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**Contemporary Korean Ecclesiastical and Social Conditions
Calling For Conversion Church Growth**

Paul H. Kim

“Why is the Korean church growing so rapidly? Many Christians around the world have asked this question,” say Bong-Rin Ro and Marlin L. Nelson, in the preface of the book *Korean Church Growth Explosion* published a decade ago.¹ Today, many Christians around the world ask a different question: Why has the Korean church, that grew so rapidly in such a short time, slipped into a stagnation for about two decades?² To Christians around the world, the question is disheartening but curious since it has a significant missiological implication. To the Korean Christians, the question is “perplexing”³ and unavoidable,⁴ according to Korean church growth authorities, since the question should be researched responsibly in order to understand the present and to prepare for the future of the Korean church.

To investigate the present in light of the past makes the present more clear and relevant. Hence, this discussion on the ecclesiastical and social conditions that have impacted the Korean church starts with the beginning of the Korean mission. This discussion, however, sketches the past briefly and focuses on the statistics and factors that influence the church growth of the Korean Christians.

Brief History of the Korean Church

Christianity was introduced officially to Korea first by the Roman Catholics in 1784 and a century later by the Protestants in 1884.⁵ The first official Protestant missionaries, Horace N. Allen and his wife, were sent to Korea by the American Northern Presbyterian Church in 1884. The Allens were effective in paving the way for the great future of the Korean mission through his

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medical skills and missionary endeavors.⁶ In 1885, Horace G. Underwood and J. W. Heron and his wife came to Korea as the second American Presbyterian missionaries. In the same year, H. G. Appenzeller and W. B. Scranton and his wife also came to Korea as the first American Methodist missionaries.⁷ According to Underwood, "From the very start Koreans have shown a receptivity unequalled by the people of any other land, and as a result the success that has followed the preaching of the Gospel has been phenomenal. Thousands have been won to the Cross, and the only limit seems to have been the physical power of the missionary to cope with, guide, and direct the work."⁸

Underwood's observation indicates that the phenomenal growth of the early work in Korea came from the "unequalled" receptivity of the Koreans⁹ and the great passion of the Korean Christians for ministry. The receptivity among the Koreans was cultivated by several factors at the time:¹⁰ extreme economic hardships, radical social upheaval, moral downfall, and political instability due to the perennial wars in the Korean peninsula caused by ensuing conflicts among the Great powers that were seeking to benefit economically in Korea,¹¹ and the failure of the traditional religion¹² in satisfying the spiritual needs of the public.¹³ The highly receptive field yielded a great harvest of souls when it was farmed by the capable, diligent, and sacrificial works of the missionaries and the Korean Christians.

Two other crucial factors contributed to the great works of the early Korean mission were the mission policy of John Nevius¹⁴ and the great revival at Pyongyang. The early missionaries and the Korean church adopted the Nevius mission policy wholeheartedly and applied it faithfully to their ministries.¹⁵ The willing adoption of this effective mission policy has been proven a great success. In 1937, reflecting on the one-half century's mission work in Korea, Charles Allen Clark, one of the early American missionaries to Korea, identifies the Nevius policy as the most crucial factor for the growth of the early Korean church: "The principles of the Nevius plan seem, humanly speaking, to have been the most important reason for the outstanding results."¹⁶

As Clark states, the Nevius policy offered an effective strategy for the growth of the Korean church, but the spiritual impetus for growth came from the great revival at Pyongyang, the largest and the most important city in the northwestern section of Korea (Today, it is the capital of North Korea). The great revival at Pyongyang began in January 1907 after four years of sincere preparation through Bible study and prayer. The revival,

which lasted until 1910, renewed and multiplied the Korean church tremendously,¹⁷ and impacted the Korean society mainly by inspiring and empowering leaders, who would soon take the national level of leadership in various areas of the Korean society, including those who led the independence movement against the Japanese colonialism.¹⁸ J. Edwin Orr notes the contribution of the great revival to the history of the Korean church and society:

Korean church membership quadrupled in a decade, and continued to rise, giving to the one per cent [sic] Christians in the population an influence far beyond their numbers. Within thirty years, the Korean Protestants numbered three hundred thousand. This nation moved by revival rapidly [sic] became the most evangelized part of the Orient. . . . The Korean Church became self-supporting in a way unknown in the Orient. The Korean church members became enthusiastic in witnessing and generous in giving. More than thirty years went by with the Japanese military power in control of their country, but their faith never dimmed. In Korea, a persecuted Church provided the spiritual backbone for a nation.¹⁹

Korea was annexed by Japan on August 22, 1910, and the brutal Japanese military control over Korea lasted till August 15, 1945. During that time, the Korean church suffered bitter persecutions, but still grew slowly while alternating growth and decline.²⁰ The independence from Japan provided the Korean church with a long-awaited opportunity for growth. Once again, the Korean church grew rapidly,²¹ despite the terrible ravages of the horrible Korean War (1950-1953).²² In 1960s, the Korean church experienced one of its highest numerical growth, recording 207 percent growth rate. The rapid growth trend continued in 1970s with the record of 125 percent growth rate. The continuing, triumphant march for growth, however, was slowed considerably in 1980s, showing only 25 percent growth rate. Eventually, the slowdown phase gave way to a plateaued stage in the last decade of the twentieth century. In 1990s, the Korean church grew a marginal growth rate—only 8 percent, and from 1998 to 2004 the Korean church shows a clear sign of stagnation, recording only 0.9 percent growth rate.

Factors Favorable to the Growth of the Korean Church

The discussion of the history of the Korean church yields at least three ecclesiastical and social factors in terms of the growth

of the Korean church: the great receptivity of the Koreans toward the gospel, the early adoption and faithful utilization of the Nevius mission policy, and the great revival at Pyongyang. As these areas indicate, the factors impacting the growth of the church exist both in and outside the church, and this fact applies exactly to the growth of the Korean church. Hence, the following discussion includes both ecclesiastical and social factors of the growth of the Korean church. The discussion on social factors, however, will be incorporated into the discussion on social environment in the last section of this article.

The Nevius policy and the Pyongyang revival have been mentioned previously. The revival at Pyongyang, however, needs to be discussed more in relation to other spiritual factors of church growth, such as prayer and empowerment of the Spirit, which the Korean church has valued highly for its growth. Perhaps, the greatest and lasting legacy of the great revival at Pyongyang to the Korean church is the earnest spirit and practice of prayer, and the sincere heart for the empowerment of the Spirit.²³ The well-known pre-dawn prayer meeting of the Korean church, which reflects the sincere heart of the Korean Christians for prayer and the empowerment of the Spirit, began when Pastor Kill Sun-Joo, the leader of the great revival at Pyongyang, "called early morning prayer meetings as an effort to bring about a spiritual awakening movement in Korea."²⁴ The earnest spirit for prayer and the empowerment of the Spirit, which characterized the great revival at Pyongyang, did not cease with the end of the great revival, however. It has persisted throughout the Korean church history and worked as a beacon for the Korean church.²⁵

In addition to these four distinct ecclesiastical factors of the Korean church growth, such as the Nevius policy, the great revival at Pyongyang, prayer, and the empowerment of the Spirit, the dynamic pastoral leadership, which has been displayed brilliantly by both missionaries and Korean pastors, constitutes one of the most important factors of the growth of the Korean church. Missionaries played an indispensable role for the rapid growth of the Korean church in many ways.²⁶ Some of their most important contributions include: leading role in conducting Bible translation and literature work;²⁷ playing a catalytic role in the great revival at Pyongyang;²⁸ adopting and utilizing the Nevius policy;²⁹ training native church leaders through the establishment of several educational institutions such as colleges and seminaries;³⁰ helping the poor and the needy through charity organizations,³¹ especially during the Korean War (1950-1953).

