him (Doo-hwan Chun) take up this important position in these tough times and remove evils and purify every part of the society” (Paek 2014:114). The fact that the 23 representatives of the Korean church who took part in the National Prayer Breakfast at that time were mostly the senior pastors of the mega-churches such as Kyung-chik Han of the Younknak Church, Chang-in Kim of the Choonghyun Church, and Yonggi Cho of the Yoido Full Gospel Church clearly shows that the mega-churches played a leading role in the Korean church to become a Pseudo-Christendom.

During the military regimes the Korean church concentrated on numerical growth through various methods such as “the church expansion movement” and “the revival movement”. One of the methods the Korean church used to

increase their membership was large scale outdoor evangelical revival meetings (Hwang n.d.:3-5). There gathered about 3.2 million people during the period of “the Yoido Plaza Evangelical Revival Meeting” led by a widely-renowned revivalist Billy Graham as the main speaker from 30 May to 3 June, 1973. “The Explo 74 Evangelical Meeting” was also held at Yoido plaza in 1974, and it is said that the total number of converts through those two large meetings in 1973 and 1974 was about 350 thousand (KCM 2007:11). Following those two meetings, the National Holy Assembly in 1977, the Great Holy Assembly for World Evangelisation in 1980, the Great Holy Assembly on the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean Mission in 1984 and the Great Holy Assembly for Evangelisation in 1988 continued (KCM 2007:11). Although the rapid growth of the Korean church through mass evangelical meetings cannot be denied, it must be noted that the Korean church came to lose its critical voices against unjust political powers as the revival movements were conducted under the patronage and collaboration of the military government.

The Korean Church benefited from the military governments, based on friendly relations with them. As an example the Great Holy Assembly for World Evangelisation in 1980, the world largest record-holding outdoor meeting with 16 million participants from 12 to 16 August, was not possible to be held without support from Chun’s new military government. While freedom of assembly and association was restricted the new military government cooperated closely through their approval of the assembly and support of the advertisement of the assembly. Although there was an advertising guideline not to exceed 30 seconds at a time to restrict freedom of expression, the new military regime allowed the Korean church to send 40-50 seconds of advertisement through a governmental TV broadcasting for the assembly and to run a classified advertisement in two governmental daily newspapers with paying only 25 per cent of the original advertisement fee. This kind of support from the military government continued for the following large evangelical assemblies (Paek 2014:120-121).

The large revival evangelical meetings led by new evangelicals, including Billy Graham, has been one of the most decisive reasons for the Korean church to strongly display the characteristics of the new evangelicalism. The new

evangelicalism indicates that all denominations which appeared after Fundamentalism was defeated (legally it won, but it actually lost in society) by Liberalism in an American legal case in 1925, formally known as the State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes and commonly referred to as the Scopes Monkey Trial (Wikipedia n.d.:1 of 35). It emphasised evangelism more than any other factors as suggested by its name and it pursued the practical line between fundamentalism and liberalism (Webber 2002:26). The priority of the new evangelicalism is evangelism, but the evangelism style of the new evangelicals concentrates on individuals, winning souls, and hope for the afterlife (Shin 2012a:6) being affected by the Enlightenment rather than directed by the New Testament (Bosch 1991:262). Adolf von Harnack, a representative of the liberal theology, followed the methodologies of the Enlightenment science as the basis for interpreting the Bible. He advocated religious individualism and subjectivism which argued that the kingdom of God is God's ruling that rules in the souls of individuals, and is within human hearts (Lohfink 1984:1-3). Like Harnack's understanding of the kingdom of God, to the new evangelists salvation is a matter for individuals to decide to or not to believe by listening to the gospel individually rather than becoming members of the eschatological kingdom community demonstrating to the world God's reign in advance.

The object of salvation is not the body but the soul, so that the new evangelicals place their emphasis only on internal experience ignoring social and political participation (Shin 2012a:6-7). Since salvation is believed to be given not to the body but to the soul after death (Snyder 2001:25-39), the present life has meaning only as a preparation for the hereafter while religion becomes a means of escape from the present reality (Padilla 2013:45). The characteristics of the new evangelicalism were combined with the anti-communist fundamentalism of the Korean church, and it came to theological support for a pro-governmental inclination and the lack of the social participation of the Korean church. During the military regimes the conservative churches, the majority in the Korean Christianity, treated the minor groups of the Korean church, that conducted democratic movements and social missions, as communist activities under the mask of religion and their theology, the *Minjung* theology and their liberation theology, as communist

theology (Kang 2007:92).

Park (2013:19-20) regards the Sarang Church, the Nam Seoul Grace Church, the Global Mission Church and the Onnuri Community Church which were founded by Rev. Han-hum Ok, Jung-gil Hong, Dong-won Lee and Yong-jo Ha respectively, whom were called “the evangelical foursome”, as the churches which have been leading the scale and influence of the mega-church phenomenon. The fact that all those churches consider themselves as evangelical and were planted and grew rapidly to be mega-churches during the new military regime clearly shows that rapid growth of the Korean church through focusing on winning more individual souls with the support of the government resulted in the beginning and development of the Korean mega-churches. New evangelicalism and anti-communist fundamentalism were retained as they were until Chun’s military government was toppled by nationwide democratic movements in 1987. The mainstream churches of Korea which developed to become mega-churches during the military governments on the basis of their two theological ideologies remained to be guaranteed voting bases and pillars of the ruling party and conservatism in Korea (Paek 2014:142).

<Table 15> The Growth of the Korean Protestant Church (1960-1983) (Hong 2001:61)

Year	Number of Christians	Number of churches
1960	623,072	5,011
1965	812,254	6,581
1970	3,192,621	12,866
1975	4,019,303	16,089
1976	4,658,700	17,846
1977	5,001,491	19,457
1978	5,293,844	20,109
1979	5,986,609	21,205
1980	7,180,627	21,243
1981	7,637,010	23,348
1982	8,676,699	24,031
1983	8,889,194	25,746

During the military governments from the 1960s to the 1980s the Korean church acquired unprecedented growth. The growth of this period was characterised by rapid numerical growth of churches and members. Seen from the table that the number of churches increased 5 times from 5,011 to 25,746 while the number of Christians grew more than 14 times from 623,072 to 8,889,194 between 1960 and 1983, the percentage increase of Christians was bigger than that of the churches. This suggests that the inclination of the numerical growth of the Korean church centred on particular individual churches, which shows that the mega-church phenomenon deepened (Kim 2015:33). The early Korean church could satisfy the spiritual desire of the Korean people through the Bible translated in the vernacular, Han'gŭl. In the process of the Bible translation, the term *Hananim* was selected as the Korean name for God after extensive research on the Korean traditional religions, ancient history, and culture in order to make the Christian faith relevant to infiltrate the daily life of the Korean people and to discern the original God-designed spiritual mind set of the Korean people from their fallen state to their new state to proclaim God's continuing sovereign authority over all things through restoration of its integrity.

These indigenous and incarnational aspects of the early Korean church became institutionalised with dualistic attitudes, strictly separating the sacred (religious) and profane (non-religious). With the strong tendency to identify ordained ministers and the church buildings with the church itself, the Korean church began to regard liturgies conducted within the church building as a sacred worship service, while regarding and ignoring the worship of daily life outside the church building as secular works (Shin 2015:433-434). This institutional ecclesiology of the Korean church can be confirmed by the high loyalty of the Korean Christians to the church institution. According to each religion's participation rate in their own rituals in 1997, the Korean Protestant Church reached 71.5%, while only 1.2% of Buddhists and 60.4% of Catholics participated in their rituals (Lee 2000:97). Meanwhile, to the question, "Do you think that attending rituals is not the only way to express one's devotion to religion?", 75.4% of Buddhists and 65.4% Catholics said yes, while only 36.4% of Christians agreed (Lee 2000:100). Through the influence of institutional ecclesiology the incarnational mission of the early Korean church became



attractational and dualistic. The Korean church attracted people to come to the church building, which is called the “Come-To-Us” stance, to make them listen to the gospel, on the basis of the dualism of a Christendom that sees the world as divided between the sacred and profane (Frost & Hirsch 2013:35-37).

Having an ecclesiocentric understanding of Christendom, the mission of the Korean church became only one of its many programmes (ed. Guder 1998:6). The revival movements during the military regimes led to the world evangelisation movement like the evangelical awakenings in the U.S. church during the 19th century that were converted into the world mission movement, for example the “Student Volunteer Mission Movement” (Kim 1999:419). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Western Christian countries, through the influence of the evangelical revival movements and impending eschatology with religious triumphalism based upon Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8 scrambled to expand the institutional church to the heathen world with the “benefits of Western civilisation” (ed. Guder 1998:6). The Korean revival movements also developed into the world evangelisation movement with its eschatological characteristics through the influence of “the unreached people mission” advocated by Ralph D. Winter at Lausanne in 1974. On his firm biblical basis of Matthew 24:14, Winter encouraged churches to evangelise the unreached people, which point out ethnic groups “within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelise this people group” (Winter & Koch 2002:19). With the strong belief that the Lord will come or has to come when the gospel has reached even small hidden groups of people, the Korean church began to think that the spreading the gospel to the third world with the blessing they had received from God, the numerical growth with more budget for mission, is the expansion of the kingdom of God (Lee 2014:23).

Cho (2011:6) identified the period between 1984, the 100th anniversary of the Korean mission, and 2000 as “the era of explosive growth of the missionary movement of Korea”. The number of missionaries increased by 6,800%, from 24 in 1973 to 1,645 in 1990. The number of countries where the missionaries were sent also increased from 9 to 90. The number of missionaries continued to grow and there were 17,696 Korean missionaries working in 168 countries in 2007 (Cho 2011:6). The characteristic of this period was that the Korean



foreign mission was carried out mainly by denominational mission boards (Cho 2011:7). According to the Global Mission Society's homepage, the GMS, the foreign mission board of the Hapdong, has sent 2,478 missionaries to 98 countries by 2016, which is the largest among the Korean denominational mission boards. Among the 2,478 missionaries sent by the GMS, 2,284 were pastors and their wives. This displays that there has been formed a dualistic structure in the mission of the Korean church due to its institutional ecclesiology in which it is believed that only the clergies fully engage in "full-time kingdom work" while the laity are involved in kingdom activity only to the degree that they are engaged in church work (Wolters & Goheen 2007:128).

According to a report of the GMS, 76.4% of the pastor missionaries were sent to the poor countries of the third world like Africa and East Asia and about 50% of them work for seminary and church plant ministries. Considering the following two factors, the mission of the Korean church seemingly tend to view mission as one of several programmes to grow to bigger denominations or sending churches, which is an ecclesiocentric mission:

- Seminary and church planting ministries are a way of denominational expansion through raising local church leaders educated with the denomination's theology and increasing the number of local churches belonging to the denomination, planted by its educated church leaders (Lee 2011:129).
- Fund-raising or managing the funds raised by missionaries for the construction of the seminary and church buildings are one of the important tasks of the denominational mission boards (Lee 2011:137-141).

This can be confirmed with the following cases which happened on the mission field:

- In Thailand, one of the countries where the biggest number of Korean missionaries has been sent, seminaries run by the Korean missionaries with different denominational backgrounds are being crowded due to competition between denominations to expand their influence (Ahn 2008:303).

- The Korean churches name the local churches built with their aid after their own church names irrelevant to the local context, and then run them as if they are their branch churches, intervening and monitoring their administrations (KCM 2010:2-3).

In the Korean church, according to the three-self principle, not only clergies but also all believers lived a voluntary witnessing life by participating in the redemptive mission of God by the empowerment and guidance of the Holy Spirit. They did not attract people to come to the church with the church building or any benefits, but did go out among the people to witness to the kingdom of God through their words and deeds. The fact that the Korean church as soon as it established its general assembly in 1912 sent missionaries to China which was in a better condition in terms of politics and economy than the colonised Korea clearly shows that the early Korean church regarded mission as the essence of the church. However, as the mission of the Korean church became ecclesiocentric, the mega-churches which carry out more missionary works in more efficient ways with more resources they mobilised from their numerical growth became the model of sending churches. This provided another reason for the churches in Korea to join the mega-church phenomenon in the name of the expansion of God's kingdom. The perception that mission can only be done by the powerful to the powerless, by the rich to the poor, or by the privileged to the marginalised took deep and strong root (WCC 2013:59).

#### 3.6.4. The civilian governments and the Korean church (1988-Present)

The military governments and dictatorship which had been continued since 1961 finally fell as a result of democratic movements in 1987. The indirect presidential election was replaced with a direct election, religion became a strong political influence that could create state power (Paek 2014:8-11). Young-sam Kim, an elder of the Choonghyun Church as well as one of presidential candidates in 1992, was given full support from the Korean Christianity. "The Council of Patriots" centring on Cha-saeng Kim, an elder of the Choonghyun Church, with its about 170 branch offices all over the country ran a campaign to make an elder president, shouting a slogan that "Let the

Hymnal songs be sung in the Blue House (the Korean presidential residence)”. Rev. Sun-do Kim, Hong-do Kim, Kuk-do Kim and Kun-do Kim “the Super Four Brothers of the Korean Methodist Church” planted their own churches and led them to grow to mega-churches. Except for Kun-do Kim, the youngest of the four, who is pastoring the Los Angeles New Joy Church in the U.S.A., the number of church members of the mega-churches led by the other brothers run to more than 200,000: the Kwanglim Church of Sun-do Kim with about 70 thousand attendees, the Kumnan Church of Hong-do Kim with about 100,000 attendees and the Immanuel Church of Kuk-do Kim with about 30,000 attendees. The super brothers overtly supported Young-sam Kim the presidential candidate through their sermons and social influence (Paek 2014:168-171). On the strength of this full support by the Korean Christianity, Young-sam Kim won the presidential election and opened the second Christian president era after 30 years absence since Syngman Rhee, being the first one.

Due to the manifest failure of the policies of the Kim government like receiving a bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at the end of 1997, Korea was ruled by the progressive administrations of Dae-jung Kim and Moo-hyun Roh for the next 10 years though the Korean church still supported conservative presidential candidates, arguing that progressive groups are pro-North Korean forces. President Dae-jung Kim was the 2000 Nobel Peace Prize recipient with his progressive “Sunshine Policy” of engagement with North Korea. The policies of the progressive governments toward North Korea were shaking the foundation of the honeymoon relation between the Korean church and the previous administrations (Chung 2014:47). When the ruling party of Moo-hyun Roh’s government tried to drive forward “the Four Reform Legislation” on the National Security Law, the Private School Law, the Past Injustices Investigation Law and the Media Law, the conservative churches in Korea led anti-government protest movements through holding as many as 18 massive anti-government rallies from the beginning of 2003 to the late 2007, throughout Roh’s presidential term, arguing that abolition of the national security law is shaking anti-communism as the policy of Christianity while reforming the private school law is shaking the property rights of the Korean church (Paek 2014:214-215).

After losing the privileges and benefits under the progressive governments they enjoyed through the church-state partnership, the Korean church called the 10 years of progressive regime as “the Lost Decade” and devoted all their energy to make Myung-bak Lee, an elder of the Somang Church and a presidential candidate of a conservative party in 2007, the next president of Korea. Christian conservative interest groups were united under the name of “the Korean New Right” and actively worked on an election campaign to support Myung-bak Lee (Ryu 2009:380-381). The Christian Council of Korea, a federation of conservative churches in Korea, and senior pastors of the mega-churches belonging to the Council openly expressed support for Myung-bak Lee through their sermons and lectures in conferences and media (Paek 2014:242-245). Efforts of the Korean church like these played a decisive role for Myung-bak Lee to be elected by the biggest margin of votes throughout the history of Korean presidential election (Chung 2014:49). As its result, Lee’s government was afflicted by a controversy over its religious bias throughout his presidential term, being mocked as the “Ko-So-Yeong” cabinet, composed of the figures from ‘Ko’rea university at which president Lee studied, ‘So’ mang Church and ‘Yeong’nam region where Lee was born (Kim 2015:36).

In February, 2011 when the ruling party tried to pass the revision of the special tax treatment control law to issue an Islamic bond (Sukuk), the Christian Council of Korea applied political pressure on the ruling party, saying “Why are you trying to give a tax benefit to terrorists? We are willing to run an anti-campaign if the Sukuk law passes.” In the end they nullified the revision through the elder president (Myung-bak Lee) (Kim 2011:6). This event shows that the Korean church came to have the understanding of the Christendom of the medieval times about the kingdom of God during which the expansion of the Christian world through the power of Christian kings was believed to be the expansion of the kingdom of God (Shin 2015:88).

### **3.7. Comprehensive assessment**

The Korean church started anew from 1945 when Korea was liberated from the Japanese colonisation. Although it was under persecutions passing through the period of the late Joseon Dynasty (a Korean Kingdom), which had

Confucianism as its national religion, under the rule of imperial Japan, the Korean church came to win the privilege of a kind of a national religion status after the liberation while passing through the U.S. military government and the era of their first president Syngman Rhee who was a Christian like the Christendom emerged after the Roman Emperor Constantine legitimated Christianity in A.D.313. Under the cold war system, a political collaboration between the Korean government sharing the border with a communist country (the North Korea) and a Korean Christianity which regarded communism as their enemy made the church-state relationships tight. These relationships continued during the military governments, which attempted to communicate with Western Christian countries through the Korean church as a contact channel to earn their political legitimacy, as it had been in the precedent administration. The Korean Christianity being a Christendom met its climax in the civilian governments when they, by being indebted to electoral system changed from indirect voting to a direct one, succeeded with the elections of two Christian presidents through their power and influence which they earned from their quantitative growth.

The Korean church as a Christendom experienced a radical growth in number, enjoying various privileges through a close relationship with the government, and that numerical growth was fulfilled in the Korean mega-churches as the central figures. The mega-churches with their size and influence were presented as successful models of church growth, and it resulted in the mega-church phenomenon as a socio-religious phenomenon by provoking many other Korean churches to set their goal to be like the mega-churches. The mega-church phenomenon as a socio-religious phenomenon has been affected by the Christendom's understanding of the nature and mission of the church, which sees an institutional church as the kingdom of God and conquering the heathen territories by Christian kings' physical might as the expansion of God's kingdom. As a result, all Korean churches under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon have lost the missional understanding as the essence and mission of the church which the Korean church had in its initial stage, and display the characteristics of church growth on the basis of an institutional and building-focused ecclesiology and ecclesiocentric missiology.

Although the Korean church has been able to bring many people to the church building with its power and influence as it was recognised as a religion highly favoured by the government, it has lost its morality in the process of attempts to maintain its political power such as the March 15 Korean Presidential Election Fraud in 1960. While the early Korean church witnessed to the kingdom of God through the holy life of the disciples, it has chosen quantitative growth rather than holiness as a disciple community to expand the territorial concept of God's kingdom. The Korean church has moved toward denominationalism and church individualism, affected by the divisive socio-political atmosphere. Although it has brought a prominent numerical growth to the Korean church through serious competition to survive, the Korean church has become an institution similar to the world which is full of divisions, not like its initial identity as a community witnessing to the kingdom of God through building shalom and unity in the society.

During the military governments the Korean church could achieve a remarkable quantitative growth through massive outdoor revival meetings mostly led by the evangelicals under the governments' patronage and collaboration. However, evangelism of the evangelicals which concentrate only on winning souls caused lack of social participation and its institutional building-focused perspective on the church due to its mechanical worldview of a body-soul dichotomy. This dualistic worldview can also be found in the foreign mission of the Korean church. Although the number of Korean missionaries explosively increased by the influence of the evangelical revival movements, the foreign mission of the Korean church has been carried out as ecclesiocentric mission with the focus on the pastor-missionary and the denomination, or sending church,- oriented ministries such as the construction of a seminary and church buildings. Institutional ecclesiology and ecclesiocentric mission took away spontaneity of the Korean Christians which used to be in them during the initial period of the Korean church and therefore made the Korean church an irrelevant religious ghetto, focusing only on attracting more people to the church building through programme-oriented missions rather than becoming an attractive community through being the light and salt of the world with an incarnational mission among the people.

### 3.8. Economic development and the church

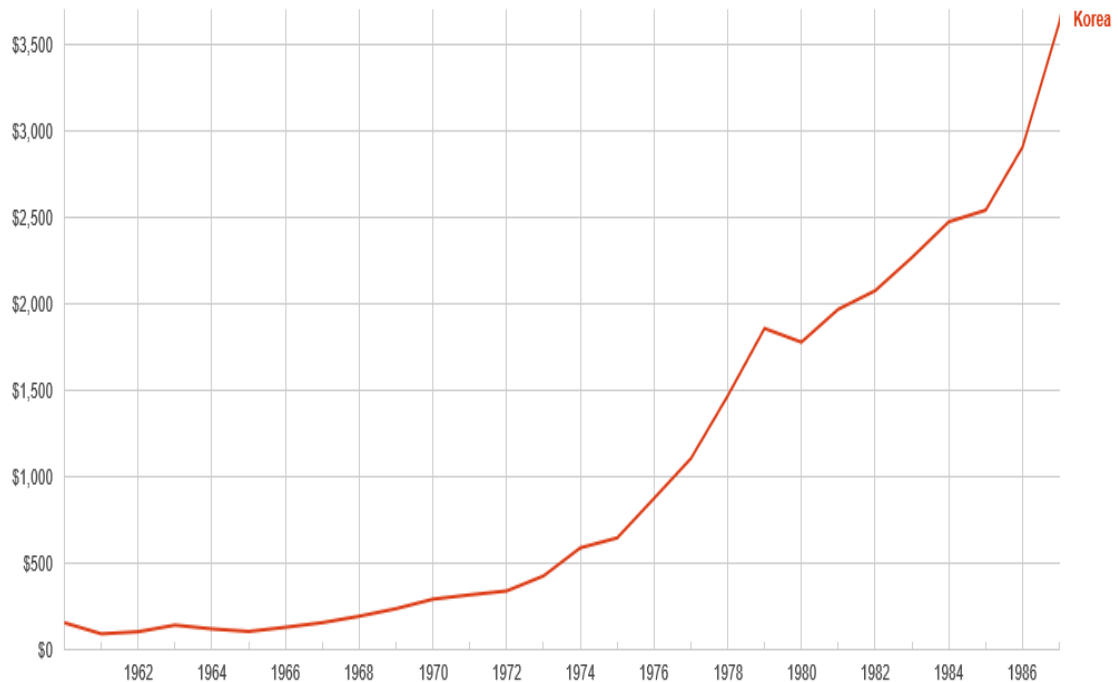
For the Korean Church to become a Pseudo-Christendom was influenced by socio-economic as well as political factors. Under the cold war system after the Second World War, America provided financial aid to many countries of the world in order to rebuild the international economy and to prevent the spread of communism. To South Korea 3.1 billion dollar of aid was given from 1945 to 1961, which was more than the sum of aid for the entire African continent (Kim 2015:32). During that period, with its high level of reliance on the U.S. to the extent that 70 per cent of the national budget was constituent of the U.S. aid, Korean Christianity worked as a window for the Korean government to maintain its relationship with the U.S. (Kang & Park 2009:126). It also became a passage for international aid to come to Korea as can be seen from the fact that about 100 million dollar of cash support was provided from 1947 to 1955 through one Christian organisation, the Church World Service (Kim 2015:32). A Korean Christianity not only built an interdependent relationship with the government through those pivotal roles in the process of restoring the Korean economy, especially from the devastation of the Korean War, but also as a key social institution that contributed stability and security to the Korean society as can be seen from the fact that with the international aid 539 Christian welfare facilities accommodated and looked after 63,787 vulnerable people in 1957 (Kim 2015:32). From the socio-economic aspect the Korean church was functioning as a Christendom from the early days of nation-rebuilding.

The close relationship in politics between the church and the state through their pro-Americanism and anti-communism was sustained through pro-capitalism. The economic system of Korea experienced a high-degree of economic growth from the 1960s to the 1980s as can be seen from the table below. In the close relationship with the government, the growth first belief, which played the role as locomotive for the military governments' economic development policy since 1960s, was actively accepted by the Korean church (Shin 2015:143-146). During the high-degree economic growth period, the Korean church attained an explosive quantitative growth with its growth-oriented values. The growing influence of the government and society and its



quantitative growth made the Korean church to be a Pseudo-Christendom (Hwang n.d.:1).

<Table 16> Korea GDP per capita (World Bank 2013)



While Korea's GDP per capita rapidly increased from \$91 in 1961 to \$1,968 in 1981 with a 8.3 % of the average annual economic growth rate for 20 years (Shin 2015:144), the number of churches and Christians in Korea also increased 5 times and 14 times respectively during the same period. The quantitative growth of the Korean church was driven by mega-churches during the period, and due to their size and influence as a successful model of church growth, the material and quantity-oriented perspective of church growth, the mega-church phenomenon, has developed (Park 2008:30). Under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon, the Korean church became identified with the modernisation of Korea, being a symbol of a release from poverty and sickness. The Korean people, in general, accepted a worldview that combined Christian faith with materialism and quantity (Park 2008:30). Hong (2001:66) argues that examining socio-economic situations is more important than political aspects to figure out how mega-churches appeared

and grew big enough to cause a socio-religious phenomenon.

### 3.9. The church in modernising Korea

The Joseon Dynasty had a rigid caste system. The upper social class adored the spirit of *Seonbi*, classical scholars seeking the way of benevolence and righteousness while avoiding seeking profit. The lower social class also mostly engaged in agriculture which relies less on capital and kept a self-sufficient economic system. Although there formed unofficial markets in Jongno, Hanyang (Seoul) and restrictive markets in local areas such as a five-day interval village market, the market system was generally not developed and the people engaged in commerce belonged to the lowest social class. These non-commercial social structure and atmosphere, however, due to extreme poverty and hunger Korea had experienced passing through exploitation of imperial Japan and the Korean War, were changed into aspirations for economic development and ardent adoption of a capitalistic economy system (Shin 2015:145). In the rapid progress of economic development, Korea converted to a modern society. The mega-churches emerged in this modernising society where the impact of modernity such as radical industrialisation, urbanisation, and commercialism interacted (Park 2008:36).