The Korean pastors also have made a foremost contribution to the rapid growth of the Korean church through their dedicated, faithful, enthusiastic, hard-working, and sacrificial life and ministry.³²

The sixth factor is a compelling vision and intense activities to evangelize the nation and the world. The Korean mission began with massive, persistent, and systematic evangelistic efforts carried out by both missionaries and the Korean Christians.³³ After the great revival at Pyongyang, the Korean church became more fervent and active in preaching the gospel to lost people: "The missionary spirit has taken possession of the whole Church, especially of the young men in the College [sic]."³⁴ The great revival at Pyongyang inspired the Korean church launch out an ambitious nationwide evangelistic campaign—"One Million Souls for Christ Movement"—and overseas mission to China, Japan, Manchuria, and Siberia.³⁵ The various local and nationwide evangelistic works went on constantly even under the brutal Japanese military control,³⁶ intensified during the turbulent times caused by the independence from Japan and the Korean War (1950-1953), and finally exploded during the 1960s and the 1970s,³⁷ and continue to the present.³⁸ The evangelization of the nation by the Korean church has been facilitated greatly by evangelism through many channels such as family network,³⁹ mass media communication,⁴⁰ planting new churches,⁴¹ army Christianization movement,⁴² educational institutions,⁴³ medical works,⁴⁴ humanitarian social and welfare services,⁴⁵ para-church ministries,⁴⁶ and the application of the principles and methods advocated by the Church Growth Movement.⁴⁷

The seventh factor is effective discipleship and leadership development. From the beginning of the Korean mission, the Korean Christians were privileged to get the benefit from the use of their own scientific language system called Hangul,⁴⁸ the Korean copies of the gospel, and various biblical tracts and books.⁴⁹ The Korean Christians also had many opportunities for discipleship and leadership development through modern Christian schools⁵⁰ and theological institutions,⁵¹ Bible conferences,⁵² small group meetings, pre-dawn and all-night prayer meetings,⁵³ fasting, revival meetings,⁵⁴ and strong local church programs established by several influential sources such as the Nevius policy, and the teachings of the Church Growth Movement.⁵⁵

The eighth factor is active lay ministry. Several things have caused the Korean laity to be active in the ministry of the local church. The first impetus came from the early adoption and

utilization of the Nevius policy. The policy facilitated the active participation of the laity in the ministry of the church by promoting self-propagation, self-support, and self-government of the local church.⁵⁶ It was so effective for the growth of the Korean church that Soltau said, "This method was adopted by many Korean missions and these to-day have the greatest number of church members."⁵⁷ More recently, small (or cell) group ministry advocated and practiced by David Yonggi Cho and discipleship training ministry systematized and modeled by Han Hum Ok also made enormous impacts upon the mobilization of the laity in the Korean church.⁵⁸ The teachings of the Church Growth Movement on the gift-oriented ministry also facilitated greatly the active lay ministry in the Korean church.

Ecclesiastical Conditions

To the casual observer, the strength of the Korean church seemingly makes Korean Christianity ever effective and productive in any circumstances. The reality, however, repulses this kind of naive and optimistic thought. The stagnation of the Korean church from the middle of the 1980s to the twenty-first century suggests that whether the Korean church's strength has been weakened considerably, or its strength no longer works effectively in a new and changed situation, or the weaknesses of the Korean church began to surface and overpower its strength, or all of these things have occurred simultaneously. In reality, the last case is true: all of these things have occurred simultaneously in the contemporary Korean church.

Lack of Qualified Pastoral Leadership

What has weakened the Korean church and reduced its effectiveness? Several factors have contributed to this condition, but this article will select and focus on four major factors. First of all, the integrity and leadership of the Korean pastor is questioned and challenged seriously by their own countrymen. According to the research conducted in 1993 by The Korea Gallup Organization, the public trust on the morality of the Korean Protestant pastor (30.9 percent) is lower than the Catholic priest (52.7 percent), the television reporter (45.0 percent), the Buddhist priest (38.2 percent), the journalist (37.4 percent), and the teacher (31.2 percent).⁵⁹

Other researches conducted by Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization in 1998 and 2004 also show that the public recognition of the leadership quality of the Korean pastor is almost twice lower than the Catholic priest and lower than the Buddhist priest. Regarding the question on the natural disposi-

tion of the leader, 22.8 percent (16.5 percent in 2004) of the participants (unbelievers) said that Korean Protestant pastors are excellent, 40.7 percent (31.8 percent in 2004) said that Korean Catholic priests are excellent, and 26.7 percent (21.2 percent in 2004) said that Korean Buddhist priests are excellent.⁶⁰ Both researches indicate that the Korean Protestant pastors have a low public recognition in terms of morality and leadership quality in the Korean society, and it is certain that this negative image of the Korean public has affected the stagnation of the Korean church to some extent.⁶¹

The public distrust and negative image on the Korean pastor come from several sources. Among them, the liberal mass media and the powerful, destructive internet (both public and private) sources are the most formidable sources in carving the negative image of the Korean pastor in the minds of the Korean public. The public bashing of the Korean pastor and the Korean Christians has increased alarmingly in recent years due to the critical scrutiny and the excessive exposure of the liberal media and the internet sources (especially, the leftist ones) on several scandals of some prominent Korean pastors (and some lay people who are prominent in the Korean church and society) and some controversial practices of the Korean church.⁶²

Korean pastors and theologians identify the following with some of the problems, which have brought discredit on the integrity of the Korean pastor and contributed to weaken their leadership: the prevalent trend of the succession of the office of senior pastor within bloodline (usually from the father to the son);⁶³ the frequent power struggle in the church on several issues such as leadership and the succession of the office of senior pastor;⁶⁴ legal fight over the problems of the church, which relates to pastors, in the public court;⁶⁵ lack of proper theological and ministerial training due to the inadequate training conducted by numerous unapproved, unqualified Korean theological schools;⁶⁶ gaining academic degrees from the unqualified schools abroad to gain social recognition;⁶⁷ lack of morality;⁶⁸ burnout and the inflexible mentality and attitude toward ministry;⁶⁹ Shamanistic clericalism,⁷⁰ the prevalent Shamanistic preaching putting too much emphasis on earthly blessings and worldly success.⁷¹ The list represents some of the problems related to the Korean pastor. From this data, one can discern that most of the problems of the Korean church, which causes its stagnation, are related to the integrity and leadership quality of the Korean pastors.⁷² In this sense, Bong-Ho Son's following assertion is not only accurate but also timely: "One of the inevita-

ble consequences of the rapid growth of the churches is the shortage of qualified church leaders. Korea must have more ministers and theologians, and the demand for them is greater than can be met."⁷³

Shamanization of Christianity

Secondly, "Shamanizing Christianity" in the Korean church is taking its toll on the modern Korean church.⁷⁴ Shamanism is the oldest, primitive, and one of the most influential religions in Korea. It has formed and dominated the Korean's way of thinking, worldview, belief system, and nationality for centuries. The vitality of the Korean Shamanism is so strong and tenacious that it has been able to exist side by side with several other foreign religions such as Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity for thousands of years. The receptive capacity of the Korean Shamanism is so high that it could absorb and deform every religion in Korea, including Christianity.⁷⁵

According to Jin Hong Kim, Shamanism has three distinctive characteristics: pursuit of blessings (called Kibok Shinang⁷⁶ in Korean), lack of morality, and lack of historicity.⁷⁷ Korean Christianity reflects these three characteristics in its teachings and expressions. Shamanism seems to make inroads into the Korean church in the 1960s when the Koreans applied themselves enthusiastically to the development of economy.⁷⁸ Some Korean churches responded to the intense economic crave of the Koreans by preaching positive thinking and prosperity theology.⁷⁹

The Korean pastors and theologians seem to agree unanimously to the fact that Kibok Shinang made a contribution to the numerical growth of the Korean church in the period of rapid economic development.⁸⁰ Some critics even acknowledge the missiological value of "Shamanizing Christianity" in a particular situation. For instance, Bong-Ho Son admits, "As a strategy of mission, Shamanism may legitimately be used as a point of contact."⁸¹ In this sense, "Shamanizing Christianity" worked quite well in the Korean context, boosting the number of the Korean Protestant population to some extent.⁸²

As Jong Gi Min points out, Shamanistic approach in evangelism helped to reduce the reluctance of the Korean people toward Christianity, made Christianity appealing especially to the poor and the middle class Koreans, and thus motivated them to come to church.⁸³ However, many Korean church leaders, who acknowledge the contribution of Kibok Shinang to the quantitative growth of the Korean church, also charge seriously the side effect of Kibok Shinang.⁸⁴ Jin Hong Kim asserts that Kibok Shi-

nang has relegated the Korean church to a secular, inferior, and worldly religious community by inducing the Korean church to embrace and teach materialistic and secular blessings rather than spiritual and noble blessings.⁸⁵ He also avers that Shamanism's emphasis on the ecstatic experience and a medium influenced the Korean church to indulge in fanaticism and sensationalism, pursue personal experience and the interests of his own community, and thus become indifferent to social injustices and passive in building a better Korean society.⁸⁶

In addition, Jin Hong Kim insists that many Korean Christians came to possess a dualistic belief system, in which faith and life operate separately, because of the influence of the Shamanistic belief system that lacks morality and historicity.⁸⁷ Hence, according to Jin Hong Kim, in this way Kibok Shinang has made a negative impact on the integrity, character, and ethical behaviors of the Korean pastors and lay people.⁸⁸ This observation leads Jin Hong Kim to insist that Shamanism's negative influence over the Korean church has become one of the major factors of the stagnation of the Korean church.

According to Moon Jang Lee, laying stress on Kibok Shinang disturbs the formation of biblical thought and Christian values in the believer's life. He also asserts that the Shamanistic tendency detected in the Korean church distorts the essence of the gospel.⁸⁹ To Jong Gi Min, "Shamanizing Christianity" has caused decisively the stagnation of the Korean church due to four different reasons. Three out of these four reasons Min points out are overlapped with the ones pointed out by Jin Hong Kim; therefore, one reason left out needs to be mentioned here. That is, Kibok Shinang has relegated the Korean pastor to be a reconciler who carries out the divine blessings to people. In other words, Kibok Shinang has degraded the Korean pastor to become like a medicine man who is able to bless and curse the congregation arbitrarily with charisma and divine authority. Naturally, the pastor who claims this authority tends to become autocratic, and this often encourages conflict and split between the pastor and those who oppose him in the church.