During the three years of the Korean War, South Korea reported some 373,599 civilian and 137,899 military deaths, as well as destruction of about 80% of industrial facilities (Wikipedia n.d.:39 of 96). This miserable situation of Korea and policy failures of the first and second republican governments granted legitimacy to developmental dictatorship of the military governments. President Park's economic growth policy represented by government driven export-oriented industrialisation and heavy chemical industrialisation, meshing with entry into society of the baby boom generation after the Korean War, led to severe concentration of population and urbanisation (Kim 2015:195). Industrialisation and urbanisation began full-scale in Korea during the mid-1960s with the Economic Development Plans of Park's military government and became intensified in the 1970s and 1980s, during the military regimes (Park 2008:36), as shown in Table 17.

<Table 17> Rate of Urbanisation (1960-2000) (Ministry of Environment Republic of Korea 2003:25)

Year	1960	1970	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Rate of Urbanisation	39.1	50.1	68.7	74.3	81.9	85.5	87.7

From 1960 to 1990 the rate of urbanisation of Korea became almost doubled. According to the Table 15, the number of Christians increased by about 4 times from 812,254 in 1965 to 3,192,621 in 1970 since the Economic Development Plans of the government was launched. This growth rate continued in the following years of the military governments. Therefore, it is clear to say that there is a correlation between the growth of the Korean church and urbanisation (Park 2008:37). Urbanisation did not progress equally in all locations, but was concentrated on some locations strategic for industrialisation such as Pusan and Incheon, including Seoul the capital city of South Korea (Hong 2001:67). Although there were no more than 4 cities with a population of more than 100,000 in 1930, in 2010 there have emerged 9 cities with over 1 million people (Shin 2015:142). The population of Seoul soared after industrialisation started in the 1960s from less than a million to 10,610,000 people in 1990, which took up 24.4 % of the overall Korean population though its area was no more than 0.6 % of the entire national territory (Lee 2014:14). As the satellite cities of Seoul were increasing very fast, they formed the capital metropolitan area, accounting for 43% of the population in 1990 while owning only 11.8% of the nation's total land area (Hong 2001:67). The increased population in the capital metropolitan area caused a high density of Christians. According to Park (2008:37-38), in 1995, 57.96 per cent of the Korean Christians resided in Seoul and the capital area with a total of 5,077,227 members, while 58.57 per cent lived in the same areas in 2005. Since the 1970s with the high density of Christians in the capital metropolitan area, mega-churches have emerged.

In the 1960s, due to the influx of people, the old downtown areas of Seoul

became saturated. According to the new urban development plan of the government, the metropolitan district north of the Han River (the Gangbuk) was established and mega-churches began to emerge there one after the other (Shin 2015:140). The Yoido Full Gospel Church started at Taejo Dong, a slum area in the Gangbuk district, on 18 May, 1958 with only 5 members, including the senior pastor Yonggi Cho himself. Three years later, it moved from the original site of the “tent church” to a better location in Seodaemun’s (West Gate) downtown with 600 members (Cho 1981:9). In 1964, it already had more than 3,000 attendees, and increased to over 10,000 in 1972. In 1973, the Church moved to the new building with 12,000 seats in Yoido, Seoul and changed its name from the Full Gospel Central Church to the present name. Since 1979, the Yoido Full Gospel Church increased by 100,000 newcomers each year and became a church in which 765,301 people were attending in 2007 (Yoido Full Gospel Church 2008).

The growth of the Yoido Full Gospel Church cannot be compared with any other large churches throughout the history of the church in terms of its speed as well as size. As a tendency of the modern city to expand limitless (Shin 2015:106), it shows the limit to church growth disappears when a local church has around 800,000 church members, which is more than the population of a city. This church is still growing bigger though it is experiencing a slow down after the retirement of the founder Rev. Yonggi Cho in May, 2008 (Lee 2014:12). The extent of urbanisation caused by industrialisation and the emergence of mega-churches like the Yoido Full Gospel Church as its result let the Korean churches regard size and quantity as measures of the success of the church and let growth itself become the purpose of the church (Lee 2014:2). As the rapid economic growth of Korea during the 1960-1980s from the devastated situation after the Korean War is called the “Miracle on the Han River”, the story of a church that began with a handful of people in a tent that grew to a mega-church with a magnificent building convinced people that it is a miracle which cannot happen and be explained without God’s intervention (Park 2013:39). As the perception in the Korean church developed that growing to become a mega-church is an obvious evidence of God’s intervention as well as a work that is glorifying and pleasing God, all values and goals of the church were fixed on numerical growth and all ministries and

resources of the church such as the sermon, pastoring, and evangelization focused on achieving those values and goals (Park 2013:39-40).

Rev. Yonggi Cho (Cho 1981:9) confessed that he resolved to build the largest church in Korea when he initiated the church in 1958 under the influence of the large scale of the Younknak Presbyterian Church as follows: “In those days the Yong Nak (Younknak) Presbyterian Church was the largest church in Seoul. It had about 6,000 members, and that proved to be a great challenge to me. In fact, one day, without anyone else knowing about it, I took a measuring stick and went over to the Presbyterian Church in order to take its exact measurements. I determined the length and the width of the building, and I counted the number of pews. It seated more than 2,000 persons. In my ambition, I then said, ‘I will build a church larger than this, and the Lord will fill it.’”

As Rev. Cho was challenged by the size of the Younknak Church, the visible successful case of the Yoido Full Gospel Church had a profound effect on the Korean church and a number of pastors tried to benchmark Rev. Cho’s ministering style (Hong 2001:58). The Full Gospel Incheon Church, founded by Rev. Sung-kyu Choi, and the Grace and Truth Church, founded by Rev, Yong-mok Cho, a younger brother to Rev. Yonggi Cho, grew to become representative mega-churches in Korea in a short period of time by using Rev. Yonggi Cho’s influence and benchmarking his ministerial style (Hong 2001:58). Ho-moon Lee, the senior pastor of another mega-church, the Soong-Eui Methodist Church, through his autobiography confessed serious influence of Yonggi Cho to his ministry to run for a mega-church (Lee 1992:339-340).

The mega-churches as urban-based churches became prevalent among the Korean churches as a side effect of industrialisation and urbanisation (Shin 2009:31). The rural exodus policy of the government for a labour-intensive industrialisation brought the break-up of the unique family communal culture of the agricultural society and caused an ontological crisis to the people who left behind the land they used to cultivate with which they had a strong bond. The living conditions of the people that migrated to urban areas were very poor since the social protection system was not yet established (Kim n.d.:7). Urban areas as bases for industrialisation were not prepared for a large-scale rural

population movement, and emigrants were confronted with serious social problems such as housing shortage, ill health, high unemployment, low pay, and poor labour environments (Hong 2001:70). According to the deprivation-compensation theory Glock and Stark insisted in the 1960s that people who faced social, organic, psychic and economic deprivation sought religious ways to compensate for these perceived deficiencies (ed. McCloud & Mirola 2008:70).

The Korean church helped the people who felt psychological anxiety, fear and social discontent caused by the developmental dictatorial situation to find mental health and peace of mind, and provided a communal character and family-like atmosphere for the people who felt a sense of alienation in the individualistic urban life (Lee 2014:1-2). To the people who suffered comparative deprivation as the social economic inequality deepened due to failure of the distribution policy, the Korean church gave hope by promising material blessings in this life and provided motivation for success. More people flocked to the churches which delivered messages of material blessings through positive and active thinking, a gospel of success and a gospel of prosperity (Hwang n.d.:3). As the industrialisation and urbanisation were proceeding, the Korean church through radical numerical growth and by easing and absorbing social tensions caused by the negative effects of economic growth became the main belief of the military governments, as represented Korean Christendom. Park (Kim 2015:33), a Christian socialist, refers to it as follows: “The Korean church carried out very effectively an ancillary function, which was in accord with the government’s high-degree economic growth policy that had been continuing since 1960s. The Korean church has been functioning as a kind of psychological therapy to the Korean society.”

The Yoido Full Gospel Church could fulfil its dramatic quantitative growth by sensitively reacting to and satisfying society’s demands caused by the negative effects of urbanisation. Rev. Yonggi Cho’s sermons emphasised what the alienated and marginalized urban poor aspired to have: spiritual salvation, physical healing, material blessing, and prosperity in the world. In this way he could meet the listeners’ needs and helped the poor to find hope to live for. As

to his perspective on a sermon, Rev. Cho (2005:24-28) stated:

While I was preaching every week in a poor village, I used to deliver the message which drags people down and blame them for more than a year. During that period, I could not lead even a single person to the Lord. People could not receive Jesus because they came to the church with their wishes, but left after being criticised by me. However, when I changed my preaching to be full of the positive message, before long, 600 people were saved. Since then, the centre of my preaching has always been “As your soul is getting well, you will enjoy good health and all will go well with you” of 3John 1:2 so far. I call this the threefold blessing. In Korea, I am the first one who preached about blessings. My preaching has been for the people who are suffering from absolute poverty.

Rev. Cho’s perspective on a sermon seems to be the same as the prosperity theology of the Faith movement, initiated by Essek William Kenyon (Lee 2014:33). Through the influence of the New Thought Movement started in Emerson College of Oratory where he attended, Kenyon insisted on positive proclamation (Hanegraaff 2009:59-60). His teaching can be summed up as “*Was ich Bekenn, besitze ich*” (I will possess as I confess). In the context of the explosive growth of the American economy in the 1940-1950s after the Second World War, it developed and prevailed as having a great influence on many preachers, especially evangelists of the Pentecostal movement. The Pentecostal movement started in Topeka Kansas, America in the early 1900 and spread far and wide throughout the world. It reached Korea in the 1950s and affected Rev. Yonggi Cho’s ministry. Rev. Cho combined the Pentecostal movement of the U.S. with the prayer mountain movement of Korea, the source of all Korean indigenous spiritual movements, and then applied it to the service of the Yoido Full Gospel Church. Compared to the rational service of the Korean church, the Yoido Full Gospel Church’s service has a festival-like style and is characterised with enthusiastic audible prayer, contemporary praise sung with fervour, and with the emphasis on healing and speaking in tongues (Shin 2015:156).

Kenyon’s positive proclamation was inherited from a number of prosperity



evangelists such as Kenneth Hagin and John Hagee. Kenneth Hagin (2008:9) argued that people can be healed and gain what they need because God does not want the people to live poor, sick, and desperate lives, but wants them to live materially prosperous lives, which he called “the better covenant”. To activate the better covenant saying words of faith as a means for affluence were necessary. He opened the Rhema Bible Training Centre in 1974 and taught his prosperity theology to more than 10,000 students for the next 20 years, through which he played a pivotal role in the Faith movement, thus came to be called “Dad Hagin” (Coleman 2000:29-30). John Hagee’s understanding about Christ Jesus was in the same light with how Hagin understood God. According to a literal interpretation on 2Corinthians 8:9, he argued that Jesus was rich and sorted out people’s poverty on the cross, so that all believers can and should be as rich as Jesus was (Lee 2014:34). As for the richness of Jesus, Hagee (2004:232) stated that “Jesus wore fine clothes! John 19:23 says, ‘He had a seamless robe.’ Roman soldiers gambled for it at the foot of the cross. It was a designer original! It was valuable enough for them to want it!”

Rev. Yonggi Cho indigenised American prosperity theology into a Korean one and named it the fivefold gospel and the threefold blessing. According to Kim (2008:93), the fivefold gospel consists of the gospel of salvation, being filled with the Holy Spirit, divine healing, blessing, and the Second Advent. The application of the fivefold gospel results in the threefold blessing which comprises of 1) as your soul is getting well, 2) you will enjoy good health, 3) and all will go well with you, which is in short if a person believes in Jesus, he or she will and should enjoy the blessing of good health with everything going on well. In 2010, Rev. Cho compiled his theology through his book titled the *4<sup>th</sup> Dimension of Spirituality*. According to him (Cho 2010:38-65), what is happening in the physical 3<sup>th</sup> dimensional world is fashioned by the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension, the invisible spiritual realm. All believers can change to the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension with their thinking, faith, dream, and word, thus if believers change their negative thinking to positive and active thinking (Cho 2010:66, 73) and visualise (dreaming) what they wish in faith that it will come true (Cho 2010:127) and keep saying positive words (Cho 2010:170, 206), they will surely enjoy blessing, a successful and victorious life, and a miracle. Rev. Cho established the Full Gospel Theological College in 1953 (the precedent of the Hansei

University) and the Full Gospel Theological Institute in 1990, which was renamed to the Youngsan Theological Institute in 2004 following Rev. Cho's pen name.

According to the homepage of Youngsan Theological Institute, the object of its establishment is "to systematically research and organise the Youngsan theology: a fivefold gospel, a threefold blessing, and a 4<sup>th</sup> dimension of spirituality, and to propagate them not only in Korea, but all over the world." As was aimed, they have extensively influenced the Korean church to seek and preach material prosperity and a leisurely life (Kim 2015:127), which are clearly a departure from the hope the early Korean church set their mind on. The early Korean Christians, although they were imprisoned and tortured like the 105-Man Incident and even lost their lives not to bow down before the Japanese gods only because of their faith, could prove that the hope they set their minds on was not earthly things but the things above (Col 3:1-2). Since the churches with prosperity theology attempted to satisfy and motivate people to come to church by offering them what they needed and promising them material blessings in this world, the understanding about the church and mission of the prosperity churches could not help being huge and splendid building-centred with church expansionism based on triumphalism and religious supremacy. Shin (2015:145) says that the Yoido Full Gospel Church not only led the growth-oriented paradigm of the Korean church in terms of scale and the speed of church growth, but also helped the Korean church to internalise and theologise the growth-oriented paradigm through the introduction of their prosperity theology and church growth theory to the Korean church.

As the Yoido Full Gospel Church was regarded as a model of successful church, it began to present consultation on church growth to the Korean church. It has hosted annual church growth international conferences since it established the Church Growth International in 1976 (Cho 2015:12) and runs church growth clinics (Ok 2007:339). The Yoido Full Gospel Church established the Institute for Church Growth in 1993 inspired and affected by the American church growth theorist Peter Wagner (Hwang n.d.:5, Cho 2010:19-21). Wagner learnt and developed the church growth theory that Donald McGavran advocated in the 1950s. Donald McGavran as a son of a

missionary in India struggled with the issue of world evangelisation and initiated the church growth theory, arguing that the world evangelisation can be achieved in the most effective way when all individual churches on earth will strive for quantitative church growth (McGavran 1990:267-268). He insisted that a church must most of all pursue the harvest of souls and establish and implement strategies to do it, saying “fantastic increase of churches is obviously the will of God” (McGavran 1990:30), with the following questions: What are the causes of church growth?; What are the barriers to church growth?; What are the factors that can make the Christian faith a movement among some populations?; What principles of church growth are reproducible? (Hunter III 1992:158-162).

Teaching at Fuller Theological Seminary as professor, McGavran raised many church growth theorists and formed a school of church growth theory. This school had a great effect on world mission, and dramatically shifted the emphasis of evangelicals from world evangelisation to church growth (Lee 2014:32). After the 1970s Wagner embraced the managerial suggestions of business gurus such as Peter Drucker, Jim Collins, Margret Whitely, Stephen Covey, Warren Bennis, and Peter Senge (ed. Kraft 2005:461) and turned largely to dealing with spiritual factors to be considered to earn genuine conversions in the mission field in preference to the more secular techniques of church growth (ed. Kraft 2005:461). Wagner’s church growth theory, compared to the one of Donald McGavran, which still remained as strategies for world mission, put far more stress on techniques suitable for individual churches’ numerical growth (Shin 2015:145). Wagner (1989:29) called the various approaching methodologies he developed and proposed to fulfil the church growth ideal “Consecrated pragmatism”. In his pragmatic perspective on church growth, Wagner (1996:11) began to run a church growth clinic. It was because he believed that the churches which are not growing are either dead or sick, thus are in need of proper managerial approaches to be applied like the patients in need of medical counsel to be cured (Wagner 1989:164-168).

McGavran (1990:39-40) said the reason the church must set multiplying churches in number as today’s paramount task, opportunity, and imperative is

to obey and fulfil the biblical imperative called the Great Commission. Wagner's aim for church growth agreed with McGavran. To the question, "Why aim for church growth?", Wagner (1989:35) answered that "If we concentrate on church growth we get to the heart of the Great Commission." Through the great influence of the church growth theory with its clear mission statement to carry out the Great Commission, the churches aiming not to grow bigger became not free from the question, "How can you oppose mission to the heathen if Christ himself has commanded it?" (Bosch 1991:340-341). As quantitative growth of the church became the great assignment that must be accomplished at any cost the church growth theory was introduced and spread to the Korean church through the church growth clinic run by the Yoido Full Gospel Church. The growth-oriented ideology and materialism of the Korean church were protected against opposing voices and were even highly encouraged to be a phenomenon. A number of early Western missionaries, especially the Methodist missionaries, came to Korea the hermit nation when they were young and sacrificed their lives as carrying out the medical and educational missions because of the poor surroundings and were overworked. Although their spontaneous sacrificial lives did not result in immediate numerical growth of the Methodist denomination or individual churches, it was more than enough to witness to the love of God, the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and the kingdom of God to the Korean church and even to the non-believers, and continued through the Korean disciples like Esther Park. The holistic mission of the early Korean church on the kingdom of God, however, became lost through the church growth theory that pursued quantitative growth of the individual churches and pragmatic ways to achieve it.

Rapid urbanisation and the high growth of the economy radically enlarged the market. Under the capitalistic economical system, the level of dependence on the market and the competition between producers to attract more consumers surged up, which led to the emergence of a consumerist society. The economical consumerism of the Korean society influenced the mass of the religious clients in the church. Increasing the number of churches in the densely populated urban areas together with the growth-oriented ideology of the Korean church, supported by the prosperity theology and the church growth theory inevitably instigated an unlimited growth competition among

denominations, with the expansionism of individual congregations (Shin 2009:32-34). These factors forced the Korean church to put themselves into the free religious market to sell Christianity and to be sold by people, the consumers, which Peter L. Berger called “the market situation” (Lee 2014:3). In the market situation, the Korean church began to be ruled by the principles of the free market economy system as Finke and Stark (2005:9) refer to it: “the invisible hand of the market place is also at work in the religious market and is as unforgiving of ineffective religious firms as it is of their commercial counterparts.” The mega-churches came to be believed to be the successful winners in selling competitions of the religious market while non-mega-churches were not.

Trying not to be ineffective religious firms the Korean churches tried to import the strategies of the mega-churches, called “church marketing”, to attract more customers (Shin 2015:147). A number of church marketing books written by American church growth theorist were translated into Korean and introduced to the Korean church. Especially, a book titled *Your church has a fantastic future* written by R.H. Schuller was translated in 1988 and had a great influence on the Korean church to have a consumerist mindset in church growth since Schuller was widely-renowned as the founding pastor of the Crystal Cathedral Church and inspired and encouraged Rev. Yonggi Cho in a close relationship to grow his church to be a mega-church since he wrote a recommendation for Rev. Cho’s book, *4<sup>th</sup> Dimension* in 1979. Schuller (1988:299) overtly compared the church with a company, evangelism and mission with sales, and non-believers with clients. In his consumerist perspective on the church, ministry seemed similar to selling goods, so that he regarded a denomination as a wholesaler while a local church as a retailer. Schuller (1988:299-314) suggested the following seven principles for successful church growth: 1) Accessibility (The best product will not be bought if people can’t get their hands on it!), 2) Surplus parking (number one criterion), 3) Inventory (large enough to meet almost every conceivable human need insures a fantastic future) 4) Service (that means trained laity), 5) Visibility, 6) possibility thinking, 7) Good cash flow (don’t be afraid of debt, but know what debt is.)

With Schuller’s suggestions, the Korean church started taking on the

marketing strategies for church growth as a matter of course, and thereafter not only a small number of successful mega-churches, but also the majority of not-yet-successful not-yet-mega-sized churches in the religious market participated in serious marketing competition (Lee 2014:26). According to Drucker (Kotler 2009:3), “the aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well that the product or service fits him and sells itself.” All kinds of efforts to know and understand the customer according to the marketing strategy let the Korean church have the characteristics of consumerism such as the consumer-orientation and customer satisfaction represented by shopping malls (Smith 2009:19-23; Hirsch 2006:110). Shin (2009:45-49) broadly classified the managerial methods of shopping malls into the following three parts:

- It is a conveniently located large-scale multi complex building.
- It is the effective organisational structure driven by a leader with strong leadership and a number of workers working under the leader with their own assigned functions.
- It is a continual service diversification to make the clients satisfied and make more profit through it.

On Thumma’s (1996:441) suggestion that mega-churches resemble shopping malls in their wide array of consumer-driven ministerial offerings, Lee (2014:16-19) compared the managerial methods of shopping malls with those of mega-churches to display how consumerism affected mega-churches to have a consumerist understanding on the nature and mission of the church as follows:

- As the people who had lived in rural areas crowded into cities, the urban environment such as accommodation buildings, stores, transportation facilities, factories, entertainment centres, even hospitals have all grown to mega-proportions. Koreans have grown accustomed to large organisations and so did the Korean church (Thumma & Travis 2007:14). In the Korean church, church planting is centred on church building, and geographical advantages and disadvantages are excessively considered (Lee 2014:76). Mega-churches have magnificent buildings and are mostly located in either



populated urban areas with the easy accessibility from main public bus and subway routes or the suburbs of large cities, where there are prominent places on highly visible tracts of the land. According to Hong (2001:31), all of the 13 largest mega-churches in Korea were situated within the capital metropolitan area in 1998, and most of the other mega-churches were located in Seoul and its suburbs. The massive buildings of the mega-churches and the people crowding into them can be a powerful attraction by themselves. Mega-churches began to own multi-complex buildings within which there were not only spaces for worship service, but also convenient facilities for their members as the main clients with their local neighbours as potential clients for as indoor driving ranges, Cafés, and book stores. It caused a competition about the construction of church buildings among the Korean churches.

- As the notion, “New church building = Church growth” (Hong 2013:3), became in vogue, the Korean churches wanted to build their church buildings even by the means of borrowing money from the banks. The banks which were reluctant to make a loan to the church because of the difficulty of disposal due to the characteristics of the church building, commercialised church building-related loans by the names of “mission loan”, “shalom loan”, and “Siloam loan” were obtained since 2000 (Hong 2013:2). The total debt of the Korean church to the banks continued to increase from \$3,299,600,000 in 2008 to \$4,510,700,000 in 2013 (Hong 2013:1). The early Korean church did not get obsessed by their church building, but were satisfied with humble buildings relevant to their local context. They made the church look attractive not through the size and splendour of the building, but through their words and deeds witnessing to the kingdom of God. The Korean church affected by consumerism, however, turned to a building-focused understanding of the church and tried to attract people to come into the church building, displaying the territorial concept of God’s kingdom, through their splendid buildings.
- In order to handle large numbers of attendees, the mega-churches became institutionalised and bureaucratic (Lee 2014:2), borrowing models of organisation and presentation methods from the urban institutions around them (Thumma & Travis 2007:15-16). The effective organisational structure



of the majority of contemporary mega-churches was either founded by or achieved mega-status within the tenure of a single senior minister. According to Hong (2001:34), 9 of the 13 largest mega-churches in Korea grew to have more than 10,000 attendees during their founding pastors' tenure while the other 4 developed from small to mega-status after the incumbent pastors took over. Senior pastors as the chief executive officers, having the final say, occupy the most prominent and highest profile position and authority, and manage the church efficiently by constituting a rational bureaucratic structure with assistant pastors working for each department such as service, missions, teaching, fellowship, counselling, music, and visiting and lay leaders working for small groups (Thumma 1996:444-445).

- According to Young-hoon Lee (Jeong 2011:76), the senior pastor of the Yoido Full Gospel Church (the successor of Yonggi Cho since 2008 though Rev. Yonggi Cho still preaches every Sunday afternoon service), one of the biggest reasons of the rapid growth of the Yoido Full Gospel Church was its cell-based structure under Rev. Cho's charismatic leadership. The Yoido Full Gospel Church has great capabilities to help the seekers who visit the church every Sunday to register and settle down in the church through well-organised fishing net-like internal structures. In 2008, the Yoido Full Gospel Church, reflected the administrative districts of Seoul, consisting of 35 archdioceses and 312 dioceses with 43,330 cells under them at least. The cells form small family-like communities and take charge of fellowship, counselling and teaching (Shin 2015:157). The Yoido Full Gospel Church, because it could not accommodate all Sunday attendees even after mobilising the main building as well as all adjunct buildings nearby, naturally progressed to a multisite church. It planted and built branch-churches all over the capital metropolitan area without particular preachers in charge of those churches and let them join Sunday service of the main church through real-time satellite broadcasting. The number of branch churches of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in 2008 ran to 21 except for the ones abroad (Shin 2015:157-158).
- The continuous expansion of the Yoido Full Gospel Church through its organisational structure with a charismatic leader clearly shows that the

organisation itself was established for continuous numerical growth. Although there were also organisational structures in the early Korean church, they were not bureaucratic and not made for the expansion of an individual church. It was based on spontaneity and was organised for the expansion of the Kingdom of God on Korean soil. The Korean church, however, as being corporatised to efficiently gain maximum profit (church growth) through a well-organised structure and charismatic leadership has lost its missional nature as a witnessing movement, but became a man-oriented (charismatic leader) and organisation-centred institution.

- Like shopping malls, the church buildings of mega-churches are crowded for the whole week with programmes offered to both church members and residents. A number of assistant pastors and lay leaders of the mega-churches are providing diverse ministries in the departments where they are in charge in order to satisfy their members and potential members (the clients) living in mega-sized cities that adapted to its anonymity and diversified tastes. On account of this character, Thumma (1996:441) called a mega-church “a seven-day-a-week church while Shin (2012b:4) called it “a programme-driven church” like a bicycle that falls if it stops running. With its consumer-oriented tendency, the mega-churches follow ways of entertainment and technology to satisfy the tastes of the people to make them feel at home and dedicate themselves to the church (Thumma & Travis 2007:15-16). To avoid boredom for its clients, which is said to be the worst sin the marketing church can commit to its clients (Ok 2007:184), even the service is designed and organised in advance and follows the prepared Q-sheet to lead praise and sermon rather than following the flow of the Spirit (Thumma 1996:441-443). As for the sermon, it is inherently seeker-oriented and seeker-sensitive, so that is thoroughly prepared to satisfy the listeners’ needs, concentrating on dealing with favourite issues such as money, good health and success (Pritchard 2001:385-387), while avoiding some controversial themes like offering, religious jargon and heavy guilt trips. To the mega-churches mission is one of many other church programmes for the individual church’s numerical growth, thus the goal of the mission is the church itself (WCC 2013:63).