In the end, according to Min, this situation disturbs the spiritual growth of the believer and the evangelization of the unbeliever.⁹⁰

Critics of "Shamanizing Christianity" argue that Kibok Shinang worked for the numerical growth of the Korean church when the rapid economic development was the foremost concern for the Koreans and dictatorship was tolerated by the Koreans in their intense pursuit of economic prosperity.⁹¹ However, Kibok Shinang (seeking blessings) has become obsolete in the

present political and social situation in Korea, which values equality, democracy, economic distribution, and social justice rather than elitism, competition, economic prosperity, and different level of social status.⁹² Moreover, the side effect of "Shamanizing Christianity" has become destructive enough to check the quantitative as well as qualitative growth of the Korean church.⁹³

Acts 2:42-47 shows that sound doctrine is crucial to the health and growth of the church. The passage also proves that the quality of faith, such as excellent Christian character, Christian unity, and good social reputation, is vital to the qualitative and quantitative growth of the church.⁹⁴ In addition, it reveals that the proper understanding and exercise of biblical leadership is critical to conversion church growth. In this sense, it is certain that "Shamanizing Christianity" has contributed to the stagnation of the Korean church to some extent.

Rigid and Hierarchical Structure Fostering Conflicts and Disputes

Third, today many Korean churches are suffering from a structural problem fostering unbalance, conflict, and split.⁹⁵ Some recent researches prove the validity of this claim. One research shows that the majority of the conservative Korean Presbyterian pastor (68 percent), who participated in the research, acknowledge that the present structure, which is horizontal and authoritative, is not desirable.⁹⁶ The research also reveals that most Presbyterian churches suffer from the bad relationship between the pastor and the elder.⁹⁷ Another research shows that 23.9 percent of the respondents (the Korean Christians) pointed out the concrete change of innate characteristics of the Korean church (the change of the system and structure fit in the changing Korean culture) as the second most important factor in terms of reviving the Korean Church.⁹⁸

Dong Ho Kim, who is a prominent, reform-minded Korean Presbyterian pastor, maintains that the relational and structural problem in the Korean church comes from the conflict between the pastor and the elder caused by the misunderstanding of their respective roles, the extreme concentration of power upon the elder group, and the group's arbitrary display of absolute power in the church.⁹⁹ The fact that the majority of the pastors (87 percent of the respondents) prefers the diminution of the power of the elder in one way or another and the expansion of the influence of ordinary lay people (rather than a tiny portion of lay people in the church such as a small group of elders) in the decision-making process of the church seem to verify the credibility

of Kim's claim.¹⁰⁰

Young Han Kim's argument, that the conflict and split in the local church come mostly from the disagreement between the pastor and the elder, also adds more weight to

Dong Ho Kim's assertion.¹⁰¹ Dong Ho Kim insists that the serious problems derived from the extreme type of elder-led ministry cause inevitably the indifference of members toward the church.¹⁰² He also maintains that those problems caused by the arbitrary elder-led ministry also facilitate the corruption and decline of the church since absolute power inevitably results in absolute corruption.¹⁰³ Thus, Kim insists that the only way out for the Korean church at this time is a decisive reform.¹⁰⁴ Dong Ho Kim is convinced that the conflict and the stagnation of the Korean church will persist if the consciousness of Korean pastors and elders and the structure of the Korean church do not change.¹⁰⁵ Jung Suk Lee also avers that the Korean church will face a tragic judgment if the Korean pastors and elders continue the arbitrary use of ecclesiastical power, discord and division, and power struggle in the church rather than becoming servants.¹⁰⁶ In Matt 12:25, Christ tells his disciples of the awful consequence of division: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand." In Gal 5:15, Paul also gives a solemn warning on discord: "But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another." The prevalent conflict and split in the Korean church hurt evangelism and discipleship in the local church.¹⁰⁷ In this sense, the power struggle between the pastor and the elder as well as the discord between the elder and the deacon, which comes from the structure fostering discord and division, has brought a negative impact on the conversion growth of the Korean church.

Misunderstanding on the Biblical Concept of Church Growth

Fourth, the improper theological understanding of biblical church growth has made some Korean church leaders to deviate or hamper genuine conversion church growth in Korea.¹⁰⁸ Conversion church growth means, "A measured numerical increase in church attendance/or membership resulting from effective evangelistic efforts that result in unsaved members of the community being converted to faith in Christ and incorporated into the life of the church."¹⁰⁹ In this sense, conversion church growth is the only biblical way to grow a New Testament church, which is prescribed in the Great Commission. The definition includes both quantifiable and qualifiable aspects of church growth. "A

measured numerical increase in church attendance/or membership," on the one hand, is a numerical or quantifiable aspect of church growth. "Unsaved members of the community being converted to faith in Christ and incorporated into the life of the church," on the other hand, is a spiritual or qualifiable aspect of church growth.

In this definition of church growth, a person is seen as both a quantifiable and qualifiable being. This perspective is both biblical and logical since 1 Thess 5:23 says that a person has a spirit, a soul, and a body. Accordingly, the person and the church (or church growth) should be seen from both quantifiable and qualifiable perspectives since the believer is the basic unit of the church.

The improper understanding of conversion church growth, therefore, comes from an unbalanced perspective on conversion church growth, which stresses too much either the quantifiable or qualifiable aspect at the expense of another, or rejects church growth downright without any serious consideration. Unfortunately, some Korean Christians value quantifiable aspect more than qualifiable aspect of Christianity. To them, concrete, quantifiable, materialistic objects such as the number of worship attendants, the building and real estate of the church, and the size of budget are the adequate measure of testing the quality of faith, the health and strength of the church, and the level of church growth.¹¹⁰ Of course, their position makes sense to some extent. The health of the church can be measured quantifiably to some extent as Rick Warren argues: "We've got a scorecard to evaluate progress. Just like when you go to a doctor and he checks all kinds of vital signs, the health of a church is quantifiable. For example, I can measure how many more people are involved in ministry this month than last month."¹¹¹

The acknowledgment that the health of the church is quantifiable to some extent, however, is different from the materialistic mentality that the spiritual vitality and quality of Christianity can and should be measured by material, quantifiable objects. Son point out this materialistic mentality and its expressions found among many Korean Christians:

Without clear awareness of what they are doing, most Korean Christians, like the rest of the population, regard numbers as the essential expression of reality. Churches with rapid membership growth are looked upon as obviously good churches. Pastors who build up large congregations are considered able. The strength of churches is estimated according to the number in attendance at Sunday services and the size of their yearly offerings.

Charts and graphs appear in every church office; statistics are published in the weekly bulletins of most congregations. Unconsciously, the numerical growth of the Jerusalem church (Acts 2:47) is magnified out of proportion to other factors, while God's wrath upon David's census in 2 Samuel 24 [sic] is conveniently forgotten.¹¹²

Those, who focus excessively on the quantifiable aspect of ministry at the expense of the qualifiable aspect of ministry, tend to relegate the church to a covetous, worldly, contemptible community, which is a mockery to the scrutinizing public. Those who have materialistic perspectives of church growth pursue "quantitative growth by any means,"¹¹³ engage in "excessive competition for increased membership,"¹¹⁴ perpetrate "sheep snatching,"¹¹⁵ and make an attempt at "Shamanizing Christianity,"¹¹⁶ according to Bong-Ho Son. In some sense, the materialistic mentality of some Korean Christians is the reflection of the Korean's amoral pragmatic mentality, which values outcome but ignores process.¹¹⁷ That is, the materialistic mentality is pervasive in the Korean church.

According to Seung Hee Lee, this typical mentality has caused a dual phenomenon in terms of the growth of the Korean church.¹¹⁸ One the one hand, this amoral pragmatic mentality has contributed to the rapid numerical growth of the Korean church by spurring the Korean Christians to engage in outreach through every available means although some methods are problematic ethically.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, the amoral pragmatic mentality has caused several ethical problems in the Korean church since it values only the consequence without regarding the due process. For example, according to Lee, the ethical problems of the Korean pastors and the administrative problems of the Korean mega-churches have come from this mentality.¹²⁰

The danger inherent in the materialistic and amoral pragmatic approach of ministry is obvious. Bong-Ho Son points out the danger in terms of the long-range evangelistic opportunity: "By God's grace, Korean churches have a fine tradition of diligent evangelism which should be kept alive, but when the motivation is not pure and the methods are not fair or biblical, evangelism may defeat its own purpose. This kind of evangelism may obliterate the identity of the Christian gospel and eventually prevent further witnessing. This is precisely what I fear most."¹²¹

Bong-Ho Son's fear seems to have materialized already in the Korean church and society. According to a recent research,

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64.6 (76 in 1998) percent of the respondents (unbelievers) said that the Korean church is more interested in increasing its own religious hegemony rather than pursuing the real truth.¹²² This indicates that unbelievers take the aggressive and fervent evangelism of the Korean church as an ambitious and egoistic attempt to establish its own religious empire, not as a sincere expression of its faith.