As urbanisation was progressing, in the late 1970s the government started to develop the metropolitan district south of the Han River (the Gangnam) where there used to be rice paddies and fields (Hong 2001:62). As the development increased in the 1980s, many apartment complexes were built in the Gangnam and it became crowded with the influx of upper-middle class people. Mega-churches began to appear and they were represented by the Sarang Church founded by Han-eum Ok in 1978 and the Somang Church founded by Sun-hwi Kwak in 1977 (Hong 2001:62). Although the mega-churches in the Gangnam were affected by the church growth theory and church marketing, which were introduced to the Korean church through the mega-churches in the Gangbuk, they differed in characteristics from the mega-churches in the Gangbuk. About 90 per cent of members of the Somang Church were university graduates, well-educated upper-middle class compared to the mega-churches in the Gangbuk of which members were mostly the urban poor (Hong 2001:63). The mega-churches in the Gangbuk were characterised by the Pentecostal movement under the influence of the Yoido Full Gospel Church. The high-education people of the Gangnam churches freely participated in the service without qualms by creating a calm, intelligent, and polished atmosphere in the service.

While the mega-churches in the Gangbuk focused only on quantitative growth of the church under the influence of the prosperity theology, the mega-churches in the Gangnam tried to achieve both quantitative and qualitative growths through emphasis on intelligent sermons and Bible studies for the well-educated church members (Shin 2015:159-160). As on the day of Pentecost the linguistic barrier has been broken down, the gospel was spread to the people from many nations gathered in Jerusalem and the church was first formed, in the early Korean church through the work of the Holy Spirit, the barrier between social classes and genders has been broken down, that they could be united and worship together, which led to social reform through demolishing the distinction of social classes. The mega-churches in Gangnam through urbanisation and social homogeneity became the primary cause of their emergence became models of the application of McGavran's principle of a homogenous unit (Hong 2001:72). Although the application of the homogeneous unit principle was effective for quantitative growth of the church,

it let the church depart from their essential mission to testify to the kingdom of God, fulfilled through Christ Jesus, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier (Eph 2:14), to the world with the deepening of the disharmony between classes, regional income inequality and economic bipolarisation.

Rev. Han-eum Ok initiated a church, renting a room at the first floor of a commercial building, by the name of the Kangnam Eunpyeong Presbyterian Church on 28 July, 1978 with 9 starting members. He changed the name of the Church to “the Sarang Church” in 1981 (Park 1998:48). Before Rev. Ok started his own church, he worked for the youth group of the Seongdo Church. After seeing the youth leave the institutionalised church and congregate in mission organisations, he found out what was in the mission organisations and what was missing in the church, the discipleship training. Rev. Ok needed to be convinced about biblical and theological grounds for the discipleship training, so he started his research on discipleship training on the basis of the ecclesiology of the Calvin Theological Seminary in the U.S. in 1975. In the end he placed the discipleship training, not like those conducted by the mission organisations outside the church, on the theological ground of Luther’s “priesthood of all believers” and Hendrik Kraemer’s “theology of the laity” and started carrying out the discipleship training in his church (Shin 2015:168). The core value of discipleship training was to break the traditional institutionalised churches’ clergy-oriented system in which the ministers become actors and the congregations become a large audience (Ok 2007:7-8). Rev. Ok proposed a sound ministerial vision to the Korean church that clergies and laity together build the church, the body of Christ Jesus, through a discipleship training in which clergies awake the laity that have fallen asleep, wasting their potentials and gifts, that they can contribute to church growth with, by letting them participate actively in what the church has to do inside and outside the church building (Park 2013:21).

The new efforts of the Sarang Church earned a positive response from the Korean church. As it rapidly rose as a model of the healthy church, numerical growth followed. The Sarang Church grew over 1,000 members after 4 years since its inception, 7,480 in 1988 and became a mega-church having 17,490

members in 1998. With its influence, the Sarang Church started the “Called to Awaken the Laity” (CAL) seminar in March 1986 and has taught three times a year their discipleship training to a number of pastors and church leaders of the Korean church. The CAL seminar has become more vigorous since the Disciple Making Ministries International (DMI) was established in 2004 and the 100<sup>th</sup> seminar was celebrated on 24 April, 2015. However the discipleship training by the Korean church with its growth-oriented paradigm, turned it into a church growth programme which departed from Rev. Ok’s intention. According to Kwon (2014:2-3), the problem of disciple making in the Korean church is that: “the church only focuses on raising church leaders working for church growth programmes in the light of a mechanical perspective of man, which believes a man can be a disciple as long as he passes through well-organised short-term discipleship training courses, ignoring the emphasis on sacrificial life and the struggling of the disciples to be holy (being dedicated to God) at work place and home.”

In the early Korean church, to be a disciple was not just the same as being a member of a local church, and making disciples did not simply mean the quantitative expansion of the church. It required costly discipleship. To be a Christian in a Confucian country meant being cut off from one’s family and neighbour community. The early Korean church, though witnessed to Christ Jesus their teacher through their gentleness, sacrifice and service, even in persecutions and disadvantages and as its result, there often were conversions of almost all people in a village like the Sorae Church. As Hirsch (2006:113) said although Jesus’ strategy was to get many versions of him infiltrating every nook and cranny of society by reproducing himself in and through his people in every place throughout the world, the disciple making of the Korean church produced only church workers who are loyal to church programmes to contribute to church growth within church buildings.

Rev. Ok said he never pursued to become a mega-church, but could not shake off the lambs coming to him, and it made his church a mega-church by serving those lambs (Park 2013:22). Confessions like this are common by the mega-churches in the Gangnam, which emphasised qualitative as well as quantitative growth. Even though the mega-churches in the Gangnam did not

pursue being mega-churches as Rev. Ok explained, all of them did not avoid being mega-sized nor tried to downsize themselves for the surrounding small churches' sake (Park 2013:21-23). They, recognised as a healthier model of church growth than that of the mega-churches in the Gangbuk, played the role for the Korean church to keep on seeking numerical growth without aiming to become a mega-church but to let the Korean church seriously take part in the mega-church phenomenon (Shin 2015:160). This can be confirmed by every move of the Sarang Church with Rev. Jung-hyun Oh, one of Rev. Ok's disciples as well as his successor since his retirement in 2004.

In 2009, the Sarang Church surprised the Korean society with a plan for construction of a church building that costs more than about 2,000 million U.S. dollar. The site for the new building was on an important traffic hub. Through mobilising the most of its material and human resources and influences, they tried to control even the flow of a floating population by closing some existing subway entrances and open new entrances towards the new church building. Although the Sarang Church spent about 2,800 million U.S. dollar on the construction, exceeding its initial budget, it had at its opening ceremony (dedication service) on 30 November, 2013, 35,000 attendees, which is more than double at Rev. Ok's time (Shin 2015:169-170). It proves that the mega-church phenomenon has the medieval understanding of the essence and mission of the church, which tries to bring more people to the church building even by means of using the power of capitalism under the capitalistic market economy.

### **3.10. Comprehensive assessment**

The Korean church has been functioning as a Christendom in their relationship with the government, having been affected by each other not only politically, but also economically. As a Christendom, the Korean church on the one hand worked as the single point of contact for the government to receive international financial aid during the period of nation rebuilding after the Korean War and thereafter has provided steadiness to the Korean society through increased influence by their radical quantitative growth. On the other hand, the Korean church by the influence of the government's growth-centred economic

policy followed a growth-oriented ecclesiology and missiology as their methodology to accomplish it. The extreme poverty that Korea had experienced passing through the Japanese colonisation and the Korean War made the Korean people receptive towards the developmental dictatorship of the military governments and got them actively involved in the government-driven labour-intensive growth-first ideology. Korea experienced explosive economic growth in a short period of time to such an extent that it is called the Miracle on the Han River. It also experienced the characteristics of modernisation such as industrialisation, urbanisation and commercialism, which gradually occurred throughout modern Western history, in a radical manner called “compressed modernisation” (Park 2009:352). The radical modernising process became the reason for the rise of mega-churches, and the accelerated emergence of the mega-churches represented the Christendom of the Korean church.

Labour-intensive industrialisation and urbanisation as its result induced a serious population concentration and the densely populated urban areas became grounds for mega-churches to appear. Meanwhile, how to efficiently compensate for the rural to urban migrators’ psychological, emotional and economical deficiencies that they experienced in the middle of urbanisation became a means for the Korean churches to grow to a mega-church. The mega-churches in the Gangbuk represented by the Yoido Full Gospel Church could attain a dramatic church growth in the densely populated urban areas by providing and promising comfort, healing and prosperity to the urban poor. In the growth-oriented society, the quantitative growth of the mega-churches became legendary success stories with God’s intervention and thereby a number of Korean churches set their goal to be another mega-church and started concentrating all their ministries and resources on numerical growth of the church. American prosperity theology and church growth theory, both introduced by the Yoido Full Gospel Church to the Korean church, played a role to support and encourage the growth-driven paradigm of the Korean church. Both the prosperity theology arguing that if you believed in Jesus (come to church), you will have eternal life (after life), be healed and enjoy material prosperity and the church growth theory, insisting that the growth of an individual church is the way to fulfil world evangelisation, obeying to the



Great Commission, became a strong defence mechanism for the mega-churches to be protected from the voices of opposition to the mega-church phenomenon.

The Korean society came to be a consumerist society due to an increased market dependence and economic development. The Korean church was also thrown into a religious market situation. Church growth theory that emphasises practical methodologies for the growth of an individual church led the Korean church, which applied the market situation to church marketing, led the Korean church to follow consumerist managerial methods like shopping malls in order to win quantitative church growth as ideal in the religious market. The Korean church, like the way of shopping malls, tried to attract more seekers (the clients) by building luxurious church buildings in a good location and organising a bureaucratic structure centring on one leader (the senior pastor) to achieve maximum efficiency at minimum effort (numerical growth), which led to a building and clergy-focused ecclesiology. Like the shopping malls that develop various programmes to increase sales, the Korean church started developing a variety of programmes to satisfy their members and potential members, and mission became just one of many other programmes of the church (mostly being pushed back in its priority).

The mega-churches in the Gangnam appeared at the peak of urbanisation and separated themselves from mega-churches in the Gangbuk by seeking only quantitative growth that resulted in qualitative growth as well as, as seen with the Sarang Church's discipleship training. They, however, still lead the mega-church phenomenon because they have never avoided their continuous expansion and even the programmes they made and spread to the Korean church for qualitative church growth have been used by the Korean church to grow as large as they do as can be seen from the example that the Sarang Church's discipleship training has been used as a programme to raise church workers who are loyal to the senior pastor and dedicate themselves to run various church programmes for numerical growth. The mega-church phenomenon occurred in the progress of economic growth and modernisation made the Korean church have an ecclesiology based on the church growth theory and their missiology based on church marketing. This is in the same as

the Christendom's understanding about the essence and mission of the church, its institutional and building-focused ecclesiology and ecclesiocentric missiology, which are clearly different from the missional ecclesiology the early Korean church had.

### 3.11. The Missional mode (Past 20+ years)

After the liberation, the Korean church earned a Christendom-like status through close relationships with the government, and it became more solid through dramatic quantitative growth of the Korean church in the progress of radical modernisation of the Korean society, coupled with explosive economic development. During the modernisation, the growth of the Korean church was attained in the Pseudo-Christendom mode, and mega-churches and the mega-church phenomenon caused by their size and influence were in the centre of that growth. All the Korean churches under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon regarded their numerical growth as the expansion of the kingdom of God and took the lead of missions to achieve it as the subject of mission. As can be seen from the table below, the explosive growth of the Korean church in the Pseudo-Christendom mode began levelling off after its centennial anniversary in 1984 and the growth rate decreased toward the end of the 1990s (Park 2008:31).

<Table 18> Growth Rates of Protestant Membership (Park 2008:31)

Years	1970	1980	1985	1995	2005
Population	30,882,000	37,436,000	40,448,000	44,609,000	47,041,434
Growth Rate	23.7%	21.22%	8.05%	10.29%	3.42%
Protestant	1,850,000	7,640,000	6,489,282	8,760,336	8,616,438
Growth Rate	40.15%	312.97%	-15.06%	35.00%	-1.64%

As for the slowdown or minus growth of the Korean church, many scholars have combined their opinions to the multiple facets of the problems and broadly grouped the fundamental causes under the following two headings: the transition from Christendom to post-Christendom and from modernity to postmodernity, both inter-relatedly have provided the mega-church phenomenon with institutional confidence and epistemological certainty based on foundationalism (Lee 2014:66-67). “The combined impact of the challenges to Christendom and modernity has profound implications for the church, the nature of its ministry, mission in the postmodern world.” (Gibbs & Bolger 2005:18), which led the mission of the Korean church to the missional mode for the last dozen years.

### 3.11.1. The Korean church being marginalised

Although it is difficult to draw a clear dividing line between social transitions, the Korean society, after hosting the Seoul Olympics in 1988, were affected by the postmodern culture of the Western world which was based on economic growth since the age of modernisation (Choi 2009:351). Sociologists generally agreed with the view that after the 1990s, the Korean society, although not yet in the political and economic realms, was gradually entering postmodern contexts in the cultural realm, crossing the boundary of modernity (Sun 2001:114). In the postmodern society, the Korean church that used to play the role as the key institution, providing social stability on the basis of pro-Americanism and a regime-friendly tendency, came to be considered as the space of lagged modernity (Kim n.d.:7). The more modern project the church continued to develop, it increasingly occupied a place on the margins of society alongside other recreational and non-profit organisations (Gibbs and Bolger 2005:17). Choi (2009:353-368) proposed the following eight intrinsic values of the postmodern culture of the Korean society:

- Concern for spirituality

Modernism put science and technology as well as the humanities including theology under the edifice of rationalism on the basis of the premise of the pre-eminence of reason and experience (Bosch 1991:349-351); with the following

epistemological assumptions: knowledge is certain, objective, inherently good, and accessible to human understanding (Grenz 1996:4). It led to the belief that progress coupled with the power of science is inevitable and will eventually free human beings from their vulnerability to nature (Grenz 1996:4). In the subject-object scheme, nature became the object to observe and conquer and a person was separated into body and spirit, one is objective while the other is subjective and impossible to define. The absolute faith in human rational capabilities was seriously damaged by the First and Second World Wars in the Western world. Like the Western world, the Korean people, after various economic indicators grew more than those of developing countries, which they had eagerly run for achievement during modernisation, became no longer convinced that knowledge is inherently good and that scientific rationalism guarantees the Enlightenment myth of inevitable progress under the serious vulnerabilities they are facing such as environmental contaminations, socio-economic inequities and security concerns, and political tensions with North Korea (Choi 2009:355).

With the new insight that humanity will never be able to solve the world's great problems with only intellectual designs and activities based on human rationality, the Korean people have become interested in spirituality. In their seeking of spirituality, they refuse to limit the truth to its rational dimension, but include the emotions and the intuition (Grenz 1996:7), thus put more weight on the warmth of subjective experience than epistemological certainty (Stott 2007:13). In the same light, their condition to choose among religions is not the logical suitability of doctrines or institutional forms and traditions, but how a religion provides solutions to their ontological anxiety. Although this opened the way for reconciliation between religion and science, it can be the thin end of the wedge for spiritual syncretism. As pursuing internal peace, more and more Korean people are involved in mind-control, Yoga, meditation, especially astrology and fortune-telling. According to Lee (2016:2), in a serious unemployment crisis, a number of job-seekers (mostly university students and graduates) are visiting fortune-telling houses, that has formed the valley of fortune-tellers in the Apgujeong Rodeo Street that is crowded by young people.

- Dismantlement of meta-discourse

Lyotard (1984:xxiii) defined postmodernism as an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth. The new generation that appeared in the Korean society after the 1990s prefers judging effectiveness to arguing on right and wrong. Their priority of values is not an absolute ethical norm, but pragmatism based on effectiveness (Choi 2009:356). They have a tendency to pursue happy and delightful life with family's happiness and security while, due to radical and chronic distrust of publicity, they are indifferent to socio-political issues such as the community, their nation and ideological culture, by which the generation of the modernisation were obsessed (Choi 2009:357). This tendency can serve as momentum for the Korean church that has been divisive following political ideologies and denominational interests to break its exclusivist attitudes and to move together for unity, while it can also be an attempt to relativise even the absolute truth of Christianity, doubting the absolute truth of every kind of empirical proposition from its stance on deconstructionism (Choi 2009:373).

- Decentralisation

Postmodernism tries to deconstruct modernism which built hierarchical systems directed unilaterally by a one-man leadership system (Choi 2009:357). The vertical order system changed to a horizontal one, and all individuals work for various roles and functions according to their own unique characteristics, but are evaluated by the same value criteria. Decentralisation is clearly seen in communication. Plural media like the internet, on which distinguishing sender and recipient is vague, deconstructed the modern mechanism of one-dimensional subject-object structure that dominated the way of communication and created a new way of communication in which recipients actively participate (Choi 2009:358). This helps the Korean church to overcome its clergy-centred one-dimensional top-down mode of leadership and to build a serving leadership that shares power in order to respect diversity and let the diversified ministerial structures function organically and efficiently. Focusing on relativism, however, can cause the malfunction of Christian ethics for the society and for religious pluralism, which are negative aspects of Christianity which places emphasis on exclusiveness and inalterability of the truth (Choi

2009:373-374).

- Life in cyberspace

Since commercial internet service started in 1994, the internet business has grown rapidly to the extent that in 2016 the percentage of fibre connections in total broadband subscriptions is 69.4%, second among the member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Lee 2016:1). Korea has the third highest smart phone penetration rate in the world with 83 % (Lee 2016:1). Amidst these industrial foundations and circumstances of the information society, a new generation familiar with digital devices, a new type of community called the online community emerged through the facilitating communication of the multimedia and networks (Choi 2009:360). The online community is a social aggregate based on the human relations network, formed through the continuous mutual interactions between people in the cyberspace, called “cyberlation” (cyber + relation) (LG Economic Research Institute 2005:150). The online community is more flexible and open than offline community in which mainly direct contacts build relationships (Choi 2009:360). According to the Statista, the number of Facebook users in Korea in 2016 is 14.03 million, which accounts for about 30 % of the population. Although anyone in the online community can freely communicate with others on even ground because there is no hierarchy and exclusive authoritarianism, it is fraught with risk factors through the experience of the virtual reality that tends to deconstruct concepts of the real world and it may cause a self-identity crisis (ed. Poster 1988:166-184).

- Liquidity culture

Liquidity is one of the important factors that characterises the people used to communication through electronics. Whenever internet users log-in or out, they do it voluntarily. They can also join various groups and experience change of self-identity when they move from one group to another. This spontaneous culture and liquid identity leads to a way of life called the mobile life. Coupled with the development of electronic communication media, there has emerged a new way of life like Neo-nomad with its character of high-mobility. The Neo-nomads refuse to stay in the same area for a long time and to work for the

same job for almost all their lives, but pursue the new (Choi 2009:362-363).

- Post-materialistic culture

While the generation of modernisation had materialistic values, aiming at a prosperous life, due to their extreme poverty, the new generation pursues consumerism to live their own distinctive lives to differentiate them from other people (Choi 2009:363-364). According to Yoon (Park *et al.* 2010:222), the perception of work and career in the Korean society after the 1990s is no longer considered to be survival and obligations, but choice and self-realisation.

- Rational selfishness

The behaviour pattern of the postmodern generation can be described with the term rational selfishness. They try not to follow the guidelines made by previous generations, but break them and pursue a free way of life. Their life style, however, is not mere selfishness but based on rationality as can be seen from freelance work that is gaining popularity with the Korean young people (Choi 2009:365-366).

- Consumerist culture

The consumerist cultural pattern of advanced capitalism was brought into the Korean society in the 1990s along with the government's globalisation policy. As modern progressivism collapsed, the core value of society has moved from progress to choice. "Choice lies at the centre of consumerism, both as its emblem and as its core value" (Gabriel & Lang 2006:26). In this society everyone becomes a consumer and everything becomes a consumer choice. Religion is thus likely to be a matter of one's choice (The Archbishop's Council 2004:9-10). In this regard, consumerism affects the way people evaluate truth because "the way people think about shopping also becomes the way people think about truth" (The Archbishop's Council 2004:10).

In the Post-Christendom of the postmodern society the old way of Christian mission (Pseudo-Christendom mode), to attract people to come to the church, no longer worked but marginalised the Korean church. Although the position of the church has been re-located from the centre to the periphery, and from the privileged to the marginalised of society, the Korean church is still under



the strong influence of the mega-church phenomenon, which Kim (n.d.:7) calls “the situation of stagnation in growth, but continuation of the growth ideology”. Through the influence of the globalisation policy and the neo-liberal market economy that try to remove all obstacles that prevent the competition-oriented society that believes in infinite competition, strongly promoted by the Korean government since the mid-1990s, as well as by the competitive growth of the Korean church, competition became fiercer, which resulted in polarisation around a few mega-churches and a majority of the small churches (Shin 2015:171). The number of seminaries increased due to denominational divisions and competition and the explosive numerical growth of the church during modernisation. The number of pastors produced from the increased seminaries and the number of churches planted by them rapidly increased compared to the number of church members. The stagnation of the membership growth rate can be seen from the table below. The lagging of the growth rate became a reason to become a mega-church (Choi 2015:16).

<Table 19> The growth of the Korean Presbyterian and the Methodist Churches (Choi 2015:16; Jeong 2011:81)

Years	The Presbyterian Church (Hapdong + Tonghap)			The Methodist Church		
	Number of churches	Number of pastors	Number of members	Number of churches	Number of pastors	Number of members
1991	9,848	10,167	3,967,552	3,817	4,429	1,183,478
2000	13,249	19,697	4,604,126	5,188	6,410	1,377,954
Growth Rate (%)	34.53	93.73	16.04	35.92	44.73	16.43

According to Sweet (2001:18-22), there are the following three possible responses by the church to the tsunami-like changing of social contexts: 1) Deny the reality and significance of changes; 2) Accept its existence but choose to be nostalgic for the past and be timid for the future; 3) Do not escape from it or mix with it but rather “learn its language, master its media, and

engage it on a higher level.” The Korean churches under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon, especially of some mega-churches, have responded to the changes according to Sweet’s first or second grouping and caused a cacophony in society. Their excessive competitions for growth coupled with their financial and sexual immoral affairs resulted in the deepening of the marginalisation of the Korean church. However, since the early 2000s there have been some conversations and movements among some scholars and churches to find and to venture a new way of church growth, following Sweet’s third way of response to the rapidly changing context.

### 3.11.2. The emerging missional church movement

Missional ecclesiology was introduced to the Korean church in the late 2003 through the writings of Hyung-geun Choi Ph.D. of the Seoul Theological University, and it led to a missional conversation. Based on the critical view of Newbigin and Hiebert of the Western church, Choi (2003:27) asserted that a biblical missional church is an alternative for the Korean church which had emphasised only individual salvation while ignoring social participation and regarded mission as one of the programmes of the church. Following Choi’s introductory work, theoretical research on the missional church has been facilitated along with lively translations of the books related to the missional church, published by the American missiologists belonging to the GOCN. Guder’s *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* was translated into Korean in 2005 while *The Shaping of Things to Come* written by Frost and Hirsch was translated in 2009. After fostering extensive research into cultural trends and the revisioning of a new missional approach to the church, the GOCN proposed the following twelve hallmarks of a missional church to the Korean church (Frost & Hirsch 2013:25-26):

- The missional church proclaims the gospel.
- The missional church is a community where all members are involved in learning to become disciples of Jesus.
- The Bible is normative in this church’s life.

- The church understands itself as different from the world because of its participation in the life, death, and resurrection of its Lord.
- The church seeks to discern God's specific missional vocation for the entire community and for all of its members.
- A missional community is indicated by how Christians behave toward one another.
- It is a community that practices reconciliation.
- People within the community hold themselves accountable to one another in love.
- The church practices hospitality.
- Worship is the central act by which the community celebrates with joy and thanksgiving both God's presence and God's promised future.
- This community has a vital public witness.
- There is recognition that the church itself is an incomplete expression of the reign of God.

Missional conversation did not stay in the theoretical dimension, but began to be applied to the missionary policy of the existing church or church planting. It coincided with the retirement of the senior pastors of most of the mega-churches in the Gangbuk and the Gangnam during the early 2000s and of the pastors who followed their ministerial philosophy. It was led by Sun-hwi Kwak of the Somang Church who retired in 2003, Han-eum Ok of the Sarang Church in 2004 and Yonggi Cho of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in 2008. In the new context, the post-Christendom of the postmodern society with its social criticism against the modern expansionism of the Korean church and awareness of the crisis in the Korean church with its low or negative growth that differs from the church growth during the modernisation period, some pastors of the new generation started asking themselves an existential question about the church, "What has God called us to be and do in our current context?" (Frost & Hirsch 2013:20). As an answer to this question, they met

missional ecclesiology and have focused not on numerical growth but on the restoration of the biblical nature and mission of the church, in its current context (Choi 2009:379).

England experienced the post-Christendom of postmodern society earlier than Korea. The Anglican Church after about 30 years of decrease of its membership in changed contexts reconsidered and re-engaged with the fundamental missiological questions of how the church could successfully embody and communicate the gospel in a postmodern culture, where the Western world re-emerged as a legitimate missionary field (Carson 2005:48-49). The Anglican Church decided to aim at following the pattern of the incarnation of Christ Jesus to become contextualised in the postmodern society and to communicate with post-Christian people. There has been a wide diversity of fresh expressions of the church in its relation to society through strategic fresh approaches to mission and church planting. The following are some snapshot features of each type of expression of the church in the English context to express God's kingdom and create new communities of Christian faith (The Archbishop's Council 2004:43-80):

- Alternative worship communities: They are loose networks of groups which are trying to connect with churches with a post-denominational consciousness. They have a passion to close the divide between the experience of the church and the rest of life by seeking to be responsive to post-modern culture using multi-media and ancient symbols and rituals in their worship service while denying any aggressive or blatant evangelism.
- Base Ecclesial Communities (BECs): BECs originated in Brazil in the mid-1950s, and are now spread and found worldwide. BECs work for the people at the bottom or at the edges of society with a gospel of liberation: a church of the poor, for the poor, providing them an intimate answer to the impersonality of modern existence.
- Café church: Though this expression of church is not common yet, it is an attempt to organise groups that seek to engage with a café culture. They prefer gathering around small tables rather than in pews; having

interaction instead of spectating with refreshments sitting and talking rather than standing or defending their personal space.