The research also shows that 63.4 (70.8 in 1998) percent of the respondents think that the Korean church tends to place excessive pressure on people for offering.¹²³ It may indicate that the Korean church has a prevalent tendency of measuring the essence and strength of Christianity with materialistic, quantifiable criteria such as number and money. The negative image of the great majority of unbelievers in terms of the evangelism and the financial matter of the Korean church works as a repellent to keep people away from the modern Korean church. The materialistic approach in ministry has degraded the Korean church to the inferior, covetous, contemptible, and worldly church and created many ethical problems in the Korean Christianity and secular society. In this sense, some Korean Christians' materialistic, amoral, pragmatic approach on church growth, has contributed to the stagnation of the Korean church to some extent.¹²⁴

The unhealthy and unbiblical understanding on church growth, which hampers conversion church growth in Korea, also comes from the position that ignores the importance of the quantitative aspect of church growth, or from the one that has no consideration for conversion church growth. As the previous discussion shows, the health of the church can be quantified to some extent. Quantity implies some spiritual value if that quantity indicates some spiritual objects or meanings such as the numbers of the lost, genuine converts, or those who obey the Lord in baptism, or the percentage of members being mobilized for ministry and missions.¹²⁵ Thus, the unbalanced position that upholds the qualitative aspect of Christianity but ignores the inherent spiritual value of the quantitative aspect of Christianity or the defensive position that rejects church growth downright is neither biblical nor beneficial to conversion church growth.

Some hold the unbalanced position from the spiritualist's¹²⁶ perspective. Others advocate the unbalanced position to stress the importance of the qualitative aspect of Christianity.¹²⁷ A group of people take the defensive position that rejects church growth from their erroneous theological views.¹²⁸ Both sides, however, play the same role in checking conversion church growth in Korea by discouraging the urgent and necessary quantitative growth of the Korean church.¹²⁹ Is the quality of the lead-

ership of the Korean church aging and deteriorating? Probably so. The leadership of the Korean church seems more concerned with maintenance, preservation, and comfort rather than ministry, risk-taking, and adventure recently.¹³⁰ Moral laxity, ethical problems, corruption, and conflict have threatened and weakened the integrity and leadership of many Korean church leaders.¹³¹ Is the Korean church not pure enough doctrinally and morally to transform the life of the believer and arouse respect among its own people? It seems so. Shamanistic thinking, such as amoral pragmatic mentality and syncretism,¹³² and materialistic, earthly, and worldly perspective of Christianity (Kibok Shinnang) are still pervasive in the preachings and teachings of the Korean church and in the consciousness and life of the Korean Christians.

Is the Korean church's structure not flexible enough to operate effectively in a radically changed Korean culture? It is likely. The significant level of dissatisfaction of the Korean pastor and lay people toward the present structure and the prevalent problems of power struggle in the Korean church prove this point. Is the Korean church out of balance in its view on the true meaning and value of conversion church growth? Probably so. The excessive focus on the quantifiable or the qualifiable aspect of Christianity at the expense of another is prevalent among the Korean Christians.

Hence, the direction the Korean church needs to take is clear. First, the Korean church needs to become healthy through renewal and reform. Second, the Korean church needs to grow through "effective evangelistic efforts that result in unsaved members of the community being converted to faith in Christ and incorporated into the life of the church."¹³³ The necessity for a healthy Korean church is urgent: "The negative aspects of rapid growth are, indeed, very real and alarming; they are not just imagined or anticipated. They are realities and their bitter fruits are being reaped. Unless fundamental self-criticism and reformation take place very soon, I seriously fear that the Korean churches might lose all that they have gained or that Christianity in Korea may be so distorted that all our labors may be lost."¹³⁴

The promotion of the health and growth of the Korean church is crucial for the survival and expansion of the Korean church, according to the prospect of a Korean sociologist in religion. Won Kyu Lee insists that the present state of the Korean church makes the future of the Korean church dismal in terms of both the quantitative and qualitative aspects. He anticipates that the following stages will be developed inevitably if the present trend continues without change. First, the members of the Ko-

rean church will decline. Second, the functions of the Korean church will be diminished. Third, the social influence and public trust of the Korean church will be more weakened. That is, the phenomenon, which already has been occurring, will be accelerated, and the quantitative and qualitative crises of the Korean church will be deepened.¹³⁵

Social Environment

In his book *The Call of Korea*, Horace G. Underwood, the first Protestant missionary to Korea, attributes the phenomenal success of the Korean Protestant mission to "a receptivity unequalled by the people of any other land."¹³⁶ Bob Pierce, founder of World Vision who watched first-hand the Korean church and society in 1950 (the year of the beginning of the Korean War), also relates the abundant evangelistic result in Korea to the high receptivity of the Koreans toward the Word of God: "I do know that they are people who hunger after God. . . . No wonder God could take the simple preaching of the Word, given out by native pastors and missionaries and teams like our own, and bringing in an abundant daily harvest of souls."¹³⁷ As both Underwood and Pierce testify, the unusual receptivity of the Koreans toward the gospel has been one of the major factors of the explosive growth of the Korean church.¹³⁸

Several factors have affected the receptivity of the Koreans toward the gospel since the beginning of the Protestant mission in Korea.¹³⁹ In the beginning of the Korean mission, the receptivity of the Koreans toward the gospel was enhanced greatly by the turbulent social conditions at the end of the 19th century, which were fluctuated constantly by the perennial conflicts among the major foreign powers seeking for the dominance of the Korean peninsula, and the lifeless response of the divided, powerless, and irresponsible Korean government in continuing national crises.¹⁴⁰ Hence, the Koreans fell into a profound agony, sorrow, and despair due to the great confusions, hardships, and destructions brought by the continual wars, famine, and anarchy. The painful and turbulent political and social conditions, however, contributed to open the minds and hearts of the Koreans to the influences of the outside world, including Christianity. They caused Korea (then Chosun) to open her hermit kingdom to the outside world for the first time after three hundred years of extreme isolation.¹⁴¹

The dramatic opening of Korea to the outside world provided the newly planted Korean Protestant church with an opportunity for growth. Wasson, one of the pioneer missionaries to Korea, assesses these particular political and social conditions in

terms of the early Korean mission: "The purpose of the missionary is to bring about changes, those changes in the attitudes and institutions of a people which are necessary to that progressive enrichment of life which is commonly called the coming of the Kingdom of God. . . . In other fields of the Orient, the pioneer missionaries labored for decades under almost static social conditions. In Korea the missionaries began work with a people set marching by other forces."¹⁴²

The demand for change toward the Koreans continued from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century. The causes of radical change include the thirty-six years of the brutal colonial occupation of the imperial Japan (1910-1945), the devastating Korean War (1950-1953), and the following acute political and military tensions between South Korea and the North,¹⁴³ the despotic government rule and the rapid economic development of South Korea (1961-1987),¹⁴⁴ and the intense democratization, liberalization, secularization, and pluralization of South Korea (1987 to the present). These events have demanded extreme political, economic, social, cultural, and religious changes on the part of the Korean. These conditions have helped to open their minds and hearts to the message of forgiveness, hope, blessing, freedom, and security promised in the Word of God, but in some cases, especially in the areas of economic revolution and secularizations, these situations have diverted their attention from the gospel to secular objects.¹⁴⁵

The radical change, which the Korean society has experienced since the 1960s, has inflicted both positive and negative effects on the growth of the Korean church. Unlike the western society, which has evolved steadily over several centuries, modern Korean society has been developed rapidly for the last four or five decades. In Korea, industrialization began in 1960s, which spurred the rapid urbanization of the Korean society.