- Cell church: It is based on the conviction that the small group is truly church. A typical cell meeting itself could express worship, word study, community and mission, which are the four functions of the existing churches. It responds well to a culture in which community and family have been eroded and the missionary need of the non-churched for in-depth discipleship into a previously unexplored faith.
- Churches arising out of community initiatives: These churches have developed through or out of local initiatives though those initiatives have not attempted to create a church. This expression of church is mostly found in urban areas of social deprivation, surrounded by situations and people experiencing significant need, and engages with the local community by allowing local people to set the agenda for what can best help rebuild or regenerate that community.
- Multiple and midweek congregations: These are initiated for people from different cultures or sociological groups to be nourished and sustained within the same building by offering them different liturgical and communal styles. Due to congregational challenges or missionary purposes, some of them prefer to have their service in the early morning, lunch time and after-work during weekdays.
- Network-focused churches: They are developed for mission to specific social and cultural groups in the belief that people connect most closely with people where they work or with whom they are at leisure, rather than with the people who happen to live nearby.
- School-based and school-linked congregations and churches: They began after-school groups that become church. They meet late afternoons during midweek in order to draw primary school children, parents of both sexes, grandparents and partners of believers.
- Seeker church: It attempts to create an experience of worship and teaching in which seekers, who have a little or no background in Christian

worship, to feel comfortable and the lapsed to be restored.

- Traditional church planting: It is mostly conducted by the sending congregation for different reasons, such as that the ministry of the sending congregation did not reach them on account of its geography. It retains close links with the sending congregation, so that the financial operating costs would be covered by the sending church for a certain period of time.
- Traditional forms of church inspiring new interest: Some churches keep their heritage in liturgy and spirituality, and a sense of sacred stability for the people who are looking for mystery, beauty, stability and a sense of God's presence in a fast changing world.
- Youth congregations: They are distinguished from youth services, which may be occasional, and may or may not be led by young people. The youth congregations are for youth, by youth, having a weekly pattern, recognised leaders, pastoral structures and clear intentions. They can meet the needs of a particular youth culture and connect gospel and church with them in fresh expressions, through which many young people can find and enjoy authentic Christian community, worship and living.

The Anglican Church, through the publication of its *Mission-shaped church* in 2004 and introduction of ways of being church in the postmodern culture by opening seminars in Korea, has affected the Korean church to be missional in the new contexts with new expressions of managing and planting churches. In the Fresh Expression of Church (FxC) seminar held in Seoul by the Church Mission Society (CMS) on 18 August, 2016, Jonny Baker, the CMS director of mission education called "Pioneer", taught about how to start fresh expressions of church planting (Choi 2016:1). By calling the participants pioneers, he emphasised seeing something new, going off the boundaries drawn by institutional churches, building relationships with neighbours to find contact points through listening to people and discerning their needs (missional listening) (Choi 2016:1-2). All the above-mentioned internal and external factors were intertwined and resulted in emerging missional church movement in the Korean context of post-Christendom in a postmodern society.

There have been churches experimenting with fresh missional types of church planting in Korea through discerning what the living God requires from them and engaging and witnessing to the kingdom of God to their particular cultural settings (Niemandt 2012:4), while refusing to be swept in the rapids of the mega-church phenomenon and avoiding to be damaged by negative aspects of the postmodern culture (Choi 2009:380).

Some churches have been formed on Daehangno, a road located in the proximity of many universities, which made it the centres of culture and arts in Seoul. The Beauty & Cross Church was founded by Rev. Dong-sup Oh in 2011 and has pursued an urban mission through culture and art based on the characteristics of where it is situated. According to its homepage, the Beauty & Cross Church gathers at a café by the name of Rachael's Tea Room on every Sunday. During the weekdays the café tries to communicate with the university students through introducing authentic English tea cultures that the pastor's wife learnt when studying in England and providing space for various small concerts and lectures. Its Sunday service uses many paintings related to the theme of the sermon and symbols like candles to help the postmodern Christians who seek a subjective spiritual experience to see, smell and feel their sins are burnt away (Ryu 2012:1). The Jesus Dream Community Church, planted by Rev. Sung-soo Kim in 2011, also resided in Daehangno. Rev. Kim has run a library named the Homo Bookers during the week for university students who look for good books and space to build relationships with others, which operates as space for the Sunday service (The gospel and context 2011:1-2). On its homepage, Rev. Kim answered to the question, "How do you expect the church and the library to be to grow?", that "I hope that the library will not be a means to attract people to come to the church, but to be a community in which people will freely come and communicate with each other through reading good books and sharing about the worries and questions of their lives."

The church is also established through the promotion of social networking service. In June, 2016, Rev. Dong-yeul Shin posted on Facebook the news of the planting of the "Why Church." Its recruitment was advertised with one condition, "Come only those who have a question" (Park 2016:2). For the



People, especially the youth group, who left the existing churches, fed up with unilateral training without mutual understanding and exhausted with excessive mobilisation for church growth programmes, Rev. Shin after one hour of Sunday service has a heart-to-heart talk with church members for more than two hours. During the conversation, they freely ask and answer about issues hard to talk about in church such as alcohol and dating. Although not all questions got answered, by listening courteously to questions and empathising with the questioner's troubles, an intimate family-like community has been formed and about 30 young Christians have been restored in their faith since inception of the church. The Why Church as an agent of God's mission sends the restored youths back to the churches where they came from to demonstrate the kingdom of God to the world (Park 2016:2-3).

### **3.12. Comprehensive assessment**

Since the 1990s, Korea has been under the influence of the postmodern culture. The Korean church that grew rapidly in the pseudo-Christendom mode with its institutionalised ecclesiology and ecclesiocentric missiology lost its missional nature and wrongly reacted to the changed context, which led to the slowdown or decrease of its numerical growth. The Korean church has lost its Christendom-like status in society and has become marginalised. Through the influence of the Western church which entered the post-Christendom in their postmodern context earlier than the Korean church, their missional ecclesiology was introduced to the Korean church through publications and seminars. With crisis awareness, being marginalised, the Korean church found a new insight from missional ecclesiology that the crisis of the church resulted from its deviation from the way God is going and church growth must be attained through restoration of the missional essence of the church. Therefore, although the missional church movement appeared in the crisis, it is not a church enhancing programme but a church reforming movement to restore its missional nature. There have been some churches such as the Beauty and Cross Church, the Jesus Dream Community Church and the Why Church which are participating in the mission of God based on missional ecclesiology in the changing and diverse Korean context. They are putting themselves at

risk in order to restore mission from institutional activities to an active movement (Frost & Hirsch 2013:240).

### **3.13. Conclusion**

The essence of the Korean church in the past and its present position were investigated in order to find its way back to the Bible from the perspective of missional ecclesiology. Although missional ecclesiology as a theological concept was not yet developed and it cannot be said that the early Korean church expressed all aspects of a missional church, its missional dynamics revealed through the work of the Holy Spirit were already presented, transcending time. The characteristics of a missional church presented in the early Korean church are as follows (Choi 2015:24):

- The early Korean church was established by the sovereign works of God.
- The early Korean church followed the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- The early Korean church spontaneously propagated the gospel by the love and grace of God.
- The early Korean church dedicated itself to incarnational service, following the example of Christ Jesus.
- The early Korean church sympathised with the pain and suffering of the age that led to healing and restoration.
- The early Korean church did not focus on the church building, but concentrated on worshipping life wherever it was.
- The early Korean church was more than just religious activities, but lived as people of God's mission even in their daily lives.
- The early Korean church had more interest in the discipline of practice in field than in teaching as a mere formality.
- The early Korean church did not pursue an individual church's selfish growth, but pursued unity and collaboration.

- The early Korean church was a community that reproduced other churches on the basis of its internal dynamics.

The characteristics of the early Korean church as a missional church clearly show that the early Korean church grew in the apostolic and post-apostolic mode in which it participated in the redemptive mission of God where it was sent by God as a witnessing community. The growth of the Korean church in the apostolic and post-apostolic mode was stopped as the Korean church became a Pseudo-Christendom through a cordial relationship with the government, passing through liberation from the Japanese colonisation and the Korean War. The Korean church's Pseudo-Christendom intensified with its explosive numerical growth during the modernisation period, marching in step with Korea's radical economic development. The growth of the Korean church during the modernisation period was led by mega-churches with all the churches competing to become mega-churches under the influence of the mega-churches. The Korean churches became:

- like the medieval Christendom, by using the power of the government to protect the Christian domain to expand the territorial concept of the kingdom of God.
- pursuers of worldly power through keeping a close relationship with the government as a privileged community rather than pursuing the ethical life of disciples separated from the world, through which they could attract the people to come to the church.
- a divided world that continued to split through conflicts and competition among denominations; it led to individualism where each church focused only on their numerical growth and prosperity while neglecting unity and collaboration with other churches.
- dualistic in their worldview saw the world as divided between the divine and the mundane. This caused a discrepancy between liturgies within the church building (religious) and the worship of daily life outside the church building (non-religious).
- a church that regarded their quantitative growth as the expansion of the

kingdom of God.

- a church that delivered the message of prosperity to satisfy people's needs and bring them to the church through the influence of the prosperity theology. According to the prosperity theology, church buildings must be big and splendid as a visible model and evidence of prosperity.
- a church that tried to attract more people to come to church with their luxurious and user-friendly buildings through the influence of their consumerist society, represented by a shopping mall.
- a church that concentrated on bringing more people to the church and manage the people not to leave the church by organising an efficient bureaucratic structure centring on clergies, especially the senior pastor, rather than a flatter structure with spontaneous participation of all members.
- a church that attracted urban people to come to church by responding to their different tastes and needs through running various programmes. Mission also became one of the entrepreneurial church expansion programmes.
- a church that, through discipleship training, raised church workers to run diverse church growth programmes, following the will of the senior pastor.

These characteristics of the churches under the mega-church phenomenon display that they grew in the Pseudo-Christendom mode with their institutional and clergy-centred ecclesiology and ecclesiocentric mission, by which the Korean church lost their early missional understanding of ecclesiology. As the Korean society entered the postmodern culture in the 1990s, the growth rate of the Korean church began to decrease. In awareness of the crisis, since the early 2000 there have been vigorous ventures with a conversation on the restoration of the missional nature of the church as a genuine way of church growth based on the missional ecclesiology introduced by the Western church. The Korean church should make sure that this missional movement does not

disappear as a short-term trend, but to be an ongoing church reforming movement that overcomes the mega-church phenomenon and restores the missional dynamics of the early Korean church in order to fulfil the redemptive mission of God in the new context of the Korean society. In the next chapter, it will be surveyed how different understandings of the Korean mega and missional churches about the essence and mission of the church affected their ministries and what the general perception of the Korean society is towards the Korean missional and mega-churches, which will provide an empirical ground to seek strategic ways forward for the Korean church.

## **4. EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVE**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter showed how the Korean church's understanding of its nature and mission changed during the course of the Korean history. During its initial period, the Korean church had a missional understanding of its nature and its mission developed from the nature of the church with missional characteristics such as incarnation, contextualisation, indigenisation, peace-building, social participation, unity and holiness. The organisation of the early Korean church was organic and based on spontaneity (Van Gelder 2000:37). Although the Korean church has lost its missional ethos and praxis through the influence of the mega-church phenomenon, during the period of industrialisation and modernisation with a Christendom-like understanding of the nature and mission of the church, there have been emerging missional church movements to restore the missional characteristics of the church by implementation of a missional ecclesiology in the Post-Christendom of the postmodern context.

This chapter deals with the different ecclesiological perspectives of the Korean mega and missional churches and how it affects their ministries, as well as the general perception of the Korean society toward Korean missional and mega-churches. This is done by way of collecting data, interviews and analysis of media reports, presenting concrete and practical evidence of how different ecclesiological and missiological perspectives of each movement are applied and practised.

### **4.2. Case study of mega-churches in Korea**

#### **4.2.1. The Immanuel Church**

The Immanuel Church belongs to the Korean Methodist Church and is the fourth largest church in the denomination following the first and second largest Methodist churches in Korea, the Kwanglim Church and the Kumnan Church run by Sun-do Kim and Hong-do Kim respectively, the first and second elder

brothers of the senior pastor, Kuk-do Kim. In September, 1975, the Kwanglim Methodist Church which was already a mega-church in the Gangbuk, decided to start a branch in the Songpa district in the Gangnam along with the regional development policy of the government and sent Rev. Kuk-do Kim, an assistant pastor as its senior pastor (Lee 2004:9). According to Lee (2014:76), “large churches tend to plant cloned-churches that have the DNA of their mother churches, at a place where there are none of their church members, without considering local specialties.” At that time under the influence of the world evangelisation movement and the church growth theory (Yang 2016:2), with the notion that growth of an individual church is the way to obey the Great Commission as well as to achieve world evangelisation, military metaphors about church planting and growth such as “army”, “crusade”, “council of war”, “conquest”, “advance”, “resources”, and “marching orders” abounded (Bosch 1991:338). According to the Immanuel Church’s homepage, Rev. Kim before starting his church with the name of “The First Kangnam Church”, rented the first floor of a Jamsil municipal apartment in November, 1975, prayed every day for 40 days going around the apartment complex 7 times a day to conquer the land of Canaan rather than to study the characteristics of the local people to be contextualised as an incarnational church.

There were civil complaints against the noise from the church held in the apartment, and ultimately they were expelled by the district office (Yang 2016:2). Rev. Kim and the church members gathered at a vacant lot behind the apartment, setting up a tent. According to the Homepage of the church, for a year until they built a church building of a 100 *pyeong* on the plot they bought (a *pyeong* is approximately 3.3058 m<sup>2</sup>) the tent was torn down for 17 times by the district officers as an illegal unlicensed structure. To stop the demolition of tent, Rev. Kim and his church members scuffled with the district officers and some of them had their arms broken. Some church members gave up their bread-and-butter jobs to protect the tent. These experiences made them to see their church as “the ark of salvation” or “the city of refuge” against the hostile world outside the church building (Han 2011:4). Rev. Kim called the construction of the church to be the building of the temple (Kim 2007:25) although the Lord abolished the man-built temple by his crucifixion that rent the curtain in the temple (Park 2013:41). When they finally had their own



proper church building, all church members actively brought people to the church, and it led to a radical numerical growth of the Immanuel Church that crowded in space after six months. They decided to build another church building in a broader place, with a gross floor space of 650 *pyeong* on 8 May, 1977 (Kim 2007:25).

To fill the bigger building with people, there continued with evangelism through performing various events. The result of a total mobilising evangelism day in May, 1980, with a goal to breakthrough 1,000 attendees, the church could have 1,500 members at the end of the same year. The total mobilising evangelism day was one of the most popular church growth programmes at that time. According to Lee's (2014:45) explanation, the total mobilising evangelism day is one of the modified features of the "Crusade Evangelism" that Billy Graham started in 1948. According to this programme, the church sets a certain day as D-day and makes the congregations decide how many people they are going to invite on that day. The congregations have to establish a good relationship with the people they chose by calling, giving presents, serving a meal, and so on, and bring them to church. On D-day, the church tries its best to open the invited people' hearts by inviting popular singers, offering various touching flash movies and special programmes, and so on and then appeals to them to be converted with a well-prepared gospel message.

According to the homepage of the Immanuel Church, they had 2,000 members in 1981 and over 3,000 in 1983. To hold all attendees within a building, Sunday services began to be conducted in three shifts.

Since Rev. Kim fled to the south following his parents by leaving their hometown behind where they experienced extreme poverty after the Korean War, he emphasised material blessings such as health, wealth, and a successful life through his sermons. He delivered the message of hope and promise of success to the people crowding into the Kangnam following the regional development policy of the government (Kim 2007:10-14). Although Rev. Kim belonged to the Methodist denomination, he placed emphasis on prosperity, which people trying to settle down in a new site of living desperately pursued, and positive words as a means to get it because he studied in the Pentecostal theological seminary and was affected by the Yoido Full Gospel

Church. In his sermons he kept repeating “We will swallow them up” (Nm 14:9), “Open wide your mouth and I will fill it” (Ps 81:10), “I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Phip 4:13) (Kim 2013:52). At his sermon on Joshua 1:1-9 in September, 2007, he asked the church members to change their stereotype of they cannot, to have a vision of what they want to achieve and to have a positive thinking of what they can succeed. He reminded them of the following Scriptures to break the stereotypes: “I will give you every place where you set your foot”, “No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life”, “I will be with you”, “Be strong and courageous”, “Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged”, “You will be prosperous and successful” (Kim 2007:12-13). This is similar with how Lee (2014:35) summarised the message of the prosperity evangelists:

First of all, set your dream and goal, and visualize in your heart that your dream has come true with active thinking and positive words, and confess it with your mouth repeatedly, and strengthen your faith with reciting everyday over and over the Scriptures which can help you have positive thinking such as “I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Phil 4:13). “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you” (Mt 17:20). “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Rm 8:31), and so on, then you can fulfil the dream and goal of yours.

The root of Rev. Kim’s prosperity messages is found in his ministerial philosophy. According to the homepage of the church, Rev. Kim’s 10 pastoral priorities are the Pentecostal movement, positive thinking, preaching ministry, Bible study, Joyful praise, Programmes, Gifts ministry, Layman movement, Small group movement and Vision. Positive thinking is the number two priority in his ministry next to the power of the Holy Spirit. Rev. Sun-do Kim who led his church to become a mega-church in the Gangbuk with sermons emphasising prosperity, blessings and positive thinking helped the Immanuel church’s numerical growth by leading revival meetings once a year as the main speaker since its inception (Lee 2004:9). Rev. Kuk-do Kim emphasised the observance of the Sunday as the Lord’s sacred day and offerings, especially

tithes following his second elder brother Rev. Hong-do Kim who preached that if a person gives tithes, s/he will enjoy material blessings, but if not, s/he cannot be saved and will be visited by misfortunes such as an accident, disease, operations, and theft and loss of all his or her money (Lee 2014:1). To be blessed Rev. Kuk-do Kim proposed church attendance every Sunday and to give offerings; blessing means being rich and successful. At the entrance of the main chapel various types of offering envelopes not only for tithes but also for other offerings such as “a thousand times of burnt offerings” were provided. A thousand times of burnt offerings came from Solomon’s sacrifices at Gibeon (1Ki 3:4). Although Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings, Rev. Kim taught that if burnt offerings were offered a thousand times, s/he would be given wisdom and enjoy riches, honour and a long life like Solomon (Kim 2007:61).

When Korea’s global positioning was promoted through the Seoul Olympics in 1988, the Immanuel Church made their prosperity a visual evidence of God’s blessings to the Korean and international societies by building a magnificent building covered by glasses shining like crystal, imitating Robert Shuller’s Crystal Cathedral Church in the vicinity of Olympic stadium. It has a gross floor space of 2,400 *pyeong* built with their amassed wealth. Rev. Kim changed the name of the church from the local style name, the First Kangnam Church to the present name, the Immanuel Church, which can be globally recognised, with aspirations to be a world-class church (Kim 2007:25). A beautiful church building located in a highly accessible and visible place brought explosive quantitative growth. In 1993 they built a tower-shaped type education centre for the Sunday school students in front of the main building with a gross floor space of 2,000 *pyeong*. The Immanuel Church has a 4,400 *pyeong* church buildings. They are convinced that it is the 1,100 fold blessings God poured on the church which started from 4 *pyeong* of tent space to 4,400 *pyeong* of church buildings, combining both the main and the education buildings. With its 30,000 attendees it became a legendary success story of God who intervened and it played a role in the building-focused ecclesiology prevalent in the Korean church.

The Immanuel Church relies greatly on the spiritual gift of an individual, Rev.

Kuk-do Kim, and the congregation completely obeys his vision. Rev. Kim argues that he received his world evangelisation vision directly from God and it became the vision of the church, which is “Today Kangnam, Tomorrow Korea, and the World on the next day” based on Luke 13:33, “I must keep going today and tomorrow, and on the next day” (Kim 2016:23). According to the homepage, to achieve the vision, the Immanuel Church carries out the following various programmes:

- Kangnam: visiting and preaching the gospel at the hospital, police station, jail, community welfare centre around the church; running a multicultural centre.
- Korea: construction of church buildings for 28 military camps; volunteer activities for rural communities; voluntary medical and aesthetic services for remote areas.
- World: sending and supporting 20 missionaries working for 20 countries; construction of 80 church buildings in mission fields.

The mission of the Immanuel Church is programme-centred with the increased human and material resources rather than incarnational by church members who witness to the redemptive mission of God through their words and deeds where they are by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These various and showy missions of the Immanuel Church contributed to the image improvement of the church as a church enthusiastically obeying the Great Commission, and it resulted in growth of the church in numbers. Mission is one of many programmes of the church to maintain continuous church growth, through which it offers religious satisfaction to the people participating in one of the activities and promotes the name of the church in the Korean society. To carry out the diverse programmes effectively, they emphasised an orderly fashioned army-like organisation centring on a charismatic leader.

The Immanuel Church consisted of 3 parishes in 1978, 8 parishes in 1985 and 12 parishes from 1992. Assistant pastors are assigned to take care of each parish and lay leaders consisting of 2-3 elders, a parish chief and a deputy chief manage the parishes helping the assistant pastors. Divisional (sectional) prayer meetings are formed in parishes, and lay leaders are appointed as the

leaders of the meetings to manage all church members with a head of the leaders of the sectional prayer meetings. In the Immanuel Church, the final say belongs to the senior pastor. Through the influence of the senior pastor who served in the Korean Marine Corps, the organisation has a strict hierarchy structure where the lower grader must obey the upper grader unconditionally (Lee 2016:73-74). According to an interview with an assistant pastor of the Immanuel Church by SNS on 30 September, 2016, assistant pastors can be struck by the senior pastor if s/he states an opinion opposing the one of the senior pastor who has the final say.

Their building and clergy-centred perspective on the church and ecclesiocentric mission perspective can also be seen in the moves of Rev. Kuk-do Kim from 2008 to his retirement in 2016. Rev. Kim ran for the Chairperson of Methodist Church Council in September, 2008. In accordance with Methodist Election Law the 6<sup>th</sup> clause of Article 12 (eligibility for election), “A person who has not been punished by church or social laws”, Rev. Kim was ineligible since he was fined for violation of libel laws in 2001. He, however, obstinately ran for election using the power of the church as well as the influences of his elder brothers who were the former Chairpersons of the Methodist Church Council, Sun-do Kim from 1994-1996, Hong-do Kim from 1996-1998 (Kim 2008a:1). Although he won the election by the support from 44% of the voters, in the end Rev. Kim’s election was declared invalid by the court since the candidate who ranked second appealed to social laws (Kim 2008b:1). Rev. Kim, however, did not accept the court’s decision. He appointed himself as the Chairperson of Methodist Church Council by holding an illegal Council meeting with only his supporters and unlawfully occupied the Chairperson’s office for two months by mobilising “errand men”, meaning hired street muscle who often played violent mercenary roles in property disputes that law enforcement agencies refused to handle. Ultimately he and his supporters were kicked off by the intervention of governmental authority (Lee 2009:1-2).

Rev. Kim mentioned that the reason he wanted to be the Chairperson of Methodist Church Council was that he had a vision of making a growing denomination of it (Yang 2016:3). This clearly shows his Christendom-like

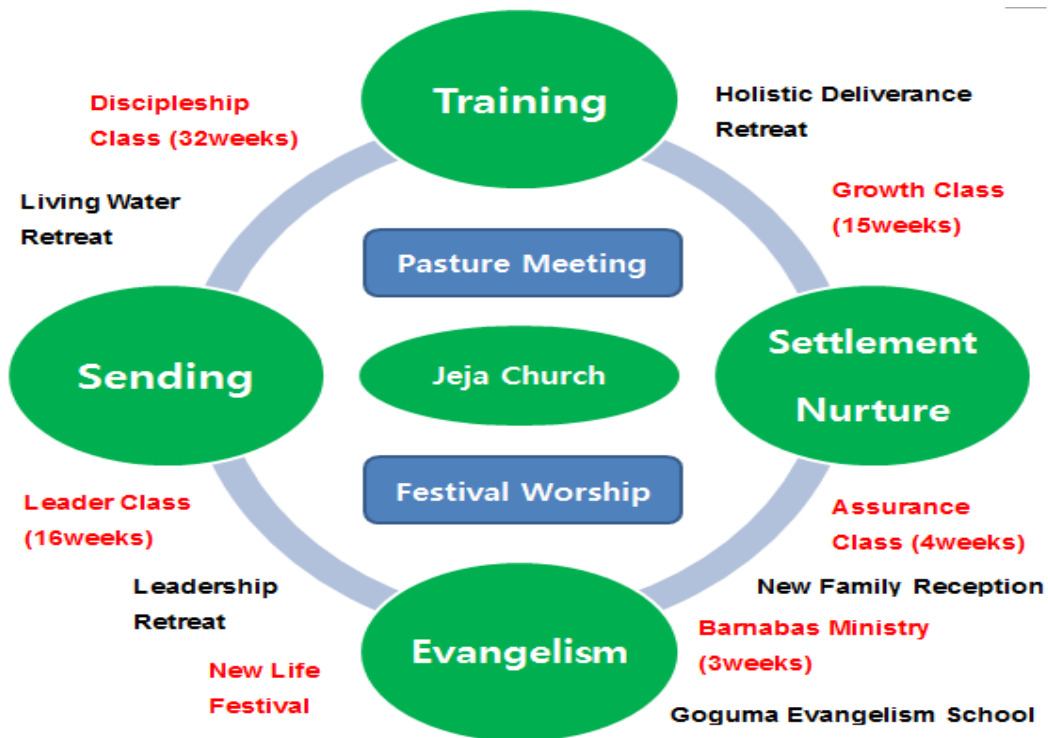
understanding of mission in which using physical force can even be justified for church growth. In 2013, Rev. Kim handed over his office as the senior pastor to his own son, Rev. Jung-kuk Kim (Lee 2013:1). In 2012, the Methodist Church established a law to prohibit handing over the church from parents to sons and daughters since heredity of mega-churches that comes together with riches, honour and power may signify syncretism of the church. The Methodist Church, however, due to the influences of Rev. Sun-do Kim who handed over the Kwanglim Church to his son, Rev. Jung-suk Kim in 2001 and Rev. Hong-do Kim who turned over the Kumran Church to his son, Rev. Jung-min Kim in 2008, could not stop the heredity of the Immanuel Church though prohibition on heredity (Lee 2004:6-13). Against the criticism of the Korean society on heredity, Rev. Kim (Lee 2013:1) said as follows, arguing that it was not heredity, but succession: “In the Bible, priesthood was passed down from generation to generation except in the case where sons cannot do priestly works or cannot be priests. Therefore, it must be seen as succession or inheritance of pastorship.” It shows clearly that Rev. Kuk-do Kim’s thoroughly clergy-centred ecclesiology believes that only pastors can be priests denying the priesthood of all believers.

#### 4.2.2. The Jeja Church

The Jeja (“disciples”) Church belongs to the General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches in Korea (Hapdong) (The Jeja Church 2002:3). It was established by Rev. Sam-ji Chung in 1988 and widely renowned as a church which has grown to a mega-church through discipleship training along with the Sarang Church (Kim 2008:1). Although the Jeja Church started with 8 families and 15 youths in one rented room of a commercial building as most of the newly started Korean churches, it grew to 160 adults and 150 Sunday school students within a year. Church growth continued by about 110 % every year, having 700 attendees in 1994, 2,500 in 2002, 3,160 in 2003, and 9,000 in 2008, the 20<sup>th</sup> year since foundation (The Jeja Church 2002:3). Rev. Chung worked for 3 years from 1975 with the Navigators a worldwide Christian para-church organisation made a wheel-shaped discipleship training system as shown below, applied the discipleship wheel illustration of the Navigators to his

ministry. This system combined the existing discipleship training made by Rev. Ok of the Sarang Church with the Discipline for Nurture and Assurance (DNA) system designed by Rev. Chung for settlement of newcomers (Kim 2008:1). According to Rev. Chung, the DNA system he designed helps the participants to strongly experience the power of the Holy Spirit compared to the existing discipleship training programmes which mostly end up as a knowledge-based Bible study (Song 2009:1).

<Table 20> Discipleship Training System of the Jeja Church (Song 2009:2)



On the basis of the DNA system, evangelism is carried out through training Goguma (sweet potato) evangelism at the Goguma Evangelism School (GES) and the New Life Festival. The GES emphasises continuous evangelism. To the Goguma evangelism, Goguma signifies recipients of the gospel. As if a person checks whether a sweet potato in a pot is boiled enough to eat by poking it with a stick, the trainees in the GES are taught to keep checking (poking) whether the recipients are ready to come to church (boiled enough or not) by telling them the following four words one by one whenever meeting them: “Are you attending church?”, “You need to come”, “It is so good”, “I will



pray for you” (Kim 2005:1). The Jeja Church on the one hand keeps training its members how to evangelise through the GES and on the other hand it opens the New Life Festival twice per year. The New Life Festival is a kind of the total mobilising evangelism day, but it tries to maximise efficiency by inducing competition between presbyteries. According to the homepage of the Jeja Church, the Church promotes a competitive spirit by letting each presbytery make lists of the people they are going to invite, whom they call “VIP”, posting the lists on the notice boards of the church and rewarding the best presbytery and person after the Festival. Frost and Hirsch (2013:65) pointed out, “even though the program might be sound and biblical and is obviously very effective in its original context, it nevertheless smacks of something artificial.”

Although they treat the VIPs to a meal and give them gifts to build relationships until the appointed D-day, the day of New Life Festival, the evangelism of the Jeja Church seems dualistic since building relationships is to them nothing but a means to bring the VIP to church. It is driven by a competitive spirit for a certain period of time rather than witnessing to the kingdom of God through incarnating Christ Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit wherever they are with their Jesus-like words and deeds. The newcomers to the church through the New Life Festival will be served by the customised Barnabas who helps them to settle down, considering their marital status, gender and age as soon as they register with the church. For the next three weeks they build relationships with their Barnabas, studying together basic Bible study on the basis of the textbook of the Barnabas ministry. During this period, Barnabas introduces all about the Jeja Church such as its history and vision of the church to the newcomers and helps them to feel at home by kindly asking and answering and guiding them around the church. For smooth and effective progress of the Barnabas ministry, Barnabas is to be thoroughly trained in advance about how to deal with newcomers and is to make a report to the pastor who is in charge of the department of the Barnabas ministry of what and how s/he works for three weeks (Song 2009:3). After the three weeks of Barnabas ministry the newcomers participate in the New Family Reception in which the senior pastor shares the vision of the Jeja Church and his ministerial philosophy.

The Assurance Class is the last step for their settlement and consists of four weeks of lectures about salvation. The lectures open at various times during weekdays for the convenience of the participants and the newcomers should write a testimony about their conviction of salvation at the last lecture. If their confession of faith is clear s/he will be baptised as soon as they completed the Assurance Class. The textbook of the Assurance Class consists of a clear detailed operation guideline, a preparation item with its contents and purpose to be convenient for the lecturer to lead the class with (The Jeja Church 2005:2-30). The Growth Class which takes up 15 weeks after the Assurance Class is the last course of the Settlement and Nurture stage and aims to establish the faith of the newcomers through a clear understanding about the gospel and to feel a sense of belonging as a member of the Jeja Church. A Growth Class is formed with one pastor and ten students that try to fulfil the following four goals: conviction of salvation, building a positive self-image, establishing a proper view on the church, practising by sharing and serving in ministries. To fulfil the four goals, there follows a Holistic Deliverance Retreat for one night and two days in the middle of a 15-week-course. It is not like the existing discipleship trainings, it helps the participants to have self-confidence about their salvation; to heal their inner hurts and pains and to restore their true identity and self-esteem through personally experiencing the Holy Spirit by combining inner healing programmes in the congregation of the Holy Spirit which is an audible public prayer meeting led by a charismatic leader with spirit-focused contemporary praises sung with fervour (Song 2009:2-3).

During the course, the participants of the Growth Class are to be allotted to the department of sharing and serving to try various volunteer works of the Jeja Church. According to the report from the Holistic Gospel Ministry, there were 14 voluntary service teams under the department of sharing and serving in the Jeja Church in 2003. Some teams support the existing well-fare institutions while other teams run their own service programmes as below:

- The Love House in Gwangmyeong: This team works for the institution that looks after the disabled.
- Korea Organ & Tissue Donor Programme: This team works for the institution by encouraging people to determine organ donation.

- House of Hope: This team works for the institution that looks after dementia and stroke patients.
- House of Rohthem: This team works for the institution that takes care of retired pastors.
- Zion Welfare Centre: This team works for the institution that looks after orphans.
- Wilderness Church: This team supports the ministry of the Wilderness Church that helps the homeless.
- Shinmok Welfare Centre: This team works for the institution that supports vulnerable children.
- Prison Ministry: This team visits jails and comforts the prisoners.
- Child Hunger Ministry: This team supports the school children attending school without lunch.
- The Child headed Family Ministry: This team gives support to the children of families without parents.
- The Handicapped people Ministry
- Diaspora Ministry: This team helps foreign workers.
- Living-alone elderly ministry
- Filial Tour Ministry: This team helps the elderly enjoy domestic travels.

At the end of the 15-week-course of the Growth Class, through the Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, Conscientiousness (DISC) test as well as the spiritual gifts test, the participants are to choose which departments of the church they are going to work for (Song 2009:4). Through this well-designed system the Jeja Church could produce a remarkable result with a 90 % settlement rate and 85 % attendance rate by newcomers, which led to the radical growth of the church.

To accommodate its increasing number of members, the Jeja Church built a

new church building on 1 March, 1998, which has a gross floor space of 1,900 *pyeong*. The successful church growth of the Jeja Church received great attention from the Korean churches that were under the depression of numerical growth since entering the 1990s and were looking for new church growth methods. As a result, the Jeja Church began to host the DNA seminar two times a year for the church leaders of the Korean churches and conducted the twentieth seminar with a total of about 4,000 participants by 2008 (Kim 2008:3). Due to the popularity of Rev. Chung and the DNA system, a large proportion of quantitative growth of the Jeja Church was achieved by a horizontal shift from other churches rather than by non-believers coming to the Church through conversion (Cho 2008:72-73). In the situation of the Korean church that 76.5% of all Korean Christians experienced a transfer from small-size churches to middle and large size churches in 2004, and about 3,000 small churches that close each year because of financial challenges caused by this horizontal migration (Lee 2014:19), the Jeja Church did not urge the horizontal migrators to go back to where they came from or to small churches around for the expansion of the Kingdom of God, but assimilated them for the growth of an individual church through the DNA system.

With their increased membership and resources, the Jeja Church purchased the church building of the Changdae Church which went bankrupt and its building provisionally seized by a bank in 2003 and became the second building of the Jeja Church. The Jeja Church also purchased the second and third floors of a building named the J-World Village in 2004 and started using it as an education centre for the Sunday school students. In the process of purchasing the buildings the Jeja Church had to make a loan of about 24 million U.S. dollar at a bank. Rev. Chung's ethical failure was exposed when he took a bribe of about 120,000 U.S. dollar and a luxury apartment from the construction company. The Jeja Church settled out of court (Yoo 2009:2). The Jeja Church ecclesiology places much emphasis on luxury buildings and a pastor who makes the church grow big as essential. Such a pastor is regarded as a special servant of God who must receive special benefits.

In 2002, Rev. Chung discarded the traditional system of the Presbyterian Church and introduced a "Cell" system to the church after visiting Saddleback

Church in the U.S. with his church members, since he worried that the inward structure of his church could become loose and malfunctioning while it grew large outwardly (Yang 2002:1-2). Rev. Chung stated that the cell system of the Jeja Church is operating under the strong leadership of the senior pastor, not like the one of the Saddleback Church (Yang 2002:2). The cell system may weaken the one-man-ruling structure since it is fellowship-centred and characterised by its division. The Jeja Church, however, could make an even stronger structure by centring on the senior pastor through the cell system by letting the lay leaders who were trained by the discipleship training lead cell meetings. The lay cell leaders help the cell members to think and speak the same as the senior pastor and ease their dissatisfaction with the church by re-sharing last Sunday's message of the senior pastor. They also report what happened in the cell meetings to the senior pastor through the assistant pastors who are in charge of managing the cell leaders. This organisation is the same as that of a shopping mall which is seeking the largest profit, church's numerical growth, through the most efficient organisational structure (Yang 2002:2). The Jeja Church calls each cell a "Pasture" and went to increase the number of cells to 240 by 2006.

To produce the lay leaders who carry out actual ministries in the cell system, the Jeja Church runs the Discipleship Class and the Leader Class as training courses. The participants of the training courses have to say yes to the question, "Can you do your works after doing God's work first?", which strictly separates the sacred work (mostly church programmes) from the worldly works based on their dualistic worldview (Song 2009:2). After finishing a 32-week-course of the Discipleship Class that includes the Living Water Retreat for 3 nights and 4 days as a mandatory course in which participants exercise serving each other, the participants are sent to the pastures as shepherds. The shepherds are provided with intellectual and spiritual supports to lead the pasture meetings through the Leader Class for 16 weeks including the Leadership Retreat. The shepherds who were thoroughly trained to obey the spiritual leader (the senior pastor) and had spiritual experiences through the public prayer meetings led by him during the long training period became to regard the will of the senior pastor as the will of God and this did not change even after they are elected as elders, to be members of the highest office of

an individual church called the Session. This allowed the Jeja Church to have a monarchy-like organisation to work according to the will of the senior pastor.

Deacon Bong-jin Lee who registered with the Jeja Church in August, 1999, confessed that he followed the senior pastor like God (Yoo 2009:2). Due to the authority bestowed on one person, Rev. Chung made troubles several times with his unclear financial management and luxurious lifestyle seeking honour that was in discord with his sermons, and led to his embezzlement of a large sum of public funds in 2011.

From August, 2008, Rev. Chung began to manage the financial management of the Jeja Church by himself which previously was the responsibility of the elders. Some elders objected to it, but they as his disciples could not challenge the charismatic authority of the senior pastor (Yoo 2009:3). Apart from his monthly wage of about 15,500 U.S. dollar he appropriated for himself about 10,000 U.S. dollar after a special prayer meeting called the prayer of Jabez at his church at the beginning of 2009 and about 1,000 U.S. dollar for each 9 sermons after leading 9 Friday prayer meetings from July to August (Yoo 2009:2). He used public money like his own without a fiscal report and in the end was brought before the court by some of the church members' accusation. At the end of 2011, Rev. Chung was found guilty of embezzling about 3 million U.S. dollar of public funds by the prosecutors' investigation. He was sentenced to four years' imprisonment in the first instance for violating the Additional Punishment Law on Specific Crimes, but it was commuted to two years after an appeal trial. While Rev. Chung served two years' prison sentence the Jeja Church paid him every month and ran the church by following the instructions of Rev. Chung's letters written in prison, which the church called the "Prison epistle". It clearly shows that the discipleship training of the Jeja Church was based on a dualistic world view that did not raise disciples witnessing to Christ Jesus through their holy lives in the world, but church workers who were loyal to the senior pastor and to church growth. The Jeja Church were in conflict between a group of Rev. Chung's advocates and his opponents throughout his imprisonment and finally split up after Rev. Chung's release on parole on 14 August, 2013. They gathered separately under the same name of the Jeja Church at the first building of the church and the second floor of the J-World

Village respectively.

#### 4.2.3. Interviews with pastors of mega-churches and its analysis

The interview with an assistant pastor of the Immanuel Church was conducted by a social networking service called Kakao Talk on 30 September, 2016, while the other interview with an assistant pastor of the Jeja Church was conducted the same way on 7 October, 2016. For the sake of confidentiality, the interviewees will be anonymous, but pastor I (the Immanuel Church) and pastor J (the Jeja Church) will be used for proper recognition.

##### **i) What is the first priority and goal in your ministry?**

- Pastor I: It is to glorify God. To do that, a church must do something great that can surprise the people of the world.
- Pastor J: It is to carry out world evangelisation to obey the Great Commission. God clearly calls his people individually for world mission and gives them strength and spiritual gifts to do it, but individuals are limited in terms of their capability and abilities. To carry out the bigger mission of God, they must come to church to form a community to work together. To help the individuals find their works in the community, the Jeja Church runs the DNA system.

##### **ii) What do you see as the reason that the Korean church is having a negative reputation with the Korean society of today, which is different from its early years?**

- Pastor I: It is because the Korean church compromises with the worldly values such as humanism, individualism and capitalism.
- Pastor J: It is quite natural that the church is having a negative reputation from the world because the world hates the church as John 15:19 says. The real problem is churches in Korea criticising each other. Especially, small and middle sized churches accuse large churches for no reason but their size. Most of the accusations are not aimed at reformation, but are criticism for criticism itself based on a cold heart



and negative thoughts. These conflicts between the Korean churches open the way for the world to evaluate the Korean church negatively and hamper the way for evangelism.

**iii) What do you see as the merits and demerits of the mega-church?**

- Pastor I: There is almost no demerit to a mega-church. It rather has many advantages. To have a good influence on the world socially, economically and politically, a church should grow bigger. It is a way to give the greater glory to God.

- Pastor J:

Merits: The biggest merit of the mega-church is the extension of influence on the local societies. Church individualism is so severe in the Korean church that collaboration among churches is very difficult. In this situation, if a church becomes a mega-church, it can do many works for the local society without help of other churches and extend its good influence through those.

Demerits: It is difficult to be with other small churches around. They complain about a horizontal shift from small churches to large churches, but it is impossible to stop the people trying to migrate to the mega-churches.

**iv) What do you think is a missional church?**

- Pastor I: A church must always be mission-oriented. To do more missionary works, a church should be big and influential.
- Pastor J: A church exists to fulfil the world evangelisation so that the church has to send more missionaries to foreign countries. The Jeja Church started the 1 pasture 1 missionary movement that has each pasture to send and support their own missionaries working abroad.

**v) What is your reaction to the statement “The bigger a church grows, the more it can carry out missionary work?” Elaborate on your answer.**

- Pastor I: I think there is no doubt that as the church increases in its

attendance number and budget, it can deal with more missionary works which could not be conducted when the church was small.

- Pastor J: I basically agree with that statement, however, a more important thing is consistency. Once you started supporting missionaries spiritually and materially, it has to last until those mission fields become evangelised for world evangelisation.

### ***Analysis of the interviews***

As the Immanuel and Jeja Churches, represented by their assistant pastors I and J, emphasise being united in one word and one thought, it can be supposed that their answers represent the vision of the churches and pastoral philosophy of the senior pastors.

To analyse the interviews, both churches are fully dedicated to carrying out the Great Commission in order to achieve world evangelisation. The two churches, however, understand the church as the subject of mission rather than participating in the redemptive mission of God as a witnessing community as agents between God and the broken world to be restored. They take it for granted that utilising the resources generated by the church's size and influence is necessary to fulfil world evangelisation efficiently in a short period of time and that the church should grow in numbers to be able to do it. This shows that the Immanuel and Jeja Churches have the same understanding of the nature and mission of the church as the churches under influence of the mega-church phenomenon. The Immanuel Church does not recognise that this understanding of mission originates from humanism, individualism and capitalism and that it has brought their negative reputation in the Korean society. The Jeja Church does not see that polarisation of the Korean church in terms of its size matches the economic polarisation of the world. It regards the extending influence of an individual church in a local area without collaboration with other churches around as expansion of the kingdom of God.

## **4.3. Case study of missional churches in Korea**

### **4.3.1. The Bundang Woori Church**

The Bundang Woori Church belongs to the Presbyterian Church Hapdong and was founded by Rev. Chan-soo Lee in 2002. When it was started the term missional church was not yet familiar to the Korean church. The Bundang Woori Church, however, demonstrated the characteristics of a missional church from its beginning, by dreaming of the church in the book of Acts which pleased God, and enjoyed the favour of all the people through their sharing, loving and serving of one another that differed from the world (Ac 2:47). That the Bundang Woori Church did not attempt to grow bigger by all means can be seen from the title of the senior pastor's book written in 2003, *A diary of church planting of the Bundang Woori Church running to be a thing that do not belong to the world*. Since deciding to establish the church in the Bundang metropolitan area which is full of high grade apartment complexes with many schools, crowded with highly-educated upper-middle social class residents, Rev. Chan-soo Lee together with the founding lay members tried to listen to the local people and find out their needs, and to participate in the mission of God who is already working to restore his kingdom there (Lee 2003:61-69).

Through this missional listening, they discerned what the Holy Spirit wanted to do through them (concerning the essence of the church) though there were already many churches. According to Rev. Lee (2003:117-120; 2012:231), the Bundang Woori Church focused on the restoration of God's people who left the church, hurt by senseless church culture caused by its clergy with their building centred ecclesiology; and dysfunctional families. Among the well-educated people in the Bundang region, there were many people who used to attend church but no longer because they were disappointed about the imperial leadership of pastors and their forcible demand of offerings to build bigger church buildings in their shopping mall-like growth strategy (Lee 2012:231).

The Bundang Woori Church has been renting an auditorium of a high school since its inception rather than trying to build its own building, even after it grew too big to gather in the school auditorium. The reason the Bundang Woori Church tries not to be a building-focused church, Rev. Lee (Lee 2008:1) said it is an endeavour to be a community witnessing to the kingdom of God through consideration for people with weak faith, and to be a community that avoided

the worldly order of consumerism. Rather than getting stuck to the church building, the Bundang Woori Church has emphasised the community spirit of love since its beginning as can be seen from its name “Woori” meaning “We” and a modifier “laughing together and crying together” added before its name (The Bundang Woori Church 2013:1). This togetherness is found in the process of the establishment of the church and is reflected in its structure.

While preparing for church planting, Rev. Chan-soo Lee prayed and discussed with the founding lay members about how the church should be and what the church should do in the Bundang region to reflect on the dreams and desires of the laity in the establishment of the church (Lee 2003:60-61). Rather than unilaterally proposing his vision and desire as the one who prepared church planting for a long time, he expected the full obedience and support of the lay members for a deviation from the Korean church’s general church planting paradigm. Before starting his own church, Rev. Chan-soo Lee worked for the Sarang Church for about 10 years as an assistant pastor so that he knew discipleship training very well and applied it to his own ministry. Although Rev. Lee has run “the Upper room” the small group meetings of the Bundang Woori Church which are led by lay leaders who finished the discipleship training under him, the leadership of the church is not centred on one man, the senior pastor, according to a hierarchical structure.

Rev. Lee divided the church into 9 departments and let the lay leaders serve them as team leaders and members. The lay team leaders were given the executive budget authority so that the Bundang Woori Church is practically prevented from being controlled by the senior pastor (Lee 2003:145-146). The disciples trained in the Bundang Woori Church are not just church workers being mobilised to run various church growth programmes as the followers of the senior pastor, but actively participate in serving the church as parts of the body of Christ using their gifts of evangelism and talents given from their Lord as his disciples. The more the church grew, the more Rev. Lee tried to share the authority in the departments of the church with the lay leaders. In his sermon on 23 November 2014, Rev. Chan-soo Lee stressed that the church must put down all instinctive desires for control with which I (the senior pastor or office bears like deacons and elders) try to control everything in the church

and participate in the redemptive mission of God along with each part of the body. According to the same sermon, Rev. Lee does not have any authority to make a decision whether the church supports a missionary or not even if his nephew is a missionary working in Japan. It is clear that the Bundang Woori Church has an ecclesial understanding to be a community witnessing to the kingdom of God through the transparency of its organisation with a holiness separated from the world in dedication to God; and has a perspective on mission in which the mission of the church is not controlled by a charismatic leader, but gives control to the missionary God to follow him.

According to the annual report of Statistics Korea (2013:27), the number of divorces that occurred in Korea during 2012 were 114,316 while 327,073 marriages were confirmed. In the same report, the Bundang region ranked with the third highest divorce rate among the Korean cities due to its regional characteristics where the majority of the residents are from the upper-middle social class (Statistics Korea 2013:21). The bread winners of the family (mostly the husbands in the Korean society) have to spend most of their time at the working place to maintain the standard of life in terms of life environment and education of their children (Lee 2003:26). According to Ahn (2015:1-2), Korea took first place among the 35 OECD member countries with its 2,285 total number of working hours in 2014 and one out of five workers worked even more than 52 hours a week which is the statutory allowed overtime hours. Since its inception, the Bundang Woori Church in the context they were sent by God has been devoted under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to the restoration of the kingdom of God through the ministries of healing a number of dysfunctional families suffering from divorce and marital discord. They encountered and exposed the destructive powers and principalities of the region. The Bundang Woori Church had a family blessing service once a month in which family members deeply recognise again the preciousness of one another before God and pray for one another. Rev. Lee sometimes deliberately encouraged and comforted the head of the household (Lee 2003:62).

Instead of the traditional style of having the congregation spend the whole day in the church on Sundays, the Bundang Woori Church encouraged the church

members to have a family worship by themselves on Sunday evenings. To help the families to worship at their homes, the Bundang Woori Church prepares an advice note on the first Sunday of every month and teaches them not to focus on preaching well, but on having conversations between family members. The Bundang Woori Church opens every year with a preparatory school and happy home seminars for the people planning to get married to help them to have a biblical view on marriage and prepare for a happy married life (Kim 2013:12). For the young husbands and wives who got married in love, but are losing their identity as Christian couples in Christ Jesus, who struggle with the different life habits and values of one another, have stress at work, and pressure of house chores and parenting, the Bundang Woori Church runs a school for young married couples for their restoration (Kim 2013:12). The Bundang Woori Church's incarnational mission in their context of dysfunctional families continued not only to worship in the church building, but also to worship out of it. In Korea's highly competitive society, especially in the realm of education, expensive private education (shadow education) to have an advantage to enter the better universities and to find the better jobs through it, causes the inequality of educational opportunities (Lee & Jang 2008:174-181). According to the Church's homepage, the Bundang Woori Church has run a programme called "the Edu Together" through which it has been matching volunteer tutors from the church to the children of broken families in the region who suffer from financial difficulties and social deprivation.

Through worship services and various ministries of the church for the restoration of families, a number of broken and dysfunctional families in Bundang region have experienced the restoration of God's ruling in their families. As the restored Christian families witness to the kingdom of God through sharing their testimony and their changed lives in local society, the local people, especially a generation of young people from dysfunctional homes who need to experience Christian families in action before they become husbands, wives and parents, are seeing Christian living and grace modelled (Chester & Timmis 2011: loc 945-947). All ministries of the Bundang Woori Church based on a missional understanding of the essence of the church were highly appreciated by the local society as well as by the Korean society, who recognised them as a church that is different from other churches which were

evaluated negatively as highly competitive in building bigger buildings only for the sake of their self-satisfaction and further growth in membership (Lee 2014:104), which ironically led to its radical church growth. The Bundang Woori Church grew to have about 200 attendees in the 2 months after planting and more than 2,000 after one year (Lee 2003:126). The number of church members became 6,500 after 5 years and 11,000 in 2008 (Lee 2008:1). The Bundang Woori Church is a mega-church according to the general definition proposed by Thumma and Travis with its more than 2,000 attendees. However, its missional ethos and praxis by resisting the mega-church phenomenon demonstrate its different perspective on the mission of the church to expand the kingdom of God, which can be found as well from “the Dispatching 10,000 church member movement”.