The rapid urbanization helped the country progress economically, but it also contributed to the collapse of the sense of community, loss of identity, and diminishes the sense of human worth in the Korean society¹⁴⁶ People flocked to the cities to get jobs. However, in a new social environment most migrants suffered from estranged feelings, loneliness, constant conflicts between different segments of society, highly competitive environment for the job market, the poor conditions for the education of children, the evil and tempting social environment, and the economic hardships.¹⁴⁷ The military dictatorship and the

ever-increasing political resistance against the dictatorship (1961-1987) made the situation more intense, bleak, and complicated.¹⁴⁸ The inhumane process of urbanization of the time, however, created a deep thirst for the meaning of life and the sense of safety and belonging, which helped to enhance the receptivity of the Koreans toward the gospel and thus provided a strong impetus for the growth of the Korean church.¹⁴⁹

The radical change, which was caused by the rapid process of urbanization under the past dictatorial governments, also has resulted in a serious moral crisis in the Korean society. With the rapid economic development, two and half decades of the secret dealings between the dictatorial government leaders and cunning conglomerates produced a corruptive economic system, which polluted the morality of the Korean society.¹⁵⁰ Even though the dictatorial government collapsed in 1987 and the democratic government has continued to function ever since, the breakdown of morality as a whole has continued or rather intensified in many different ways.¹⁵¹

Prevalent political and economic corruption, ever-increasing crime, extreme individualism, strong collective egoism, rampant secular humanism,¹⁵² the breakdown of family and the third highest divorce rate in the world,¹⁵³ the world's highest suicidal and accidental rate, the dissemination of relativism and religious pluralism,¹⁵⁴ materialism,¹⁵⁵ and ever-deepening sexual immorality¹⁵⁶ were some of the problems modern Korean society experiences.¹⁵⁷ In addition to these problems, the nation is now bent strongly on nationalistic leftism, which is another hindrance to the growth of the Korean church.¹⁵⁸ In the midst of these various social problems, the Koreans are now enjoying the greatest materialistic abundance in their long five thousand years of history despite the present difficult financial situation caused by the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s. The present materialistic abundance is the result of the rapid economic development of the latter part of the past century. In South Korea, per capita GNI was only \$1,598 in 1980, but fifteen years later it reached \$10,823.¹⁵⁹ In such a short period of time, the Koreans achieved one of the greatest financial achievements in the twentieth century—so called “the miracle of the Han River.”

The sudden financial boon, however, did not work favorably for the growth of the Korean church.¹⁶⁰ In the same period of an unprecedented economic expansion in Korean history, the Korean church began to lose its momentum for growth and finally slipped into a prolonged stagnation for about two decades.

Stagnation, however, is not confined to the realm of the Protestant Christianity. It has become a common phenomenon in all of the Korean religious sector although there are some differences among religions in terms of the degree of stagnation.¹⁶¹

Accordingly, it seems certain that the rapid economic development of the Korean society has caused the minds and hearts of the Koreans to be less interested in religion as a whole and less receptive to the gospel message in particular. With the intense democratization and the rapid liberalization of the Korean society, which began in 1987, and the acceleration of the rapid economic development, liberalization, and globalization in the 1980s and 1990s, the traditional values and lifestyles of the Koreans gave way to a new set of values and lifestyles—the highly secularized, pluralized, postmodern culture.¹⁶² The Koreans, who are enjoying an unprecedented political and financial freedom, find ample opportunities to explore various kinds of philosophies, ideas, values, pleasures, and lifestyles, and serve themselves with the materialism of this world and the desires of their flesh.¹⁶³ Many believers, who once were fervent in spirit, are now at ease in Zion and satisfied with living under the shadow of the past glory. Many established churches discourage new people to come to their own churches in order that they might maintain the present condition.¹⁶⁴ The young, who have not experienced bitter persecutions, devastating wars, extreme economic hardships, and the old, who sought desperately for hope, security, and direction in the Word of God in the previous tough times, are now seeking comfort, pleasure, wisdom, and meaning of life in human wisdom, the teachings of the traditional religions, technology and science, education, and secular humanistic and hedonistic culture.¹⁶⁵

The abundant, cultured, urban Korean society at the beginning of the twenty-first century is different vastly from the primitive, poverty-stricken, mostly rural Korean society of 1960s. The peculiar receptiveness toward the gospel, which characterized the Koreans for a long time, has become the legend of the past.¹⁶⁶ Now, the Korean church is ministering in one of the most secularized countries in the world, which expresses a cold, indifferent, even hostile response to the gospel of Christ and the traditional value, morality, and world view of Christianity.¹⁶⁷

The rapid secularization and pluralization of modern Korean society indicate that the Korean church should weather a violent, long-range storm and advance forward against the ever-changing, ferocious cultural tide with skills, necessary adaptation, patience, and wisdom without losing its peculiar strength; namely, simple and solid faith in the authority of the Word of

God, unequaled passion and practice for prayer, great vision and commitment for world mission, dynamic and conservative faith, sacrificial giving and living for ministry, willingness for learning and growth, and fervency in spirit.¹⁶⁸

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NOTES

1. Bong Rin Ro and Marlin L. Nelson, eds., *Korean Church Growth Explosion* (Seoul: Word of Life Press, 1995), 5. The first edition of this book was published in 1983 in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the Korean Protestant church. The question, therefore, was asked more than two decades ago.

2. For the relevant statistical chart, see Appendix A.

3. Byoung Kwan Chung, "The Attempt and Suggestion for the Korean Church Growth," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (November 1997): 67. Chung employs the term "perplexing," which represents the feelings of most Korean church leaders, to describe his view on the present situation of the Korean church.

4. Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization, *Hankuk Kyohoi Mirae Report* (The Future Report of the Korean Church), 311. In Korea, numerous articles and books have been published to give adequate answers to this perplexing question. The concern over the situation, however, is ever deepening. For example, *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology), the foremost journal for the Korean Christian leaders ministering around the world, responded to this perplexing question by publishing eight feature articles on this issue in its January edition of 2005. The *Future Report of the Korean Church* also concludes its report by urging the Korean church to investigate the causes of the stagnation of the Korean church and devise the fundamental measure to meet the situation.

5. See Bong Rin Ro, "The Korean Church: God's Chosen People for

Evangelism," in *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, eds., Bong Rin Ro and Marlin L. Nelson, 12-5; John T. Kim, *Protestant Church Growth in Korea* (Belleville: Essence Publishing, 1996), 91-2; L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea 1832-1910* (Pyeng Yang: Union Christian College Press, 1929), 24-52; Yang-Sun Kim, *Ganchurin Hankuk Kyohois* (Concise History of the Korean Church) (Seoul: The Department of Education of the Korean Presbyterian Council, 1962), 27-9. Prior to the official beginning of the Protestant mission in Korea, Carl Friedrich Augustus Gutzlaff visited Korea in 1832 for the first time as the Protestant missionary and engaged in evangelistic activities for more than forty days by distributing Chinese Bible to the Koreans. In 1865, Rev. Robert J. Thomas, another Protestant missionary, attempted to evangelize the Koreans by distributing Chinese Bible while staying in Korea for two and one-half months, but he faced the martyrdom by the hands of the Koreans he was trying to evangelize. According to Yang-Sun Kim, the first contact with Christianity (in the form of Nestorianism) by the Koreans goes back to the end of the seventh century. This is attributed to Alopein, the Nestorian missionary from Persia, who served in China from 635 to 670. See Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1975), 324.

6. Horace G. Underwood, *The Call of Korea* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1908), 100. Allen was a medical missionary who had once served in China as a missionary before he came to Korea. Upon his arrival in Korea, he saved the life of the queen's nephew, who was critically ill, by his western medical skills. This incident opened a way to start the first western hospital in Korea and helped to earn favor of the royal family and the Korean public for him and Christianity.

7. T. Stanley Soltau, *Korea, The Hermit Nation and Response to Christianity* (New York: World Dominion Press, 1932), 19.

8. Underwood, 5.

9. *Ibid.*, 39. Favorable impressions of the Korean royal family and governmental leaders at the time toward Christianity proves this point. Underwood offers some excellent cases regarding this aspect, including the Korean emperor's view.

10. Paik, 405. Paik argues, "Disappointment, discontent, and disillusionment made the people responsive to the presentation of new ways of life."

11. At the time, China, Japan, and Russia struggled for holding the political hegemony in Korea. America was not involved in that bitter struggle. So, Koreans did not have an anti-American feeling then, which was favorable for the mission of the American missionaries in Korea and the Korean Christians who worked with them closely.

12. Bong Rin Ro, "The Biblical Investigation on the Theory of Church Growth," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (November 1997): 59. For the information on the various Korean religions

observed by the missionary in Korea at the time, see Paik, 16-23.

13. Ro, "The Korean Church: God's Chosen People for Evangelism," in *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, 17-26. Here, Ro gives a full detail of historical, religious, political, and economic factors that contributed to the phenomenal growth of the Korean church in the early days of the Korean mission. See also John Kim, 96.

14. John L. Nevius, *Planting and Development of Missionary Churches* (New York: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1899), 16-35; Charles A. Clark, *The Korean Church and the Nevius Method* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1930), 41-2. The Nevius policy includes: itinerary evangelism of missionaries; self-propagation; self-government; self-support; systematic Bible study for every believer under guidance; strict biblical discipline; cooperation and union with other bodies; non-interference in lawsuit; financial contribution to the needy and the poor.

15. Soltau, 24. Soltau testifies, "The advice given by the Rev. J. L. Nevius, of the American Presbyterian Mission in Shantung, was of supreme importance in the pioneer days of the work." The Nevius policy is not obsolete in the Korean church. It is still adopted and utilized effectively by some growing Korean churches. For information on a specific Korean church which is growing by utilizing this policy, see Suk Young Im, "The Church Is Growing Even in the Rural Area Being Urbanized Rapidly," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (November 1997): 90.

16. Charles Allen Clark, *The Nevius Plan for Mission Work* (Seoul: Christian Literature Society, 1937), 274.

17. William Newton Blair and Bruce F. Hunt, *The Korean Pentecost and the Sufferings Which Followed* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), 78. "The whole Church was washed and made clean and sweet and new," says Blair, who worked in Korea as an American missionary during the great revival. See also James S. Gale, *Korea in Transition* (New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1912), 227-8; Choongang Church, *The 107 years of History of Choongang Church, 1890-1997* (Seoul: Choongang Church, 1998), 32-7. Gale's report shows the enormous impact of the Pyongyang revival upon the numerical growth of the early Korean church: Methodist Episcopal Church grew from 7,796 (1905) to 24,246 (1908) and Presbyterian Church in The U. S. A. grew from 9,756 (1905) to 19,654 (1908). The history of the second oldest Korean Methodist church shows how the revival affected the Korean Methodist denomination and a local Korean Methodist church.

18. Ro, "The Korean Church: God's Chosen People for Evangelism," in *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, 19.

19. Orr, *The Light of the Nations*, 249-50.

20. Harry A. Rhodes, *History of the Korea Mission, Presbyterian*

Church, U. S. A. (Seoul: Chosen Mission Presbyterian Church, 1934), 546-7; C. Peter Wagner and In Yong Park, "Jump into Spiritual Warfare," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (November 1997): 31. Peter Rhodes offers well-arranged statistics for his Presbyterian denomination, which includes the figures between 1896 to 1934. According to Rhodes, "the statistics here given are only for that part of the Korean Presbyterian Church within the bounds of the Mission." The statistics show the growth rate was 1,786 between 1896 (4,800) to 1910 (90,543) whereas only 78 percent between 1910 (90,543) to 1934 (160,864)—the period of the Japanese military control over Korea. It shows that the Japanese brutal control over Korea, with the forcible demand of Japanese Shinto religion to the Koreans and the Korean church, made a very negative impact upon the evangelization of the Korean unbeliever and the growth of the Korean church during the time. Peter Wagner, on the basis of his theory of spiritual warfare, claims that the forcible demand of the Shinto placed upon the Koreans by the Japanese contributed to break the evil spirit (and thus drive out its evil influence), which had dominated the traditional Korea, and thus helped the Koreans to have a spiritual freedom in some sense and open their hearts to the gospel after the Japanese left Korea. Dr. Wagner's claim, however, seems neither biblical nor logical. It is not biblical, on the one hand, since the Scripture says, "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matt 12:26-28). Christ rejects clearly the possibility of Satan's casting out Satan and makes it clear that it is the Spirit of God to cast out demons. On the other hand, Wagner's view on this issue is not logical, since the statistics show that conversion church growth was hampered greatly by the coercion of Shinto. Contrary to Wagner's claim, the coercion of Shinto by the Japanese inflicted upon the Koreans causes a great harm to the Korean church (and thus to the Koreans) by making the Korean church to worship (Shinto) idols and later causing the Korean church to be divided bitterly on the issue after the Japanese left Korea. This writer is convinced that if the Korean church had continued to grow after the great revival of Pyongyang without being intercepted forcibly by the idol-worshippers and warmongers (the Japanese at the time) for almost thirty-five years, the Korean church could have evangelized the nation much faster and deeper and helped to prevent the communist revolution in the northern section of Korea (North Korea). See also Institute for the Korean Religion and Society, *Hankuk Chonggyo Yungam* (Year Book of the Korean Religion), 131. Another statistics for the whole Korean Christian population reported by Institute for the Korean Religion and Society supports the claim of the above statistics by showing that the

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growth rate was slow during the Japanese military control—only 25 percent growth rate between 1915 (267,484) and 1941 (333,490). The growth rate was determined according to the standard formula which determines the annual or the decadal growth rate. cf. Elmer Towns, ed., *Evangelism and Church Growth*, 20.

21. Institute for the Korean Religion and Society, 156, 169. According to the research, the Korean church had 333,490 members in 1939. But, the membership grew to 1,040,114 in 1960, according to the research prepared by Institute for the Korean Religion and Society. It indicates that there was 212 percent growth in the membership of the Korean church between 1939 and 1960.

22. Ro, "The Korean Church: God's Chosen People for Evangelism," in *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, 17-8.

23. For the detailed information on the prayer habit of the Korean church, see Hyuk Kim, 32-83.

24. See Sam-Whan Kim and Yoon-Su Kim, "Church Growth Through Early Dawn Prayer Meetings," in *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, eds., Bong Rin Ro and Marlin L. Nelson, 98; Hyuk Kim, *Hankuk Kyohoi Jaengjum Jindan (The 18 Hot Issues of the Korean Church: Its History and Potentiality)*, 41.

25. *Ibid.*, 98. See also Hyuk Kim, 36-7; Young Han Kim, "The Argument on the Analysis of the Slowdown of the Korean Church and the Measure," in *Hankuk Kyohoi Sungjang Dunhwa Bunsuk-kwa Daechaek (The Analysis of the Slowdown of the Korean Church and the Measure)*, 58; Yong Gyu Park, "Anticipating the 100th Anniversary of the Great Revival Movement at Pyongyang," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (January 2005): 199. Park, professor of church history, avers that the great revival at Pyongyang has been the source of the spiritual vitality of the Korean church and the only alternative to revive the Korean church.

26. See Seung Hee Lee, *Miraesahoe-wa Mirae Kyohoi: 21 Seki Hankuk Kyohoi Mega Trend (Future Society and Future Church: The Mega Trend of the Korean Church in the 21st Century)* (Seoul: Korean Christian Literature Society, 1996), 36-7; Clark, 81-2.

27. Underwood, 108, 114-6.

28. Alfred W. Wasson, *Church Growth in Korea* (New York: International Missionary Council, 1934), 51-4.

29. Rhodes, 86-90.

30. See Harry A. Rhodes and Archibald Campbell, *History of the Korea Mission*, eds., Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. vol. II, 1935-1959 (New York: Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, The United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., 1964), 262-80; Ro, "The Biblical Investigation on the Theory of Church Growth," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (November 1997): 58.

31. *Ibid.*, 320-52.

32. See also Seung Hoon, "Korean Style of Pastoral Leadership and Church Growth," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (November 1997): 62-6; John Kim, 182-5; Lee, 31-3; Ro, "The Korean Church: God's Chosen People for Evangelism," in *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, 27; Ro, "The Biblical Investigation on the Theory of Church Growth," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (November 1997): 58. Ro describes the typical Korean pastor's everyday life: "The pastor gets up 4:00 in the morning for the pre-dawn prayer meeting in his church and works all day in the church until late evening." The price for Korean pastor's extreme commitment to ministry, however, is costly. Lee argues that the side effect of overwork experienced by many Korean pastors includes ill health, the breakdown of relationship and family, and even early death.

33. Institute for the Korean Christian Culture, 241. The first Korean Christians, who were baptized in Manchuria by the western missionaries, began to evangelize their nation through the distribution of the gospels they translated even before the western missionaries officially began their mission in Korea. See also Wasson, 27. Wasson describes the various evangelistic efforts at the outset of the Korean mission: "Through their own lips as they went up and down the country, through employed native assistants, colporteurs, and Bible-women, through the voluntary preaching of unpaid native workers, and through the sale of books and the distribution of tracts, the missionaries told the same story over and over again." See also Clark, 114-5. Clark describes the intense itinerary works of the missionaries in the beginning of the Korean mission.

34. Blair and Hunt, 78.

35. Soltau, 29-33.

36. Wasson, 60. According to Wasson, personal witnessing and the distribution of hundreds of thousands of tracts and copies of the Gospel to unbelievers were some of the main methods of evangelism at the time. See also Institute for the Korean Christian Culture, 245-8.

37. John Kim, 182-191. For the statistical information, see Appendix A and B.

38. Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization, *Hankuk Kyohoi Mirae Report (The Future Report of the Korean Church)* (Seoul: Tyrannus Press, 2005), 240. Refer to Appendix A and B. According to the research, 83 percent of the respondents, who were approached by the believer of a certain religion for the purpose of outreach for the past one year, said that it was the Protestant Christians that approached to them, while 12.3 percent of the respondents said it was the Roman Catholics and 5.5 percent of the respondents said that it was the Buddhists that approached to them. It indicates that the evangelism of the Korean Protestants is still very active.

39. Paik, 284. Paik explains why evangelism through the family is

effective in Korea on the basis of the homogeneous unit principle.

40. See Jay Kwon Kim, "The Impact of Mass Communications," in *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, 132-55; Institute for the Korean Christian Culture, 247-8.

41. Clark, 129-30.

42. John Kim, 189-91.

43. See Wasson, 55-9; John Kim, 156-61.

44. Underwood, 100-4. Underwood explains how effectively medical work helped open the door for evangelism in Korea. See also Paik, 318-26.