Although the Bundang Woori Church continued to grow in numbers, Rev. Chan-soo Lee felt pressured since he knew that a large proportion of numerical growth was achieved by a horizontal migration from other churches around. He asked himself if it is right before God that the Bundang Woori Church as a tree in the forest (the Korean church) enjoys alone its radical growth while the forest is ruined by shrugging off other small trees (churches) (Lee 2014:104-105). In agony fighting his instinct to grow bigger, Rev. Lee declared abandonment of being a mega-church and the Dispatching 10,000 church member movement as its implementation measures at his sermon on 1 July 2012. At the same sermon, Rev. Lee (ed. Huh 2013:53) explained why he started that movement as follows:

The attendance of the Bundang Woori Church has passed the 20,000 mark. Although it is now the best days of my ministry, I am feeling uneasy. I will start a process of dissolving the church by sending out well-trained members for the next 10 years. I hope from 1/2 to 3/4 of the congregation leave the church for the weak churches in the vicinity for the next ten years. It is not right that the high-quality human resources are dying out in this one large church. You should not be satisfied with worshipping once a week sitting here, but go to all the churches around for the sake of the kingdom of God. I will also resell the education centre we bought at a cost of 57 million U.S. dollar after



using it for the next 10 years and spend that money for the Korean church and society.

Although it is true that the declaration of such an important decision by the senior pastor still shows the clergy-centric characteristics of the Korean church, it was a proclamation from the church gathered to the church scattered, following the God who continues to send and being sent, in the context of the competition among the Korean churches that have been indulged into the ideology of church growth (Lee 2014:87). The congregation resonated with their senior pastor's missional heart and surprisingly 97% of them consented to the Dispatching 10,000 church member movement in an up or down vote. After the proclamation of the movement, a task force was formed in the Bundang Woori Church to set up the theoretical ground and practical strategies of the Dispatching 10,000 church member movement that has been on the march. On its homepage, the Bundang Woori Church presents the theoretical basis as follows:

The Dispatching 10,000 church member movement is the realization of a missional church. The missional church is to restore the essence of the church. If the essence of the church is restored, it does not work only for one individual church, but for bearing fruit, regaining "good influence". The fruit of good influence means the state that all the churches on earth can be in a win-win position together. The head of the church is Jesus Christ, so that all the churches confessing him as the Lord form His body. In this sense, all the churches on earth are partners to participate in the mission of God. The Korean churches have to be partners of each other to expand the kingdom of God together by overcoming the existing excessive competitive discord structure for growth.

The Bundang Woori Church has developed and carried out the following three practical strategies to actualise the Dispatching 10,000 church member movement:

- The Bundang Woori Church does not allow the people registered with another church to re-register with it.

- The Bundang Woori Church serves the small and weak churches through the 10•10•10 project. The first 10 means financial aid. The church pays 10 pastors of the poor and weak churches monthly to help them concentrate on ministries. The second 10 means aid of time. The church sends several groups of 30 members to each small and weak church in the area to join the Sunday services of those churches. The third 10 means physical aid. The church offers referral information to the congregation and urges them to shift to the weak churches voluntarily.
- The Bundang Woori Church plants churches by dividing itself and by sending.

As can be seen from the theoretical and practical grounds of the Dispatching 10,000 church member movement, it came from the thought that the churches in Korea should grow together as partners to participate in God's mission together, overcoming the existing excessive competitive discord structure for growth to restore and expand God's ruling in the Korean context where the church is being blamed by the world for its excessive growth competition.

#### 4.3.2. The Pillar of Fire Church

The Pillar of Fire Church belongs to the Methodist Church and was established in 1999 by Rev. Joon-sik Choi, renting the first floor of a commercial building in Jeongwang-dong, Siheung. According to Rev. Choi (2012:5), he wished to let it grow big as soon as possible to buy an estate and build a church building as usual churches in Korea. However, in the situation where only 1% of newly started churches becomes self-supporting, many Sundays of the first year only Rev. Choi and his wife gathered at the church. Although some seekers attended Sunday service of the Pillar of Fire Church once in a while, they did not settle down on the excuse of its inferior facilities compared to the churches which have their own buildings and parking lots, and with no privacy due to its small size, but which usually makes a church a fellowship-centred sharing of life together (Choi 2015:18-32). Rev. Choi continued doing his utmost with a traditional ministry that consists of evangelism, preaching, visiting and

discipleship training and after about 10 years, in 2007, became a self-supporting church. The Pillar of Fire Church moved from the commercial building to Oido in 2010, leasing a site of religion with a church building on it (Kang 2015:3-4). Rev. Choi says that the vision of the church after they moved to Oido was to purchase the 338 *pyeong* land with the 120 *pyeong* building, which they were renting, within 3 years. Although the Pillar of Fire Church prayed to be big and powerful enough to achieve that goal, God did not give them what they wished, but what they needed, which was a heart seeking the essence of the church (Choi 2015:120).

In their new place The Pillar of Fire Church enjoyed what they had not been able to do in the commercial building such as raising some animals for Sunday school students, tending a vegetable garden and outdoor barbeques. The number of attendees increased to about 100. About a year later Rev. Choi started to worry about the state of the church, that it enjoyed what they were given from God only for themselves within the boundary line of the church, while becoming more and more an irrelevant religious ghetto, with a fundamental question, “Why did God send us here, to Oido?” (Kang 2015:4). To overcome the situation where the church was not communicating with the local society like blending water and oil purchased a small snack bar in front of the back gate of a primary school. They named the snack bar “Oh Dduk Yi Uh”, meaning five loaves of bread and two fishes and started to run it with the dedication of some church members, including Rev. Choi and his wife (Choi 2012:1-2). Since the purpose of running the Oh Dduk Yi Uh was not making profit, the Pillar of Fire Church could communicate with the local community through children by providing good quality foods to them (mostly students of the primary school) at an affordable price. As its result, the Pillar of Fire Church could get acquainted with the characteristics of surroundings (Choi 2015:20).

Oido was an island at a 4km distance from a land, but was connected to the land to be part of it through a land reclamation project of the government to create vast industrial complexes. Therefore, in the region there were a number of poor domestic and foreign (immigrant) workers who were used as a source of cheap labour. The Pillar of Fire Church noticed that more than half of all students of the primary school were from single parents families (Choi 2015:38)

and many of them were abandoned and exposed to harmful their environment with bars while the single parents went to more than one work to escape from extreme poverty (Choi 2015:44). Since they discerned the needs of the local community through incarnational missional listening, the Pillar of Fire Church realised that obeying the calling of the church to restore the kingdom of God in the local society is the way to being a church and gave up the growth ideology it had pursued (Choi 2015:122-123). This missional understanding about the nature of the church did not allow the Pillar of Fire Church to carry out an ecclesio-centric mission that tries to attract more people to come to the church building by imitating and running some efficient church growth programmes made by mega-churches without contextual understanding. It rather let them try to be where God's heart is and where the Holy Spirit moves, proclaiming the kingdom that has already come by embodying the compassion of Jesus on the harassed and helpless people. This understanding of the mission of the church as an agent of God's mission can also be found in Rev. Choi's (2015:124) sermon as below:

The people of the gospel must sympathise with the suffering of others. The Bible says that Jesus had compassion when he met lepers and other troubled people, called the poor, '*anawim*' in Hebrew. This means that he sympathised with the poor, suffering with his inwards twisted and torn. According to Luke 4:18-21, the kingdom of God that Jesus dreamt of was the year of the Lord's favour. This means the year of jubilee and the spirit of the year of jubilee is freedom and liberation. The proclamation and beginning of the year of jubilee, these are the kingdom of God. Therefore, setting free and liberating *anawim* of all realms and dimensions of this world is the will of God and this kingdom of freedom and liberation is the kingdom of God. Each church for his kingdom like this has to go with love to the *anawim* of the spiritual, economic, social, ecological and physical realms where they were sent and has to carry out their mission to set them free.... To set free and liberate the *anawim*, we first of all have to sympathise with the suffering of the *anawim*.

The Pillar of Fire Church having compassion on the children of Oido has been

running the Oh Dduk Yi Uh, with their motto “Be father and mother for the children who need the care of father and mother” (Choi 2015:80). As a result, the local children call the Oh Dduk Yi Uh different names like (Choi 2015:20):

- Oasis: Whenever feeling thirsty, the local children can freely come and drink water.
- Public toilet: The local children can use the toilet anytime like their own.
- School infirmary: Emergency remedy is reserved and is given to hurt or sick children.
- Police substation or court: Monitoring school violence and reconciling conflicts between friends.

Every Friday, after school, the Pillar of Fire Church pitches a tent in front of the Oh Dduk Yi Uh and propagates the word of God to the students of the primary school. The evangelists remember the names of all students who attended the previous week and call their names before starting to teach the word of God. The students listen carefully to the gospel propagated by the evangelists who take care of them with love like their own father and mother on the other days of week at the Oh Dduk Yi Uh. After listening to the word of God, the children can get their coupon stamped and enjoy free foods at the Oh Dduk Yi Uh according to the number of stamps on their coupon, which they receive every week they attend. In this way, every week about 100-150 students out of 400 students in the whole school listen to the gospel (Choi 2015:37-38). The local children stay at the Oh Dduk Yi Uh even after the propagation is finished and share what they heard with each other and even with their families at home. Since the evangelism of the Pillar of Fire Church is not an introduction of the church but the propagation of the word of God, the attendants are not pushed to come to the church. This clearly shows that the Pillar of Fire Church is a witnessing community which preaches the gospel in holistic ways through word as well as serving and sharing, not like the church growth theory and the church marketing teach.

The Pillar of Fire Church also leased a room in a commercial building and named it “Agit” (hideout). Some neglected children they met through the Oh

Dduk Yi Uh gather there after school and study together under the loving care of the church (Choi 2015:33). This serving ministry that started in a small space obtained a bigger space in 2014 with the help of a benefactor and changed its name to “Wak Woo Jib”, meaning noisy our house. Like its new name, the neglected children who were depressed and lost their self-esteem are restoring children’s own characteristics at the Wak Woo Jib to be active and noisy as God created them (Choi 2015:82-83). Meanwhile, the Pillar of Fire Church set a tent before the Oh Dduk Yi Uh in 2012 and started Flowing # during Chuseok, Korea Thanksgiving Day, for the foreign labourers. The foreign workers felt homesick because they had nowhere to go during Korean national holiday. The Flowing # is a second hand clothes shop which provides (to flow) the good quality clothes donated (what is flown) by the Korean churches to the poor foreign workers at a very low price. Through the Flowing # the Pillar of Fire Church naturally builds close relationships with them. On the request of the foreign labourers with whom the church made relationships through the Flowing #, the church opens Korean language courses. When there is an exam for naturalisation, the church goes to the exam place together with the foreign workers and encourages them until they finish the exam (Choi 2015:39-40, 73). The foreign labourers say that having Korean friends in an unfamiliar country itself is such great comfort to them. The Pillar of Fire Church witnesses to Christ Jesus who came down to earth to become a human and became a friend of whom he loved (Jn 15:13-15) through not only their words but also their deeds (Choi 2015:75). As the Agit moved to the Wak Woo Jib in 2014, the Flowing # moved from the tent, which could not open when it is raining, to where the Agit was and more frequently meet and build relationships with the foreign labourers in the neighbourhood.

The ministries such as the Oh Dduk Yi Uh, the Wak Woo Jib and the Flowing # are not from the Pillar of Fire Church itself as the subject of mission that relies on its human and material resources, but from the recognition of the missional nature of the church as an agent of the mission of God as well as a passage that makes the blessings of God flow into the world. According to Rev. Choi (2015:11-13, 125), this is the purpose of the existence of the church that testifies to the kingdom of God not through the growth-oriented church growth programmes, but through a life of service and sharing. At the end of 2012, the

Pillar of Fire Church experienced an unexpected incident that the owner of the land that the church had been renting sold it to a third person and even the church building was pulled down. In a desperate situation, the Pillar of Fire Church decided to gather at the Oh Dduk Yi Uh for Sunday service though some church members left the church. With this, the Pillar of Fire Church started a new paradigm of ministry in which a snack bar is a church and the field is the church rather than attracting people to the church building through the snack bar (Choi 2015:15, 43). Rev. Choi (2015:36-37) says: “Land and building were good for our community, but they were rather hindrances to us to cope with mission as witnesses of the gospel.... It is practical that mission should be carried out on the street outside of the church building rather than inside the church building.”

To carry out all the ministries, the Pillar of Fire Church also raises disciples like other Korean churches. However, the discipleship training of the Pillar of Fire Church is not a programme to produce workers for the church itself by providing biblical information through books and classrooms, expecting that dealing with the intellectual aspects a person will change his or her behaviour (Lee 2014:122). It is more like the way of Jesus’ disciple making in which the teacher demonstrates first in every possible circumstance and let the disciples minister after him and corrects them, all in the context of everyday life (Choi 2015:134). This kind of discipleship training is based on Rev. Choi’s view on truth: “The Trinitarian God is truth and the truth is a person. Therefore, the truth in our faith is initiated, transferred and delivered from person to person. Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ (Rm 10:17). Only when the word of God is delivered through a vessel of a beautiful personality to other persons, it produces faith” (Choi 2015:41-42, 113-114).

Since the story of the Pillar of Fire Church was spread to the Korean church through a newspaper article in July, 2012, Rev. Choi has had opportunities in seminars and on Christian T.V programmes to introduce the ministries of his church to the Korean church, especially to ministers, as an alternative model for the Korean church that is in stagnation in growth. What he has emphasised throughout all those opportunities are the following (Choi 2015:41-42, 113-114):



- The purpose of the mission of the church is not the church itself, but the world.
- Evangelism does not mean attracting people to individual churches. It rather means propagating the truth that Jesus is the gospel.
- Revival means salvation, recovery and change. The church is not the object of revival, but the subject of revival. God wants revival of the local society through the church.

Mega-churches with their size and influence cause a phenomenon that let other churches in Korea concentrate only on their numerical growth rather than on their missional nature. That let the Korean church stick to a monotonous way of ministry, “Let us gather, bring more money and build church buildings (mostly called the temple)” (Park 2013:56), the Pillar of Fire Church is used by God to play an instrumental role in initiating the missional church movement for the Korean church to serve the needs of where they are sent in various ministerial ways according to their contextual dynamics by restoring their missional essence (Choi 2015:56).

#### 4.3.3. Interviews with pastors of the missional churches and its analysis

The interview with an assistant pastor of the Bundang Woori Church was conducted by email on 22 October, 2016, while the other interview with Rev. Joon-sik Choi (the senior pastor of the Pillar of Fire Church) was conducted by a social networking service called Facebook Messenger on 7 November, 2016. For the sake of confidentiality, the interviewee of the Bundang Woori Church will be anonymous, but called pastor B (of the Bundang Woori Church).

##### **i) What is the first priority and goal in your ministry?**

- Pastor B: It is to awaken the laity to realise their identity as the disciples of Christ Jesus and to train them to follow their teacher wherever they are. The philosophy of the Bundang Woori Church is not to build a church building, but ‘one person’. We expect the restoration of the kingdom of God through one well-built up person.

- Rev. Joon-sik Choi: I believe that on the basis of Colossians 1:28, the essence of pastoral ministry is to proclaim to the people that Jesus is the gospel; and to present to the people who received the gospel to become perfect in Christ by admonishing and teaching them with all wisdom. Propagation of the gospel, therefore, must first be prioritised in my ministry, which needs seeds to sow and fields. Seeds mean oral messages which must not be typical doctrines but the good news that changed and is still influencing the messenger's life. Fields mean the receivers of the gospel. To let them carefully listen to the gospel, in other words to help them to be a good soil, building relationships must come first. These relationships can be formed only through the messenger's mature personality and way of life, which are naturally revealed in his/her life.

**ii) What do you see as the reason that the Korean church is having a negative reputation with the Korean society of today, which is different from its early years?**

- Pastor B: Most of all, ministers have failed to properly teach the laity. Not all, but many churches in Korea have emphasised only prosperity and material blessings in their teachings. This kind of teaching made Korean Christians bear negative fruits in their social lives, called a discrepancy between inside and outside the church. People in the world judge the church through the lives of the believers around them.
- Rev. Joon-sik Choi: The problem is that Christianity fell into Gnosticism. Although it cannot be said too often how important listening to the word of God is in church, it must be emphasised as well that the very words were delivered through the personality of Christ Jesus. Since the Korean church is not teaching that the gospel must go together with the good character, personality and ethical life of the evangelists, although they emphasise evangelism, even the gospel they preach becomes ridiculed.

**iii) What do you see as the merits and demerits of the mega-church?**

- Pastor B: In pursuing to be a missional church as a large church, it has

advantages to develop and carry out various meaningful and influential ministries which can bring positive reactions from the local community. The Bundang Woori Church is spontaneously participating in supporting the vulnerable such as the disabled and the people in financial crisis in our neighbourhood, which helps to restore the negative image of the church and as a result helps to open people's hearts when we preach the gospel to them. On the contrary, it has difficulties to discipline and unite the hearts and thoughts of all church members to have a missional mind-set. As a large church, there are always some people who want to enjoy anonymity without dedication of their lives to the restoration of the kingdom of God.

- Pastor Joon-sik Choi: Mega-churches can efficiently develop and carry out various ministries with their abundant human and material resources. Many mega-churches, however, have no strength left to serve their local societies because they use up those resources for the upkeep of their buildings or for running a number of programmes to satisfy the various tastes of their members. Their ministries may run the risk of becoming events for the show to attract people to their church buildings that is mostly irrelevant to the genuine needs of the local societies.

**iv) What do you think is a missional church?**

- Pastor B: Although the spectrum of understanding of a missional church be various and wide, I think it basically came from self-reflection in view of the traditional church to restore the biblical design of the church. The philosophy of discipleship training is connected to the spirit of a missional church. It is because the essence of the discipleship training is to be a church that is sending well-trained disciples to the world as a church sent from God.
- Pastor Joon-sik Choi: I think that this concept did not come from a desk but from a fierce mission field. The church is called to restore the kingdom of God that was the dream of Christ Jesus. The church, therefore, should not simply focus on conversion of people to

Christianity, but on the restoration of the year of jubilee, the day of liberation from all kinds of bondages. The church is assigned by God to find and to be with the people who are oppressed, neglected and discriminated against, and to do with the love of God what it can to liberate them from the bondages which put them in those states. A church that is loyal to this assignment is the missional church.

**v) What is your reaction on the statement “The bigger a church grows, the more it can carry out missionary work?” Elaborate on your answer.**

- Pastor B: I do not think that a church can do more missionary works as it grows bigger. A large church can do no more than some works which small churches cannot carry out. It is just a functional matter. Both large churches and small churches have their own assignments to solve, thus they are in the relationship of mutual supplementation in terms of participating in God’s mission.
- Pastor Joon-sik Choi: A missional church is not about how effectively and efficiently a church can carry out more missionary works, but about how sincere a church is with its missionary nature. Therefore, in terms of participating in the mission of God, how sensitive the church and its members are reacting with the gospel to the context they belong to is the core part rather than aiming at being a large church. In the same light, pursuing only to be a small church is also inappropriate.

***Analysis of the interviews***

According to the answers of the two pastors, both Bundang Woori Church and the Pillar of Fire Church clearly understand that a missional church is not a new structure of the church aiming at quantitative growth, but a movement to restore the biblical missionary nature of the church. The Bundang Woori Church recognises that a church is not the subject of mission, but an agent sent from a missionary God to the world. This understanding is presented through their ministries that raise disciples who follow Christ Jesus instead of raising church buildings, and that witness to the kingdom of God to the world through the words and deeds of the disciples. Though it is large in size, the Bundang Woori Church does not use their human and material resources for

church growth programmes to attract more people to the church building, but for serving the marginalised and vulnerable people to let them taste the reign of God in advance as an agent of God’s mission. The Pillar of Fire Church also regards their role to be with marginalised people where they are located and to satisfy their needs in incarnational ways as their calling and mission from God, while denying the gnostic faith that divides life into inside and outside the church building. Although the two churches are different in size, both of them with the ethos and praxis of the missional church, are participating in the redemptive mission of God to restore his kingdom in Korea in the fields they are sent to.

**4.4. The public perception the Korean society have of the Korean churches in the mega-church phenomenon and the missional church movement**

In 2009, the *Sisa* (current events) *Journal* (Roh 2014:1-2), a weekly magazine, started their research on the social influence of the three largest religions in Korea. For the next 5 years, they made the annual list of the 10 most influential religious figures in Korea on the basis of a survey with a question, “Who do you think is moving Korea?”, and then counted the number of influential figures from each religion who were ranked on the list. The result of their research was published in August, 2014 as in the table below:

<Table 21> Religious influence on the Korean society (Kim 2015:36)



The religious influence of the Korean Protestant church in the Korean society has radically dropped from 36% in 2009 to 9% in 2014. This clearly shows that the Korean church has received a negative evaluation from the society, which is in Kinnaman's (2007:11) expression "the image problem". There was a survey in 2012 conducted by the Campus Evangelisation Network targeting at university students. To the interview question, "Why has Christianity lost its influence in the Korean society?" about 61% of the respondents answered: "It is because the Korean church has incurred discredit through their advocacy of political power, heredity, financial mismanagement, etc." (Kim 2015:36). The response of the university students represented the public voice of the Korean society when it is coupled with the result of the survey of social credibility of the Korean church conducted by the Christian Ethics Movement (CEM) in 2010. According to the research of the CEM, 45% and 35% of non-believers in Korea trusted in Catholicism and Buddhism respectively, while only 12% of them trusted in Protestantism (Kim 2015:41-42).

According to Kim (2015:176-188), the image problem of the Korean church started since 23 short-term missionaries were abducted by the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2007. The short-term mission team consisted of 20 from the Bundang Saemul Church, 1 pastor as the leader with 19 lay members (mostly youth) and 3 missionaries working in Afghanistan as translators. According to the Korea Times' article (30 August, 2007), *Chronology of kidnapping from July 19 to Aug 29*, in the midst of 10 days missionary works started on 13 July, 2007, the team was kidnapped by the Taliban on their way from Kabul to Kandahar. The Taliban opened negotiations with the Korean government, demanding the following conditions in exchange for the hostages: complete withdrawal of the dispatched Korean troops from Afghanistan, prohibition of missionary activities in Afghanistan, and the release of Taliban prisoners imprisoned by the Afghan government. As the negotiations were proceeding with difficulty, the militants shot dead one of their hostages, Rev. Bae the leader on 25 July and another hostage, Mr. Shim on 30 July after accusing the Afghan government and the Korean delegation of not entertaining their demands. Until the 21 survivors finally returned to Korea, it had taken 42 days. This incident drew keen attention (mostly negative) from the public opinion of Korea not only with its unprecedented number of hostages, but also other factors. The Pressian (31

August, 2007) dealt controversies aroused by the incident:

- The short-term mission team entered Afghanistan, a troubled region, although the Korean government (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) strongly urged them to refrain from travelling thence.
- The country's image was damaged by the face to face contact negotiations with the terrorist group.
- The incident consumed the diplomatic power that was supposed to be concentrated on other issues.
- The security of Koreans travelling abroad can be hindered since the incident will be a precedent for terrorist groups to target Korean travellers.
- Non-governmental diplomacy like humanitarian aid efforts by international relief organisations can be shrunk.
- A huge sum of money was spent for ransom, which came from the taxes paid by citizens.

After this incident, the Korean church began to be accused by society of its programme-centred subjugating, exclusive, ostentatious and unilateral way of missions (The Dong-a Ilbo 8 September, 2007), and it led to criticism on other negative aspects of the Korean church such as financial scandals, heredity, tax exemption and sexual misconduct. In fact, 'church-bashing' became quite popular amongst journalists (Dreyer 2016:1) and a number of anti-Christianity movements appeared both on and off lines (The NewsM 14 April, 2008). According to Newsjoy (17 September, 2008), by anti-Christianity activists, new terms were coined using word play: *Kaedokkyo*, a compound word made from the swearing prefix 'Kae' and Christianity, meaning a selfish group seeking only modern progressivism and prosperity in the postmodern era instead of *Kidokkyo* (Christianity); and *Muksa*, meaning a man of greediness, not working for mission, but for something to eat (money) instead of *Moksa* (pastor). These terms became generalised in the Korean society (Park 2013:250-251).



Kim (2015:56-57) says that the negative perception of the Korean society toward Christianity has been deepened by the ethical failures of the senior pastors of influential mega-churches. An embezzlement case of Rev. Yonggi Cho as the senior pastor of the world largest church was revealed in early 2011 and sparked a storm of criticism. The Economist (15 October, 2011) reports as follows: “Following complaints by 29 church elders, prosecutors began investigating Mr. Cho over the alleged embezzlement of 23 billion won (\$20m) from Yoido’s funds. A documentary aired by MBC, a television station, claims that this money was used to buy property in America. The show also charged that Mr. Cho’s wife sold a building constructed with collection money for her own gain. Its buyer was Hansei University - an institution where she also happens to be president.... The likes of Mr. Cho, for all their flaws, provide something that millions of Koreans find irresistible.”

Other ethical blemishes of mega-church pastors, for example the sexual abuse of Rev. Chun of the Samil Church in 2009, the breach of trust of Rev. Choi of the Bundang Central Church in 2011, and the hereditary succession of Rev. Choi of the Full Gospel Incheon Church in 2015 have continued following the one of Rev. Cho and have accelerated the marginalisation of the Korean church. Kwon (in Kang *et al.* 2013:98) says that sexual abuse, financial corruption and hereditary succession mostly happen because of church leaders’ (mostly senior pastor) compensation mentality or mechanism according to their churches’ numerical growth as well as abuse of their authority based on the charismatic leader-focused institutional structure of the Korean church. Seen from what has been observed, it can be said that the ways of mission and failures to being a church (integrity) of the Korean church itself are the major contributions to being marginalised from society and to people leaving the church (Dreyer 2015:5). Considering that a Christendom-like ecclesiocentric mission and clergy-centred understanding of the nature of the church are that of the mega-church phenomenon, the Korean society’s negative perception of the Korean church is about churches in Korea which are under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon rather than about a handful of mega-churches.

To the Korean church that had been their image problem, the according to the

result of a survey that the *Sisa Journal* (23 October, 2014) reported. It suggested the image of the church that the Korean society anticipates. The *Sisa Journal* conducted a joint research with the Korea Media Research, the largest polling organisation in Korea. In the research that was conducted by telephone interviews, asking the following question, “Who is the most influential next-generation leader?”, to 1500 experts in the fields of politics, economy, law, NGO, religion, literature, cultural art, popular culture, science, sports, Rev. Chan-soo Lee the senior pastor of the Bundang Woori Church ranked first in religion. According to the report of the *Sisa Journal*, the reason Rev. Lee topped the list was that:

He takes the initiative by example to tackle the issues of selfishness and financial misconduct of the Korean church which are pointed out by society as its chronic problems. In the situation that severe church growth competitions between churches and a series of hereditarily successions and financial scandals of the mega-churches come to the fore as a serious social issue, he shows the Korean society’s new image of the church as pursuing coexistence and mutual growth with small churches through the renunciation of being a mega-church (the Dispatching 10,000 church member movement); and with the local society through a promise to return the church’s education building, worth about 65 billion won (\$56m), to society.

Rev. Hak-joog Kim the senior pastor of the Dream Community Church who ranked fifth on the list also received a favourable evaluation for social contribution activities which give hope and a dream to the less privileged in the local society such as the “Rice sharing movement of hope” and the foundation of a welfare institution for physically challenged children rather than pursuing the numerical growth of the church (Kim 2015:68-69). As for the other interview question of the *Sisa Journal*, “What is the best virtue for the next-generation leader?”, morality, honesty and communication were answered as the most important three virtues. Considering that participating in the redemptive mission of God to restore his good creation through communicating with people in the local societies where churches are sent in incarnational ways and helping them to taste in advance, the rule of God who is righteous and full

of love is a missional church's understanding of the nature and mission of the church, it can be said that the Korean society is positive towards the churches in the missional movement and expects a change in the Korean church through them.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

Although the early Korean church clearly displayed the characteristics of a missional church in its faith thinking and attitude of life, it has come to a distorted understanding about its nature and mission through the influence of the mega-church phenomenon which has been prevalent since the liberation from Japanese rule by the interaction of socio-cultural, political and economic factors of the modernising Korea. The mega-church phenomenon has its own missiological and ecclesiological perspectives and they are obviously from the Immanuel Church and the Jeja Church. Both churches understand that the growth of individual churches are the expansion of the kingdom of God that it must be achieved by all means even through the power and material obtained from growth. For the sake of effective and efficient numerical church growth, both churches have splendid church buildings with user-friendly facilities to attract more people. To run various church growth programmes, both churches are also functional and structural, strictly centred on the senior pastors with the lay members who are loyal to the senior pastors since they are trained according to the discipleship training programme to be the disciples of the senior pastors.

In the mainstream of the mega-church phenomenon, there have been church reforming movements to restore its missional ethos and praxis under the common awareness of the crisis that "the church is increasingly out of tune with contemporary culture, and that unless it comes to terms with change, it faces extinction." (Stott 2007:12). The missional church movement has its understandings of the nature of the church and mission on the basis of the missional ecclesiology. It can clearly be seen from the Bundang Woori Church and the Pillar of Fire Church. Both churches recognise their calling as an instrument of the mission of God to restore his kingdom where they are sent. They rather try to incarnate Christ Jesus to their local societies as the

kingdom community through their serving and sharing ministries to satisfy real needs of the local people than to run various church-oriented programmes to attract more people to the church, pursuing quantitative growth. Their organisations carry out mission embrace, a spontaneous and flatter leadership rather than a one-dimensional top-down triangular hierarchy.

Depending on the ministerial expressions of the churches under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon and the missional church movement, which can be exemplified by the previous case studies, the Korean society makes different assessments. On the one hand, the Korean society regards the Korean church as a troublesome religious ghetto and rates it very low when it comes to the mega-churches' severe competitions for church growth, construction of luxurious church buildings and material and power-oriented missions irrelevant to the local society. Ethical failures of the senior pastors of mega-churches are recognised as a serious social problem. The Korean church is trampled by society like the salt that lost its saltiness (Mt 5:13) and becomes marginalised. On the other hand, the Korean society applauds the missional churches for their social contribution activities and expects positive changes of the Korean church through them. This gives an impetus for the next chapter to seek strategic ways forward for the Korean church to let the missional church movements continue and prevail as the biblical way to being a church.

## 5. STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

### 5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter indicated how much contemporary Korean churches struggle with the question of integrity, what the church should be and do, and that the discrepancy between their missional nature and calling and ministerial manifestations leads to a negative evaluation of the Korean society (Dreyer 2015:3). The Korean church with its growth-driven ministries affected by the mega-church phenomenon has been unfaithful to its own nature and neglected what it is supposed to do. As Niemandt (in Dreyer 2015:3) remarked, the church is responsible for its own crises such as an image problem and regression. However, the Korean society still rates the Korean missional churches positive on account of their missional ecclesiology and expects the Korean church to be restored through themselves as a community serving the society. This stimulates the current emerging missional conversations and ventures not to fade away as a trendy church enhancing programmes for its numerical growth, but to continue and be developed in diverse ways in the rapidly changing Korean context.

According to Bosch (1991:3), crisis is not the end of opportunity but in reality only its beginning. It is the point where danger and opportunity meet, where the future is in the balance and where events can go either way. In terms of its marginal status in society, the contemporary Korean church is in the same condition as the early Korean church, though in a different context and has shifted to the margin by itself. Under their marginalised conditions, the early Korean church followed the scriptural guidelines with its proto-missional understanding of the nature and mission of the church, transcending its contextual challenges. As with the early Korean church, the marginal status of the present Korean church can be an opportunity to restore its missional ethos and praxis by reconnecting with the Bible, since “the New Testament is a collection of missionary documents written by Christians living on the margins of their culture, to a missionary situation” (Chester & Timmis 2011: loc 76-78).

As observed in the previous historical research, the Korean church has lost

some integrity through a distorted understanding of its nature and mission under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon; its ecclesiology has changed from the apostolic and post-apostolic mode to the Christendom mode. After Constantine, the church became institutionalised and it began to neglect mission because it interpreted the authority of the apostle to teach and to lead to be inherited by the institutional church, especially by the office of the bishop and the pope (Van Gelder 2000:124), while the ancient church believed that apostolicity (one authoritatively sent on a mission) had been succeeded to them through the faith and practice of the apostle (Lee 2014:124). The WCC (2015:7) refers to the apostolicity of the church as follows: “[The church] is apostolic because the Word of God, sent by the Father, creates and sustains the Church. This word of God is made known to us through the gospel primarily and normatively borne witness to by the apostles (cf. Eph 2:20; Rev 21:14), making the communion of the faithful a community that lives in, and is responsible for, the succession of the apostolic truth expressed in faith and life throughout the ages.”

The early Korean church practised their apostolicity not with their institutional organisation, but with their apostolic faith and practice of witness to the kingdom of God. The restoration of the apostolic genius and dynamics of the early Korean church is the way for the contemporary Korean church to be liberated from the Christendom’s preoccupation with power and influence, and to restore its biblical integrity. This does not imply a simplistic idealisation or reduplication of the Jesus movement of the early Korean church, but rather an identification with the kingdom of God which became manifest with the reincarnation of Christ through their mission (Dreyer 2015:2).

As a way to restore the Jesus movement in the contemporary context, Hooker (2009:4) says that the church, as a community of witness, called into being and equipped by God, and sent into the world to testify to and participate in Christ’s work, should be actualised by the shape of its missional witness (what the church is called to do), by the traditional four marks of the church of the Nicene Creed, to be the “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church” (The Archbishop’s Council 2004:96). It is because these four attributes are the practical demands of an authentic mission (WCC 2005:10), derived from the

attribute of the Trinitarian God, which are thus not separate from one another but are to inform one another and are mutually interrelated (WCC 2013:16-17). Guder (2015:171) proposes a complementary way to formulate the missional doctrine and practice of the church by interpreting the four marks of the Nicene Creed in the reverse order, beginning with the fundamental dimension of apostolicity, which defines what the church is and what the church is for and reorients the other three marks: “I believe [in] the apostolic, and therefore the catholic, holy and one church.” (Guder 2015:84). This can also be found in Küng’s (2007:493) words that the church can only be one, holy and catholic when it is apostolic. Skoglund (1962:94) states: “Mission can never be thought of as only one of the marks of the church. It is *the* mark of the church. All other so-called marks, if legitimate, are but an explication of mission. The only power which Christ through the Holy Spirit promises to the church is the power to witness. All other church activities are derived from this essential task and must be governed by it.”

In a postmodern society the church finds it increasingly difficult to live missionally (Dreyer 2015:2). This chapter, however, as participating in the emerging missional conversations suggest, after consulting the above-mentioned scholars, the following practical implications which the Korean church in crises need to consider going forward to continually carry out a missional movement with its missional ecclesiology:

- Apostolic Catholicity
- Apostolic Holiness
- Apostolic Unity (Oneness)

This strategic approach does not mean quick fix solutions or more programmes, but mean that we need to look at ways how the church could become what it already is – the people of God, the body of Christ, the communion of the Saints, and the temple of the Holy Spirit – the restoration of its integrity (Dreyer 2016:1).

Returning to the Holy Spirit through repentance and being empowered by him must first be considered (Park 2011:214) since he is the source of apostolic nature of the church as the Spirit of mission (Ac 1:8; WCC 2013:54) as well of



the other attributes of the church: unity (Eph. 4:3), holiness (1Cor 3:17), and catholicity (John 14:26; 16:13). During the transitional period from its initiation to settlement, the early Korean church instead of being institutionalised could retain its apostolic nature and mission as a witnessing community through the Great Pyongyang Revival. The Holy Spirit who manifested himself in the revival movements guided and empowered the early Korean church to voluntarily participate in his redemptive mission through their propagation of the gospel in their contexts with indigenised and relevant words and deeds, holy lives as disciples of Jesus, in a united mission for the expansion of the kingdom of God.

The fact that the Great Pyongyang Revival was started and spread all over Korea through repentance movements, gives us an insight into the first step for the contemporary Korean churches to take to be guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit. It is to repent of losing the missional nature of the biblical church through their materialism and growth ideology under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon, and by neglecting what they are supposed to do, to serve the purpose of God as a gift given to the world in order that all may believe (WCC 2005:10).

In this regard, listen attentively to the repentance of Rev. Jung-gil Hong, one of the evangelical foursome as well as the retired senior pastor of one of representative Korean mega-churches, the Nam Seoul Grace Church (Park 2013:24). On 14 September, 2013, he appeared on a Christian T.V programme. He evaluated the 40 years of his ministry and left the repenting comments and wishes as follows: “I think I have failed my ministry in the end. As looking back the last 40 years of my ministry and as seeing the American mega-churches that I set as role models, I am wondering what on earth they are different with the world. I have been captured by an illusion. There is nothing but large buildings and crowds in my ministry. The goal was wrongly set.... I ran discipleship training and missions to grow my church bigger.... I came up to here being fooled. I really hope that the next generation would not be fooled like me” (Kim 2013a:1-2).

## 5.2. Apostolic Catholicity

Choi (1998:125) defines the catholicity of the church as being a universal church that is arranged and prepared for all nations, all ages, all social statuses, classes, and for all places and times. Van Gelder (2000:118) said, the church transcends time and place and is not bound to any one social, cultural, and political system. The church to exist as the church with its catholicity transcending time and place despite change of age and generation, it must go together with apostolic essence of the church (the faith and practice of the apostle). Küng (2007:431) refers to it as follows: “The church has to move with the times, has constantly to modify itself, as a historical entity it has no option.... [But] the fact that despite all the constant and necessary changes of the times and of varying forms, and despite its blemishes and weaknesses, the church in every place and in every age remains unchanged in its essence, whatever form it takes: this must be its aim and its desire.”

The catholicity of the church becomes the apostolic catholicity that refers to the global and cross-cultural missionary commission of the church (Guder 2015:85) since it is fundamentally missionary in nature, universal in scope and translatable into a particular context (Guder 2000:81). As the apostles believed and witnessed to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all the local churches, with their apostolic catholicity, should confess the same faith in the same gospel and translate it into the life and experience of their local contexts to demonstrate God’s love for and healing of all the world in Christ (Guder 2015:85). This translatability of the gospel leads to the contextualisation and incarnational mission of the local churches, which propagate the gospel with their bodily presence as Jesus revealed God and the truth through his body (John 12:45). By being among and with them Jesus convinced his disciples to confess: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Mt 16:16). Padilla (2013:110) refers to it as follows: “The knowledge of God is personal and therefore it takes place in the context of our bodily existence in the world. The God whom the gospel proclaims is a God who has entered into human history in order to put himself within our reach and to participate in all the contingencies of everyday life. The incarnation is a negation of every attempt

to reach God by means of mysticism, asceticism, or rationalistic speculation; we know God through the word who takes on concrete form in our own culture.”

The mega-church with its Christendom-mode ecclesiology regards territorial expansion and numerical quantity of an individual church as the catholicity of the church like the medieval church understood the catholicity as one universal Roman Church that existed in all the known regions of the time under the rule of the Roman Empire (Van Gelder 2000:115). This with the Constantinian understanding of apostolicity produces the mega-church’s institutional church (clergy and building) centred mission and organisation. In the Christendom version of apostolic catholicity, the mega-church’s mission becomes more “excarnational” than incarnational. It is irrelevant to the needs of society by becoming self-centred, betraying its belief in attractionalism, anticipating that if they get their internal features right, people will flock to the services (Frost & Hirsch 2013:35). Niemandt (2012:4) argues that only being incarnational decentres the church from a self-centred life and makes the church sensitive towards outsiders and strangers. Shin (2015:367-368) suggests the following three “Re-s” to the Korean churches with which they may restore their catholicity to be truly apostolic and reincarnate Jesus in their local contexts:

- Relocation - The Korean church has to relocate itself to where Jesus was, who was with the sick, poor, sinner and broken people. It has been dislocated from the calling of the Lord towards his church that the Korean church only looks for good locations in new towns and bourgeois areas for its quantitative growth. It certainly should happen that the Korean church who first received God’s saving grace relocated itself among nearly two million foreign workers and about 30,000 North Korean defectors to participate in his redemptive mission according to Deuteronomy 10:19, “And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.”
- Reconciliation - The Korean church is not only to mediate between God and the sinners with the gospel, but also carry out reconciling ministries that break various existing barriers in society, following the mediating ministry of Jesus who with the cross destroyed the barrier between Jew and Gentile, man and woman, the poor and the rich, and the slave and

the master (Eph. 2:14-18). It departs from the ministry that Jesus assigned to his church when the Korean churches severely compete with their neighbouring churches with constant conflicts. The Korean church should actively tackle not only the strife inside the church circle, but also various ideological conflicts between factions of society. Concern for social and economic justice and the welfare of others is also of necessity in the Korean context of an economic crisis, the widening gap between rich and poor, corruption, the collapse of major systems, the ecological crisis and the misuse of natural resources (Dreyer 2016:6).

- Redistribution - The contemporary Korean churches bury themselves in the construction of church buildings by taking on a lot of debt to attract more people to their own buildings. A massive burden of debt caused by it is the actual state of the Korean church that has lost its calling of redistribution. The Korean church should try to redirect their wrongly distributed resources to the people in need inside and outside the church and to their financially challenged neighbouring churches according to Acts 2:44-45.

According to Kim (2015:45-47), the Korean church is experiencing an antinomic situation which increases the Korean society's distrust, although it has actively participated in social service more than any other religions in Korea. Since 1996 Korean churches donated 8.1 million dollar to a relief fund for flood victims in Korea, which took up 69% of the total collection. For 3 years since 2001 they donated 69,856,000 U.S. dollar to humanitarian aid in North Korea, which accounted for 51% of the total aid. Kim (n.d.:8) says that this contradictory situation is due to the following two reasons:

- 1) Serving and sharing ministries of the Korean churches have been programme-oriented, especially programmes that are renowned to be effective for church growth. They are primarily self-promoting instead of being relevant to the communities where they live. This leads to failure of meeting the true needs of the local people. The programmes for serving and sharing mostly end up as one-time events if they are not productive enough. Although Matthew 6:3 says, "When you give to the needy, do not let your left

hand know what your right hand is doing.”, the Korean church has been busy trying to promote their serving and sharing to attract people before those ministries are naturally spread by the people who received helps and bear fruits of a good reputation.

- 2) Serving and sharing ministries of the Korean churches are unilateral in a network society where two-way communication prevails. The Korean churches have carried out their ministries for abstracted objects (objectification) that they have never confronted but are only connected in a sponsor-beneficiary relationship, rather than to their local neighbours with whom they build relationships in incarnational ways. This leads to a failure to demonstrate the kingdom ruled by reincarnating Jesus, who was rich, yet for the world's sake became poor (2 Cor 8:9).

To carry out redistribution in a contradictory condition, it is necessary for the Korean church not to serve for immediate and concrete numerical church growth, but to serve silently and consistently for the expansion of the kingdom of God in incarnational ways such as missional listening and building relationships with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the compassion of Jesus.

### **5.3. Apostolic Holiness**

Shin (2009:146) says that holiness in the Bible means “set apart”, “stay away” and “be separated” from sin by following the worldly order (culture) as well as by individual, internal and ethical errors. According to him (Shin 2009:169), the worldly order is the rule of power in a pyramid structure, which is revealed by limitless competition and the law of the jungle. The Holy Spirit makes holy in order to create a community that can serve as ‘Christ’s letter to the world’. The church is more than just another social organisation or human institution because it is a community created by the Holy Spirit (Van Gelder 2000:116-117). The consistency between message and messenger authenticates the apostolic message and cultivates receptivity in the hearers (Hirsch 2006:116). The Holy Spirit equips the church to practice its vocation so that its witness can be credible to the world (Guder 2015:87). If the church as Christ’s letter to the world is called to be an apostolic witness, the church must live a life worthy

of the calling it has received (Eph. 4:1). Therefore, all its ministry, organisation, administration, and leadership are to be set apart and separated from the worldly way, since they are “potential demonstrations or witnesses to the rule of God in Christ in its midst” (Guder 2015:87).

The Korean church has an image problem. Park (2013:249-251) argues that the reason the Korean church has struggled with their image problem is that it has failed individually and communally to reflect God’s holiness to the world, though it was created in God’s image (Gen. 1:26). According to Park (2013:250), Christians and the church exist in the world to represent the image of God that is restored in them through Christ Jesus, and in that sense, the mission of the church is to reflect the image of God who commanded his people: “Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy” (Lv. 19:2). The missional church, therefore, have to testify to the holy God, with their holiness given from God before the world in concrete ways through their resolution, direction and pilgrimage (sanctification), keeping themselves separate and marginalised from the worldly order (culture) (Lee 2014:129).

The Korean church, however, under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon is not ready to occupy the margins of their cultural environment. They take it for granted that to increase their size follows the world by keeping up its enlargement and by fiercely competing against each other to grow bigger by following the law of the jungle. To attract more people to their own church buildings, they are committed to impact on the culture by portraying Christianity as useful, relevant, and user-friendly (Tennent 2010:29), trying not to lay the burden on their congregations to be set apart from the culture of the world and to design their worship and their religious message to satisfy their attendees’ (consumers) physical and spiritual needs in a consumerist society. They also employ worldly movies, music, T.V programmes, commercials, and pop trends into the service of the kingdom, which they call “to baptise the secular to be sacred” (Thumma & Travis 2007:141). To cope with large numbers of attendees, they baptised the models of organisation and presentation methods from other institutions around them to be acceptable (Lee 2014:131).

According to Küng (2007:293), baptism is given in the name of Jesus, in whom God himself through the Spirit has his dwelling among his people and in Jesus’

name God's reign, God's challenge, God's will, God's word and hence God himself has been revealed. Being baptised, therefore, means submitting oneself to God's rule, instead of to the worldly order, in order to display his holy attribute. Although insisting that they baptise worldly entertaining, managerial and psychological methods to serve the congregation well, the mega-churches neglect to cut out the worldly ethos, in order to grow big, make more profit, and have bigger power and influence (Lee 2014:132). This failure of being baptised against the worldly values has borne fruits of pastors and church members' ethical failure and discrepancy between the life inside and outside the church buildings and has led to spoiling of the image of God.

To overcome the secularisation of the Korean church to properly reflect the image of God to the world, the Korean church is to continue to be holy because it is already holy by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. From this perspective, "the church could never exist in any other way as *ecclesia semper reformanda*" (Dreyer 2016:4). Shin (2015:334) argues that to be a reformed church with the genius of the apostolic holiness, the Korean church is to be a counter-cultural community with a more radical commitment and in a more active tension with the world, following the way of the cross that is central to holiness. Jesus contrasted the messiah whom the Jewish society had been waiting for to come with might and authority to defeat the Roman Empire, with the messiah who was gentle and humble to be crucified. The churches in Korea, therefore, can regain their integrity, what they are and what they are for, only when they individually and communally live in contrast to the way of the world by following the way of the cross of Jesus, by denying themselves (Mt 16:24; Shin 2015:335).

Individual Christians are to identify themselves as missionaries sent to the world (Bosch 1991:137) to restore the rule of God in every realm of society by practicing radical discipleship. Stott (2010:19-27) argues that the radical disciples are to resist the following four contemporary trends to persevere in their dedication to God:

- Pluralism: The radical disciples stand against the challenge of pluralism by being a community of truth to protect the uniqueness of Christ Jesus.



- Materialism: The radical disciples contrast the world of materialism with their simple life style and pilgrimage.
- Ethical relativism: The radical disciples become a community of obedience to resist the challenge of relativism.
- Narcissism: The radical disciples live to love one another standing against the trend of the world that is full of the people who are lovers of themselves (2 Th 3:2).

These resistances must be accompanied by the morality and personality of the disciples since they are shaped by God's own ethical character and standards (Wright 2010:94). In his letter to Titus, Apostle Paul emphasised Christians' personality and ethical life with which they reflect the good image of God their saviour and thus make the teaching about God attractive. He first commended integrity, seriousness, and soundness to Titus himself and let him encourage his congregation to be respectful, self-controlled, kind, loving, and faithful while telling him to discourage drunkenness, slander, gossip, and disrespect (Tt 2:1-10; Frost & Hirsch 2013:76).

Park (2013:266-267) states that the reason the Korean church has a serious image problem is not only because of corruption of some influential pastors whose range of activities are limited to the religious sphere, but also of most Christians who fail to practice radical discipleship in their diverse mission fields. The Korean church, however, is failing to raise and train them to be proper images of the glory of God as radical disciples. The Korean church under the influence of the growth ideology and consumerism has been busy running disciple making programmes with which they produce disciples who contribute to the glory of the church itself through the expansion of the church. Although church members through those programmes become church leaders to be cell leaders, deacons and elders and become used to activities for the maintenance and numerical growth of the church, they are not different from non-believers in their life style, and become estranged from the radical discipleship that lives to build the kingdom of God in the world.

To transform the leadership development of the Korean church, its approach to disciple making needs a paradigm shift from the current instructor-led

training that transfers biblical information out of the context of ordinary lived life, unilaterally led by pastors at a certain appointed time and space (mostly within the church buildings) to one carried out in the context of life and for life based on mutual communication between trainer and trainee (Bosch 1991:67). In this approach to disciple making, the development of a missional discernment that discerns God's good design from the current distorted state should be prioritised because disciple making lies at the heart of the missional nature of the church that participates in God's redemptive mission. Missional discernment also includes physical, emotional and spiritual distortions of individuals and the world, and it must be followed by a missional confrontation and the challenge for restoration. This kind of missional leadership development through the new way of disciple making cannot be executed in the passive environments of the classroom (Hirsch 2006:121). It requires activity because ideas and information are "generally needed to guide action and are best assimilated and understood in the context of life application" (Hirsch 2006:124).

To commence such leadership development, not only pastors, but also all active missional practitioners in the church who first became disciples of Jesus should help the other to become his disciples. The trainers meet with the trainees regularly and help them to have a biblical perspective on various matters that they confront in all areas of their daily lives such as economy, education, unification, environment, culture, job, and scientific technology by debriefing the matters, identifying problems, suggesting actions, and referring them to resources, including books and conferences (Hirsch 2006:124-126). To engage in this kind of training is based on transformational leadership in which the trainers connect the trainees and their sense of identity to the mission of God by being a role model that inspires them; enhancing their motivation and morale; understanding their strength and weaknesses, so that the trainers can align the trainees with tasks that optimise their performance (Kauppi n.d.:1). Although the trainers who give mentoring for are the mentors of the trainees, communication between them is rather bilateral than unilateral. In their meeting, both the trainers and trainees share how they have lived out the radical discipleship following the way of the cross; encourage each other by comforting and praying; and think over and practice together how to make

the world taste God's ruling in advance through their holy lives in the contexts where they are sent (Kim 2013b:1).

This missional leadership development can lead to the transformation of the leadership structure of the Korean church in terms of the concept that the leadership is an extension of discipleship and the quality of the church's leadership is directly proportional to the quality of discipleship (Hirsch 2006:119). The leadership structure of the Korean church has been a typical hierarchical structure with favours of a chain-of-command approach (Frost & Hirsch 2013:217), affected by the interaction of a patriarchal social convention, military dictatorship and radical economic growth. Lim (2014:108) criticises this leadership structure, saying: "While the Roman Catholic Church has only one pope, all Protestant churches have their own popes." According to the New Testament, there are no clergy and no laity, but all are ministers (Frost & Hirsch 2013:212). The church is not a hierarchy that consists of people in low and high positions, but a community that consists of free and equal brothers and sisters (Mt 23:8), in which God is the only father and Christ Jesus is the only Lord and teacher (Shin 2015:425). There is no room for the loner or the one-man band in the leadership structure of the biblical church. The classical hierarchical, triangular model with so-called senior pastors at the top are thus to be repudiated (Frost & Hirsch 2013:212-213). However, denying the hierarchism of the church should not lead to anarchic individualism since the church will not last long without a sustaining leadership structure.