45. John Kim, 161-5.

46. Institute for the Korean Christian Culture, 251.

47. See Lee, 33-5; Bong-Ho Son, "Some Dangers of Rapid Church Growth," in *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, 259; Won Kyu Lee, *Hankuk Kyohoi-eui Hyunshil-kwa Chunmang (The Reality and the Prospect of the Korean Church)* (Seoul: Scripture Research Press), 189-92; Getz, *Sharpening the Focus of the Church*, 22-3; McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 34, 44. To this writer, the principles and strategies advocated by the Church Growth Movement overall has made a positive contribution to the Korean church growth in modern times, as the Nevius policy did the same for the Korean church growth in the early days of the Korean church. In contrast to this writer's viewpoint, Bong-Ho Son's evaluation is more negative than positive in its perspective on the influence of the Church Growth Movement over the Korean church: "In spite of some positive contributions it has made in other parts of the world, church growth theology has done more harm than good to Korean churches in general." To this writer, Bong-Ho Son's criticism needs to be understood in a different perspective. That is, the negative impact of the Church Growth Movement on the Korean church comes largely from the misunderstanding, misuse, and abuse of its teachings by the Korean church, although admitting the teachings and directions of the Church Growth Movement has its own flaws and weaknesses. This way of understanding matches well with Getz's cautious but positive comment on the Church Growth Movement: "However, these men and many inspired by them are having a significant and continual influence on churches and Christian leaders. What they are saying cannot and should not be ignored. Keen insights from culture and sophisticated research methodology make this movement commendable, particularly in terms of helping reach more people for Christ." Bong-Ho Son's overly critical evaluation on church growth shows that he does not tune his view to the mainstream view on church growth: "Neo-Pythagoreanism, as I call the worship of numbers in modern society, has been reinforced by the introduction of the theological pseudo science called church growth which is developed and propagated by the Fuller Theological Seminary

School of World Mission in Pasadena, California." Unlike Bong-Ho Son's baseless criticism, the emphasis on numbers in the Church Growth Movement is not based upon so-called "Neo-Pythagoreanism" or "the theological pseudo science," but on McGavran's "theology of harvest," which stresses the end (not just the act) of the proclamation of the gospel. McGavran identifies this end with "that men—multitudes of them—be reconciled with God in Christ." In other words, to McGavran, the end of evangelism is the concrete number of the saved: "The revelation of God throughout assumes that the numbers of the redeemed do count. It believes, for example, that as 'grace extends to more and more people,' thanksgiving to the glory of God increases (II Cor. 4:15 [sic])." Italics in original. McGavran's emphasis on numbers is biblically based. Therefore, the emphasis on numbers in the Church Growth Movement in this sense should not be identified with the irrelevant philosophical term like "Neo-Pythagoreanism" or the unfit pejorative language like "the theological pseudo science."

48. James Dale and Van Buskirk, *Korea: Land of the Dawn* (New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1931), 117-8. The authors argue: "But the Korean script did make for greater literacy than existed in neighboring countries, and when Christianity took up the script and fostered its use, the people readily learned to read. Probably ninety per cent [sic] of the men and fifty per cent [sic] of the women in north Korea learned to read; in South Korea the proportion was probably not more than half as great." See also Clark, 82-3.

49. Lee, 37-9.

50. Dale and Buskirk, 118-42.

51. Ro, "The Korean Church: God's Chosen People for Evangelism," in *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, 32-4.

52. Young Jae Kim, "An Approach from the Korean Church History," in *Hankuk Kyohoi Sungjang Dunhwa Bunsuk-kwa Daechaek* (The Analysis of Slowdown in the Growth of the Korean Church and the Measure), 242; Clark, 124. Clark describes the Korean believer's passion and commitment for Bible study as follows: "Christians have learned that it is only right to put aside their occupations for several weeks each year for special study of the Word of God."

53. Sam-Whan Kim and Yoon-Su Kim, 96-100. The authors describe how the tiny little church of twenty-five members has grown to a megachurch of thirty-thousand members in just ten years through fervent and consistent pre-dawn prayer meeting.

54. *Ibid.*, 96-100. See Bob Pierce and Ken Anderson, *The Untold Korea Story* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1951), 10. Pierce and Anderson wrote, "That church was born in revival. Unlike so many of the churches in Japan, it was not educated into Christianity but was born through a spiritual awakening."; Clark, 162-5. Clark describes the strong

tradition of revival works of the Korean church.

55. Lee, 33-4. Lee argues that the teachings of the Church Growth Movement has impacted significantly the growth of the Korean church.

56. See John Han Hum Oak, *Healthy Christians Make a Healthy Church*, with a foreword by Rick Warren (Seoul: DMI Press, 2001): 276-81; E. Cairns, *An Endless Life of Splendors* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1986), 202. Cairns points out that this policy encouraged the participation of the laity in ministry, "These principles, which were followed in China and Korea, were intended to produce indigenous, self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing churches. . . . The laity was to be trained by life and word to witness. . . . Bible class teaching, Sunday observance, and scriptural discipline were to be the tasks of the elders under a simple church government."

57. Soltau, 90.

58. See John Oak, 271-5, 328-30; David Yonggi Cho and John W. Hurston, "Ministry Through Home Cell Units," in *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, 111-31; Lee, 33.

59. As quoted by Young Han Kim, 31-2. Kim took this information from the most prominent daily newspaper in Korea (*Chosunilbo*) published in 1993. See also Seung Hee Lee, "Pastor's Credit Should Be Restored," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (July 2000): 258-9. According to Lee, a certain bank rejects to issue its credit card to clergy, and the city library lends books to Buddhist priests but not to pastors because of the lack of credibility.

60. See Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization, *Hankuk Kaeshingyoin-eui Kyohoi Hwaldong-kwa Shinang Euishik* (The Church Activity and the Consciousness of the Faith of the Korean Protestant, 117; Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization, *Hankuk Kyohoi Mirae Report* (The Future Report of the Korean Church) (Seoul: Tyrannus Press, 2005), 233.

61. Sam Yul Park, "The Level of the Recognition of the Korean Protestant Christians on the Renewal and Revival of the Korean Church," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (April 2004): 169. In a recent research, the Korean Christians (12.7 percent of the participants of the research) pointed out the renewal of the integrity and spirituality of the Korean pastor as the second most important factor in reforming the Korean church. This indicates that the evaluation on Korean pastor's integrity and spirituality is not much favorable in the Korean church as well. For the critical view on the pastoral leadership of the Korean-American churches, See also Kwang Chul Park, "Immigrant Church, Is It All Right?" *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (January 2000): 159-60. According to Park's evaluation, the leadership quality of the Korean-American church is similar to the one of the Korean church.

62. Korean Broadcasting System, *Hankuk Sahoi-rul Malhanda: Sunkyo 120 Junyun, Hankuk Kyohoi-nun Whiki-inga?* (120 Years of

Mission, Is the Korean Church in Crisis?) (Seoul: KBS, 2004 [on-line]); accessed 2 October, 2004; available from <http://www.kbs.co.kr>, Internet. Korean Broadcasting System, which is the most influential public media in Korea possessed and operated by the Korean government, pointed out the positive and negative influences of the Korean church over the Korean society. However, the tone was more negative than positive as the title of the program suggests implicitly. Thousands of conservative Korean church leaders protested strongly against the broadcasting of this program since they were convinced that it was motivated politically to disclose the dark side of the Korean church and bring discredit on the Korean conservative churches. See also Sam Yul Park, "The Korean Church After 10 Years from the Perspective of Hope," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (January 2005): 88-91; Director Myoung Soo Kim of Discipleship Training International, Interview by author, 5 July, 2000. Seoul, personal note, 21st Century Church Growth Institute, Fort Worth; Dong Min Jang, "Discern the Present Age," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (January 2005): 50; Young Han Kim, 31-2; Jerry Falwell, Falwell, *An Autobiography* (Lynchburg: Liberty House Publishers, 1997), 474. Dr. Falwell describes how the PTL scandal caused the national credibility problem for media ministries and created a financial havoc in his ministry. Likewise, the broadcasting of the several scandals related to prominent Korean Christians and church leaders caused the national credibility problem for the Korean church and had a very negative effect on the Korean church.

63. See Jung Gil Hong, "A Thought on the Succession of the Office of Senior Pastor," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (November 2000): 266-7; Sam Yul Park, "The Korean Church After 10 Years, From the Perspective of Hope," 88-91; Jum Sik Ahn, "The Marks of the Non-Christian Worldview in the Korean Church," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (October 2000): 78-9 (74-84); Jang, 46, 50. According to Jang, this problem is one of the major reasons to provoke the Korean young people to leave the church. Ahn argues that authoritarianism in the Korean church makes this kind of succession prevalent in the Korean church. This kind of succession is found also in American churches, but it does not create the same kind of intense controversy in American churches. For more discussion on why it is so controversial in Korea, see footnote 130 in this article.