In this sense the missional leadership structure is of necessity to find a balance between the two extremes of hierarchy and anarchy. Its apostolic holiness is to embody the kingdom order to the world through its equal and non-discriminatory structure. On the basis of 1Corinthians 12 Shin (2015:428-431) says that the church as the body of Christ is to form a structure in which all congregants (parts) are equal and serve each other with the spiritual gifts given by the Spirit to all of them; and through which it carries out its missional calling to be a visible manifestation of Jesus (the head) to the local society it is sent to. To form this alternative missional model of church structure, the following principles regarding church order and polity need to be considered (Shin 2015:422-424):

- Leaders of the church such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, bishops, elders and deacons are not a rank in a hierarchy (Morrison n.d.:1). It exists as a function and a role to serve and edify the local congregation.
- All members of the church are called as leaders by one Lord, Christ Jesus (Eph. 4:11; Morrison n.d.:1). All of them, therefore, equally serve according to their calling and spiritual gifts for ministry effectiveness and maturity of the church though spiritual gifts are various and some are more useful than the others (1Cor. 14:5).
- Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit gives gifts and grace to the leaders to fill the whole universe through the church, his body (Eph. 4:10). The church's ministry, therefore, is to be apostolic, prophetic and evangelistic to proclaim that Christ became "far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come" (Eph. 1:21; Frost & Hirsch 2013:209-210). All rule and authority, power and dominion of the world continue to divide according to country, class and culture. Christ is the authority who is far beyond all limitations, prohibitions and walls. His rule overcomes all kinds of divisions and fills everything through reconciliation and unity. The church, therefore, through its horizontal and non-discriminatory structure embodies and lets the world taste in advance that Christ will rule heaven and earth as one family at the beginning of the new age. It will be "an ecclesial dimension of fullness of eschatological salvation" in Volf's expression (1998:269)

#### **5.4. Apostolic Unity**

The essential unity of the church begins with the recognition that it is a community gathered by God, forming the one body of Christ Jesus (Küng 2007:434). The unity of the church implies an individual church as well as the universal church. Apostle Paul describes it in Ephesians 2:21-22: "In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God

lives by his Spirit.” If unity were understood in the light of apostolicity, then the focus would be upon the way that both Christians and churches despite diverse forms and contexts, before watching the world, love one another, “being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind” (Phlp 2:3; Guder 2015:87-88). The Korean church in its individualism under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon has regarded itself as a crowd of individuals rather than a gathered community (Tennent 2010:493) united in one baptism and forming the sacred body of Christ Jesus (The Archbishop’s Council 2004:96). Unlike a church as an organic congregation, an individual church as an aggregation of individuals has no quantitative and geographical limitations in its growth. This leads to severe growth competitions among churches in Korea and the churches are thrown into the situation, “War of all churches against all churches” to borrow Hobbes’ expression (Shin 2015:433).

Chronic conflicts and hostility between churches in Korea due to repeating divisions and competitions the Korean church have lost its missional vocation from God for which it is called to make present his holy and life-affirming plan for the world revealed in Jesus Christ by rejecting values and practices which lead to the destruction of community (WCC 2013:61). As the WCC (2013:17) declared, the current divisions within and between the churches in Korea stand in contrast to the apostolic unity of the church. Thus, the Korean church to be the church is to overcome its individualism under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon, through the Spirit’s gifts of one faith, hope, and love so that separation and exclusion do not have the last word. Dreyer (2013:3) argues that “[a] change only takes place once we change our understanding of reality, when we create a new language and work creatively with new ideas and new realities.”

The mega-church phenomenon has had the Korean church united in terms of its tendency to become a bigger church by any means and it has led to serious growth competitions in the name of obedience to the Great Commission. This distorted and twisted version of apostolic unity of the Korean church might have brought a Christendom understanding of territorial expansion of the kingdom of God in which individual churches grow in their physical size, but has surely failed to lead the local society to give praise to God (Mt 5:16). The

church lives as body of Christ under his governance and, in such a way, it becomes a reflection of the kingdom of God (Dreyer 2013:2).

From this, one may deduce that to be the church of Jesus Christ and to stay his church by reforming its missional nature being actualised through the apostolic unity should start with the reorientation of the growth-oriented tendency of the Korean church. Against the church individualism, the demonstration of the kingdom of God to the local society through communal fellowship within a church and between churches is to be proposed as the biblical alternative for the Korean church. This should be coupled with the apostolic holiness that separates the church from the world and its orientation to power, and with the apostolic catholicity through which the church infiltrates into the local society to reincarnate Jesus; in this way the mission of the church can be apostolic and therefore catholic, holy and one (Guder 2015:87).

The question is: “Can a proposal of reorientation be efficacious against the mega-church fever to rehabilitate the missional ethos and praxis of the Korean church?” (Shin 2015:438). Therefore, changing the understanding of reality should be followed by creation and use of a new language. As Dreyer (2015:5) says, the new language is to become a language of hope. “When a church starts to tell stories of hope, of a renewed passion for the gospel and the church of the Triune God, the dynamics of a church can change completely.” It is also to be the language of faith. The Bible emphasises one faith of one body of Christ (the church) in one Spirit, one Lord, one God and Father of all (Eph. 4:4-6). If all churches have faith in the oneness of the church and communicate it with each other in faithful vocabularies, it will serve as a foundation for the reformation of the reality of the church. The new ideas and new realities are then to be put in practice in creative ways. The following measures can be considered: substantial solidarity and cooperation between local churches and the spontaneous limit of a church’s size.

All local churches as parts of the body of Christ should not hesitate to be united with their neighbouring churches. This unity cannot be with the current rampant “church hunting” or “hostile church mergers” (Shin 2015:357-358). It is to be a solidarity and cooperation between churches that can be performed as follows:

- Local churches in their bulletins, programmes and vision of the church should express their identity as churches standing together with other churches. This expression should include a resolution that they will avoid growth competitions with other churches and will not try to bring members of the other churches to their churches, including a horizontal migration.
- Local churches should deal with the heresies that harm the local communities through their solidarity.
- Local churches should cooperate to serve the local societies when natural disasters happen.
- As the Macedonian churches (other European churches as well) gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability (2Cor. 8:3) for the church in Jerusalem that was in financial crisis, local churches should help other churches that face crises. This should not be limited to churches in certain local areas or denominational circles, but should pursue the unity of all churches in Christ Jesus.
- Local churches should send each other as missionary churches. Bigger and financially stable churches as mission basecamps should support small churches that they can serve the needs of local communities in incarnational ways as sent missionary churches without struggling for survival (Choi 2015:18-23). The relationship between sending and sent churches must not be one of donor and receiver, but as partners participating together in God's mission. This partnership is to include not only sharing of material resources but also sharing of human resources and ministerial ideas. For instance, the sending churches can invite church leaders of the sent churches to listen to their ministries and send some helpers among the congregants according to their talents for the sake of the ministries.

Restriction on church size is with some hesitation because the New Testament gives no normative instruction about the size of the church (Shin 2015:426). However, in terms of the apostolic unity, a local church is to admit that it cannot



maintain its organic characteristics as the body of Christ when it is too big to have intimate fellowship such as friendship and meaningful relationships (Dreyer 2015:2). In a local church, all its members form one body of Christ Jesus, thus all of them are connected and not replaceable. In this regard, the fellowship between each part should not be partial, but be whole. In a mega-church, fellowship is mostly superficial and partial according to the presbytery and cells. It causes anonymity and alienation of church members, which challenges the oneness of the church. Since the Holy Spirit unites all in Christ and with each other, being Christians is in essence communal and the communal oneness of the church cannot be sacrificed for numerical growth of the church (Dreyer 2015:4). If a local church failed to let the world taste in advance the restored relationships through its fellowship, it is to consider church multiplication. Park (2013:32-33) argues that although mega-churches have concentrated on attracting people and building large church buildings, it is time for them to train and scatter the gathered people to the small and weak churches in their vicinities in order to build the body of Christ in the Holy Spirit.

A size limit of a church is to be applied and practised not only to an individual church, but also between local churches which are parts of the universal body of Christ Jesus (Snyder 1987:226) to avoid extreme growth competitions and conflicts. Only when the local churches are in actual endeavour to be united, refraining themselves from selfish growth, can they propagate the gospel of reconciliation to the world (Shin 2015:323). There have been voices prevalent in Korea through the mass media and books such as *The Korean church lives again as mega-churches fall* (Lee 2011), which contend that mega-churches must be dismantled even through the compelling legal (ecclesial) force for the reformation of the Korean church (Shin 2015:363). However, for unity the church should not indulge in totalitarianism and authoritarianism with which the Roman Catholic Church attempts the institutional agreement of the church.

According to Van Gelder (2000:122), the essential oneness of the church is to find its source in the oneness of the Trinitarian God as Jesus prayed, “that they may be one, as we are one” (John 17:22). Although each person of the Trinitarian God is completely independent and autonomous, they open themselves to stay in relationships and voluntarily obey the other persons with

their own free will. They promote a perichoretic unity by voluntarily giving themselves to the others as well as embracing the others in themselves (Moltmann 1981:157, 174-175). Through the Holy Spirit, the triune God is present in the church (Volf 1998:239). All local churches, thus, as the image of the Trinity, are to open themselves to build relationships with the neighbouring churches. They are to promote “spontaneous mutual unity” that imitates the perichoretic relation of the Trinity by giving themselves toward the neighbouring churches and embracing those churches in themselves (Shin 2015:358-359).

For the spontaneous mutual unity, the church needs to become a dynamic, communicative network, distinguished by its participatory nature under the direction of the Holy Spirit and the Word (Dreyer 2013:3). A social networking online service such as Facebook can be used as an instrument, being baptised to facilitate the network between churches. The networked churches can possibly work together as follows to let the kingdom of God come in the locations where they are situated through their voluntary mutual unity rather than competitively pursuing numerical growth of individual churches:

- Pastors, theologians and lay leaders from the networked churches can make an anti-mega-church theology declaration through discussions on and off lines, which clarifies that seeking to be a mega-church is an error that deviated from the biblical model of the church, and which call on the churches in Korea to bail out of the error (Shin 2015:446-451). Through this declaration, the erratic ecclesiology and missiology of the mega-church phenomenon can be publicised and the alternative can be publicly put in circulation.
- Through the network of churches, information regarding various alternative models of local churches and their practices and applications can be introduced and shared among the participating churches (Lee 2012:65-68). This will encourage the networked local churches to put down their preference towards the familiar numerical church growth model and will let them participate in manifesting the body of Christ in the local societies through their communal oneness that is expressed through genuine fellowship within a church and between churches.

## 5.5. Conclusion

The Korean church in crisis has been challenged to enter a process of radical reformation (Dreyer 2013:3). Choi (2015:176) says that although many people want the reformation of the Korean church, it does not happen due to changing structures and laws. It, however, happens only when the church becomes the church. Park (2013:115) also states that the Korean, to overcome its crisis and to be a community serving the society again, is first to be the genuine church before doing something towards the world, which is the restoration of its missional integrity.

The Korean church under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon with its Christendom-like understanding of the nature and mission of the church has focused on running programmes optimised for its numerical growth rather than being incarnational to its local context. It also has become secularised by pursuing consumerist ideals like a shopping mall and has continued with competitions and divisions for the growth of individual churches, neglecting the unity as the one body of Christ Jesus. Although the Korean church, by following the mega-church phenomenon, has incurred crisis situations, its marginalised position in the society can be an opportunity to return to be a biblical church by restoring the apostolic genius and dynamics of its early period.

To restore its missional ethos and praxis, the Korean church is to be a community that manifests the attributes of God to the Korean society with its apostolic catholicity, holiness and unity as follows:

- Apostolic catholicity: The mission of the Korean church is to be contextualised and incarnational through Relocation, Reconciliation and Redistribution.
- Apostolic holiness: The Korean church is to be a counter cultural community, following the way of the cross by radical discipleship through a transformational leadership development, and an equal and non-discriminatory leadership structure based on the spiritual gifts given to the all members of the church.

- Apostolic unity: The Korean church is to witness to the kingdom of God in the world through its communal fellowship as the body of Christ within a church, in a congregation, and between churches. It can be done through substantial solidarity and cooperation in each congregation, between local churches with a spontaneous size limit of a church.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

### **6.1. Introduction**

This research has been an attempt to demonstrate that what has put the Korean church in crisis is its own inability to be church as being irrelevant to its own nature and mission by the influence of mega-church phenomenon and its understanding of the nature and mission of the church. The research suggested missional church and its missional ecclesiology as the only way for the Korean church in crisis to restore what it is supposed to be (nature) and to do (mission), in order to move forward.

Missional ecclesiology is rooted in the concept of the *missio Dei* and has emerged in a situation where Christianity is being marginalised by the Post-Christendom of the postmodern world. Due to where it is rooted and emerged from, missional ecclesiology sees the church as an instrument sent to the world to participate in the mission of God in which the Trinitarian God works to save the whole cosmos (Lee 2014:139).

To carry out the research, a methodology was employed which investigated the ecclesial growth in Korea according to the aspects of the Korean church's nature and mission during the course of the Korean history from hermeneutical, historical, empirical and strategic perspectives. This final concluding chapter summarises the author's findings from the four different perspectives and proposes further research.

### **6.2. The way forward for the Korean church**

Dreyer (2015:5; 2016:7) says that to be the church requires a clear understanding of the essential nature, identity, calling and mission of the church as proclaimed in Scripture. To satisfy this requirement, defining the church's nature and mission was expounded in chapter 2 on the basis of both the meta- and micro- narratives of the Bible.

The meta-narrative of the Bible is the overall story of the mission of God who has a missional nature. The mission of God is disclosed through the line of

Creation-Fall-Redemption-New Creation. The whole universe was created according to God's perfect design, but fell due to the rebellious sin of the first man who was in charge of management as a feudal lord working under the instruction of the Monarch. Despite the fall, God in his sincerity and consistency never stopped his redemptive mission to restore his creation where he rules. God sent his Son as the second man through whom all the people belonging to the first man could be reconciled with him and restored to continue the first managerial commission (the cultural mandate). The restored people carry out their mission by propagating what God has done through his Son as well as by living it out as foretastes of the coming new heavens and earth under the guidance and supervision of the Holy Spirit (the Great Commission of the resurrected Christ). In this flow of the redemptive narration, it is clearly shown that the church as the restored people was born to be a witnessing community and the mission of the church is to be participating in the redemptive mission of God.

This is also supported by the most important metaphors of the Bible for the church: the people of God, the body of Christ, the communion of the saints, and the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The church as the people of God whose citizenship is in heaven though yet living on earth (Phil. 3:19-20) represents the reign of God to the world by obeying the law of God. Therefore it is inherently political and it lets the political governments of the world taste in advance the kingdom ruling with its different political formations and aspects such as being a united though diverse as well as a non-violent community. As the body of Christ, the church acts and lives and speaks like him (Dreyer 2016:4). Following where Jesus is heading, they marginalise themselves to be with the vulnerable to rejoice and mourn together (Rm 12:15). Through seeking to be a community pursuing weakness like this, they stand against the world that seeks power and is ruled by a winner takes all system. The church embodies Jesus their shepherd to the people wandering like sheep without a shepherd. The church as the communion of the saints is called to represent Jesus in its service, to be Jesus to others. They are sent to live out Jesus through their transformed lives in its individual and communal dimensions, which demonstrate to the world genuine reconciled

fellowship. The church as the temple of the Holy Spirit is holy and is to be holy. Although its holiness does not lie in being without sin, but through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, it is called to witness to the kingdom of God to the world by embodying the holiness of God through its holy life dedicated to God and distinguishable from other communities or peoples (Dreyer 2015:4).

The biblical narration consistently teaches that for the church to be the church of Jesus Christ is to stay with its nature as a witnessing community and to take part in the mission of God to restore the kingdom of God on earth, which corresponds with what missional ecclesiology explains about the nature and mission of the church. Therefore missional ecclesiology is the scriptural means for the church to restore its integrity.

Chapter 3 investigated how the Korean church's understanding of its nature and mission has been changed. In the socio- political and economic contexts of the previous 130 years of its history, the mission of the Korean church was carried out under the following three different modes: the apostolic and post-apostolic mode (1879-1945), the advance and triumph of the pseudo-Christendom mode (1945-2000), and the missional mode (past 20+ years).

In the apostolic and post-apostolic mode, the early Korean church although it did not know the present missional ecclesiology was inherently a missional church with its biblical characteristics of missional ecclesiology, a proto-missional church. The early Korean church from its initial stage, spontaneously participated in God's mission to restore his kingdom on Korean soil, testified to the gospel by their changed words and deeds as a disciple community wherever they were sent. Their spontaneity was expressed through the three-self principle: self-propagation, self-government, and self-support. In their mission, the Korean church avoided the present top down power-based imperialistic mission, but pursued an incarnational mission, giving up all kinds of privileges, positions, titles, and authority, to be present in the proximity of the marginalised. Through this humble (powerless) service, the early Korean church made genuine relationships with the Korean people and the gospel was proclaimed through the relationships. By carrying out their mission, the early Korean church did not compete for individual churches' quantitative growth, but became united to work together to expand the kingdom of God.



The missional ethos and praxis of the early Korean church continued even during its settlement stage through the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, through which they avoided being institutionalised and built peace in the Korean society between ethnics, genders and social ranks that led to the transformation of distorted and unfair feudalistic social structures. Throughout the national hardship under the rule of imperial Japan, the Korean church was with the Korean people to share the sufferings and fought together to seek justice. Although their blood was shed for the people, they manifested God's just ruling by their nonviolent movement. Against life threatening persecutions to deny Jesus and to compromise with the worldly power, the early Korean church proved the value of the truth they spread and displayed their true hope of eternal life by obeying Christ to the point of martyrdom. The early Korean church rapidly grew in numbers though they did not aim to grow bigger by attracting people to come to church buildings. When they held on to what they already were, the people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of God (Dreyer 2015:4), as a proto-missional church, they became attractive to the Korean people and it resulted in their numerical growth.

The integrity of the Korean church in the apostolic mode has, however, been lost in the advance and triumph of the pseudo-Christendom mode. After the liberation from Japanese colonisation and the Korean War, the Korean church came to enjoy a national religion-like status through a close relationship with the government and thereafter its mission became focused on numerical growth of individual churches through the influence of the Pseudo-Christendom understanding of the nature and mission of the church, in which territorial expansion of the institutional church by physical might was regarded as the extension of the kingdom of God. This became intense due to the prosperity theology and consumerism affected by the radical modernisation and economic development. The mission of the church in the pseudo-Christendom mode was led by mega-churches in Korea as they were regarded as a successful church growth model. This drove the Korean church into the mega-church phenomenon. In the competition to grow to be another mega-church, churches in Korea came to have institutional and a building-focused ecclesiology and clergy-centred organisational structure as well as a programmed-oriented ecclesiocentric missiology. Although serious

competition for numerical growth led to a dramatic growth of the Korean church in membership, it resulted in “its inability to be church – sometimes not even conscious of what the church is or should be and sometimes deliberately ignoring it for personal gain” (Dreyer 2015:4). As Dreyer (2015:4) argues, “When the church dilutes into mere human activity, it is not church anymore” and that loss of integrity and identity of the church is why the Korean church has been in a crisis.

As the postmodern culture has been prevalent in Korea since the early 1990s, the Korean church has lost its privileged status in society that entered the post-Christendom era. The Korean church with its fossilised institutional forms under the influence of the mega-church phenomenon has lost its missional dynamics as an instrument for God’s mission and failed to properly react to rapidly changing contexts. Moral and financial corruption of the senior pastors of mega-churches caused by secularisation coupled with those failures made the Korean church marginalised in the society. With crisis awareness, since the early 2000s, there have been some churches struggling with ontological self-questions about the biblical nature and mission of the church. It has led to the introduction of the missional ecclesiology from the Western church through conversations and ventures between those churches to apply the missional ecclesiology to their ministries and church plantings, which has become an emerging missional movement.

In chapter 4, two Korean mega-churches and two missional churches were looked at as case studies to examine how different understandings about the nature of the church affected particular churches’ ministries and organisational structures. The two mega-churches, the Immanuel Church and the Jeja Church, with their building and clergy (the senior pastors) centred understanding of the church displayed the ministerial and structural characteristics of the churches of the mega-church phenomenon such as church growth programme-based ministries with prosperous messages trying to comfort their congregations and hierarchical triangular structures strictly centred on the senior pastors. Although both mega-churches emphasised discipleship training, it was rather raising workers productively to run various church growth programmes within the church buildings, obeying the senior

pastors, than making disciples of Jesus who live out the gospel outside the church buildings through their holy words and deeds. The Bundang Woori Church and the Pillar of Fire Church as missional churches recognised their calling as instruments of the mission of God to demonstrate the kingdom of God where they were located by reincarnating Jesus through their spontaneous serving and sharing ministries in incarnational ways. Both missional churches focused on discernment by the guidance of the Holy Spirit to satisfy the genuine necessities of the local communities. To carry out those ministries, they formed flatter relationship-centred structures rather than bureaucratic structures optimised for church growth and management.

Towards ministerial manifestations of the churches of the mega-church phenomenon and of the missional church movement, the Korean society had different general perceptions. The churches with the mega-church's understanding and practice of being church, received negative social evaluations because of their severe competitions to attract more people to their own church buildings, and their programme-centred irrelevant missions for show rather than for real. The churches with the missional church's understanding and practice of being church, however, received a favourable social evaluation with their social contribution ministries and fresh approaches to the symbiosis and mutual growth of churches.

In chapter 5, some strategic ways were proposed for the Korean church in crisis to restore its biblical integrity on the basis of the foregoing hermeneutical, historical, and empirical researches. The churches of the missional movement are not declined as one of the many movements for boosting church growth, but become relevant and fulfil the will of God to restore his kingdom on Korean soil as his sincere agents. The Korean church has marginalised itself from the Korean society by being captured by the mega-church phenomenon and lost its biblical understanding of mission and the church. According to Dreyer (2016:24), "Wherever there is a lack of theological depth in our ecclesiology, it leads to poor governance, a deathly silence on injustice, tolerance of corruption, materialism and a general loss of integrity and credibility." Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that the emerging missional movement in Korea is to be a reforming movement that resists the strong

tendency to pursue the ways of the mega-church phenomenon and restores the biblical missional nature and practice of the church that the early Korean church had.

To restore missional dynamics of the early Korean church, the contemporary missional movement is to apply and practice the missional ecclesiology that presents the four marks of the church. Since they are derived from the attributes of the Trinitarian God, the four marks are correlational and can be rearranged centred on the church's apostolic missional nature, thus apostolic catholicity, apostolic holiness, and apostolic unity.

As for the apostolic catholicity, the mission of the Korean church is not to be imperialistic, but incarnational. For that, the churches in Korea are to relocate themselves to be with the marginalised vulnerable. Social participation to promote peace and reconciliation is to be considered to be their primary mission. They are to be a blessing by redistributing of what they are given by God, to the people in need. To make the invisible God's ruling visible, the church itself is to live with a deep consciousness of its apostolic holiness and its continual reformation to be what is already is, the temple of the Holy Spirit (Dreyer 2015:4). As the temple of the Holy Spirit, the mission of the church is to be carried out with their equal and non-discriminatory leadership structure that differs from the one of the world, and by the disciples of Jesus with their radical discipleship not only within a church, but also outside the church. To be witness of their head, towards the world, the church as the body of Christ is to be united. This apostolic unity is actualised through communal fellowship within an individual church and between local churches. Substantial solidarity and cooperation like financial supports and spontaneous size limit of churches for intimate relationships and mutual growth can possibly facilitate the communal fellowship.

As Dreyer (2016:17) says, "being church with integrity, being the church what is already is in everyday practice, is not a simple matter, but a continual reformation and transformation." What Pascal (Kreeft 1993:321) said therefore is worthy to keep in mind for the churches wanting to join the missional movement. "The least movement affects all nature; the entire sea changes because of a rock. Thus, in grace, the least action affects everything by its

consequences.”

### **6.3. Proposal for a further research (Final thought)**

Although there have been various attempts to apply and practice missional ecclesiology in the Korean context since missional ecclesiology was introduced to the Korean church in the early 2000, it is true that as many churches as various missional attempts have undergone trial and error due to different contexts than the Western societies whence the missional ecclesiology was imported.

It is time to try to establish an indigenised missional ecclesiology in the Korean context. It corresponds to the characteristics of the missional ecclesiology. What has been learned by trial and error can be useful to commence such a task. Various case studies according to locations (urban or rural), sizes and denominations of the missional churches and their ways of approach to apply and practice a missional ecclesiology need to be collected and analysed. Those case studies are to go together with theoretical research on Korea's historical, political, economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds (Lee 2012:67), as well as with a process for the acceptance of the missional ecclesiology. The indigenised missional ecclesiology will contribute to the churches in the missional movement, to reduce the risk of application of the missional ecclesiology and to develop more fresh approaches, thus more research on this issue is worthwhile.

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## 8. APPENDIX

### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

**Title of the Study:**

From proto-missional to mega-church: A practical-ecclesiological critique of ecclesial growth in Korea

**Researcher:**

YONGSOO LEE

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You are cordially invited to participate in an academic research study due to your experience and knowledge in the research area, namely practical ecclesiology. Each participant must receive, read, understand and sign this document *before* the start of the study. If a child is 7-17 years and is requested to partake in a research study, the parent/legal guardian must give consent. Children from 7-17 years are also required to sign an assent form.

- **Purpose of the study:** The purpose of the study is to seek the best way forward for the Korean church which is in crisis through the research on the origin and progress of the Korean church in terms of missional ecclesiology. The results of the study may be published in an academic journal. You will be provided with a summary of our findings on request. No participants' names will be used in the final publication.
- **Duration of the study:** The study will be conducted over a period of 3 years and its projected date of completion is 30 April 2017.
- **Research procedures:** The study is based on an interview with questions as follows: What is the first priority and goal in your ministry?; What do you see as the reason that the Korean church is having a negative reputation with the Korean society of today, which is different from its early years?; What do you see as the merits and demerits of the mega-church?; What do you think is a missional church?; What is your reaction on the statement "The bigger a church grows, the more it can carry out missionary work?"
- **What is expected of you:** To figure out understandings about ecclesiology and how those understandings affect ministries.
- **Your rights:** Your participation in this study is very important. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without stating any reasons and without any negative consequences. You, as participant, may contact the researcher at any time in order to clarify any issues pertaining to this research. The respondent as well as the researcher must each keep a copy of this signed document.
- **Confidentiality:** All information will be treated as being kept confidential. Participants and their organisations will be kept anonymous. The respondent

will have access to the raw data and motivation in the case that data will not be confidential or when participants or their organisations will not be anonymous.

## WRITTEN INFORMED CONSENT

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I hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature of this research.

I understand that I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the research. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions.

Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Contact number of the Researcher:

## VERBAL INFORMED CONSENT *(Only applicable if respondent cannot write)*

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I, the researcher, have read and have explained fully to the respondent, named

\_\_\_\_\_ and his/her relatives, the letter of introduction.

The respondent indicated that he/she understands that he/she will be free to withdraw at any time.

Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_