64. See Sam Yul Park, "The Korean Church After 10 Years from the Perspective of Hope," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (January 2005): 88-91; Young Han Kim, 27-8; Korean Broadcasting System, "Daehyung Khohoe Shindo-kiri Muryuk Chungdol" (Physical Clash Between the Two Sides of a Mega-Church), in *News Plaza* (Seoul: KBS, 2005 [on-line]); accessed 28 June, 2005; available from <http://www.kbs.co.kr>, Internet. Korean Broadcasting System reported that physical clash occurred between the two sides of a Korean mega-church

due to the conflict on the succession of the office of senior pastor, which continued for one and half year. According to the report, the elder pastor and his followers piled up huge containers along by the church building, and the newly appointed pastor and his supporters clashed against policemen, broke the facilities of the church with stone and sticks, and expelled the old side. The reporter said that the clash was like a fight between street gangs. KBS videotaped the clash and released it through one of its most popular news programs. This incident may cause considerable damage to the Korean church.

65. Jang, 50.

66. See Young Han Kim, 23-4; Bong-Ho Son, "Some Dangers of Rapid Church Growth," in *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, 268.

67. See Young Han Kim, 31; Ahn, 80.

68. Young Han Kim, 31-2.

69. See Lee, 58-60; Byung In Ko, "The Present Condition of the Stress and Burnout of the Korean Pastor," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (November 2004): 154-61; Jong Ho Park, "The Tough Daily Life of the (Korean) Pastor Cannot Be Sustained," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (August 2004): 96-101; Sam Yul Park, "The Level of Understanding of the Korean Pastor on Ministry," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (September 2004): 147. According to the research conducted in 2004, 72 percent of the Korean pastor, who participated in the research, said that they have experienced burnout. Park describes how Korean pastors are compelled to be a workaholic person due to the strong influence of the workaholic Korean society and the demanding members of the church. He also points out that Korean pastors have become more busy than before since the busy contemporary lifestyle, competition, and the demand for professionalization and diversification add more weight on the unique ministerial tradition of the Korean church, which makes Korean pastors awfully busy from early in the morning till night.

70. See Bong-Ho Son, 264; Ahn, 75-6; Jong Gi Min, 65-6; In Korea, clericalism is interwound closely with Shamanistic concept on medicine man. According to Bong-Ho Son, "Once a Shamanistic practice gains entry, various other Shamanistic influences quickly rush into churches. Pastors are, for example, looked upon and treated almost as Shamans by many new believers rather than as spiritual leaders who teach them the Word of God." The following discussion on "Shamanizing Christianity" deals with this matter in detail.

71. See Young Han Kim, 14-5, 21-2; Bong-Ho Son, 262-3; Jong Gi Min, "Liquidate Kibok Shinang in the Church," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (December 1999): 73; Jin Hong Kim, "The Long Shadow of Kibok Shinang in the Church," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (December 1999): 66. Bong-Ho Son identifies Shamanistic preaching with "the excessive emphasis in sermons on the be-

liever's earthly blessings." In Korea, prosperity theology is interwound closely with Shamanistic belief system. Often, biblical concept of blessing is replaced by the Shamanistic concept of blessing—"Bok," which is secular, worldly, materialistic, egoistic, and often amoral by nature. Jin Hong Kim, who is a critical thinker and prominent reform-minded Korean pastor, calls those "pseudo evangelists," who seduce and steal the members of other churches with this kind of Shamanistic teaching, "Moodang" ("Shaman" in Korean).

72. See Jung Eun Kim and In Hwan Kim, "The Way the Church Should Choose Is 'Back to the Bible.'" *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (May 2005): 47; Jun Min Kang, "The Korean Church Should Pursue Spirituality," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (November 1997): 168-71. Jung Eun Kim, president of one of the most prominent seminaries in Korea, points out the leadership quality of the Korean church is one of the major causes for the stagnation of the Korean church. He indicates that a major contributing factor to this situation is the lack of preparation produced by the seminaries by saying that the cause of the stagnation of the Korean church is seminary. If the Korean seminaries, he asserts, can train leaders who are excellent in intellect, spirituality, and character, the problem of the stagnation of the Korean church will be resolved. Although this may be overstated, it does surface one of the problems of theological education in Korea. See also Lynne and Bill Hybels, *Rediscovering Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 193. To Hybels, leadership is the primary cause of stagnation of the church: "It's my conviction that the crisis of mediocrity and stagnation in today's churches is fundamentally a crisis of leadership."

73. Bong-Ho Son, 271. See also Seung Soo Kwon, Chang Sam Yang, and Man Yul Lee, *Kyohoi Seung Jang Iyaki* (Lectures on Church Growth), 46-57; Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization, *Hankuk Kyohoi Mirae Report* (The Future Report of the Korean Church), 306; Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization, *Hankuk Kaeshingyoin-eui Kyohoi Hwaldong-kwa Shinang Euishik* (The Church Activity and the Consciousness of the Faith of the Korean Protestants), 150. The research shows that 59,474 Korean pastors and 5,194 Korean missionaries (in 2004) are serving the Korean churches and other ethnic churches around the world. The data in the research, however, contain the data which came from only twenty-one Korean Protestant denominations. Thus, the number of the Korean pastors and missionaries will increase if the data contain every available data that come from all Korean Protestant denominations. The data also show that the number of the Korean pastors (39,838 in 1997) and missionaries (3,469 in 1997) grew 47.9 percent from 1997 to 2004. The research also show that the Korean church grew only 0.9 percent in number from 1998 to 2004. This means that the Korean church grew disproportionately in this period. The meaning of this disproportionate growth of the Korean church in the period seems

to support Bong-Ho Son's argument on the necessity of qualified leaders for the Korean church.

74. *Ibid.*, 261. Bong-Ho Son, who is a scholar and reform-minded preacher, seems to coin this term. For discussion on Shamanizing Christianity, see Kwang Ho Lee, "The Reality of the Spreading Shamanistic Belief," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (January 1998): 45-51. Lee argues that the Korean church is influenced much by Shamanism and many Korean church leaders use Shamanism to increase their influence in ministry. Chang Doo Huh, "Teach the Believer Embracing the Shamanistic Belief System This Way," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (January 1998): 90-3.

75. Jin Hong Kim, 61-3.

76. Young Jae Kim, "The Functional Relationship Between Kibok Shinang of the Korean Church and Church Growth," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (December 1999): 74. The author defines Kibok Shinang as "the faith that seeks blessing with the understanding of blessing which does not come from the biblical concept of blessing." Several Korean writers identify Kibok Shinang—part of Shamanistic belief system—with Shamanism itself in their writings since it is the most distinct feature of Shamanism.

77. Jin Hong Kim, 63.

78. Young Jae Kim, "The Functional Relationship Between Kibok Shinang of the Korean Church and Church Growth," 74.

79. See Sang Chul Moon, "Gospel, Worldview, Change," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (October 2000): 90; Seung Hee Lee and Moon Sik Lee, "An Expectation for the Korean Church That Will Approach Ten Years Later," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (January 2005): 36-7; Young Jae Kim, 76; Myoung Hyuk Kim, 22-3. According to Moon, prosperity theology embraced by many Korean Christians reflects confusion, which was caused by rapid industrialization, in the Korean church. He asserts that prosperity theology based on materialism is a serious distorted phenomenon of the worldview, which does not follow the biblical ideal but makes faith a means. According to Moon, growth without maturity represents a distorted form of Christianity. Church growth loses its meaning if the believer does not embrace the Christian worldview. Church growth is limited without establishing the Christian worldview. Thus, Moon insists that if the Korean church wants to grow and extend its mission continually, its evangelism and ministry should come to the point to touch the worldview.

80. See Moon Jang Lee, "How to Understand the Tendency of Kibok Shinang of the Koreans," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (December 1999): 59; Jong Gi Min, 69; Young Jae Kim, 77; Jin Hong Kim, 65; Bong-Ho Son, 261.

81. Bong-Ho Son, 263.

82. There is a clear distinction between cultural adaptation and

worldly accommo-dation. See Donald McGavran, "A Church for Every People: Plain Talk About a Difficult Subject," *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* (Fall 1998): 46. McGavran makes it clear that there should be a distinction between cultural adaption and moral, spiritual separation: "Encourage converts to remain thoroughly one with their own people in most matters. Please note that word 'most.' They cannot remain one with their people in idolatry, or drunkenness or obvious sin." As McGavran says, there should be a clear distinction between cultural adaptation and worldly accommodation. Cultural adaptation produces effective evangelism, but worldly accommodation results in spiritual fall. For more discussion on worldly accommodation, see Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical Disaster* (Westchester: Crossway Books, 1984), 36-8. For the critical arguments on this issue, which are valid and sensible, see Gary McIntosh, ed., *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 61; Os Guinness and John Seel, *No God But God* (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 157. To Gailyn Van Rheen, who represents a reformist's perspective, in the end moral and spiritual separation of the believer determines the effectiveness of evangelistic impact: "Great growth gained using the seeker model will dwindle unless these churches become distinctive, counter-cultural communities of faith." Guinness also argues, "But Scripture and history are also clear: Without employing critical tension, the principle of identification is a recipe for compromise and capitulation. . . . If the process of becoming 'all things to all people' is to remain faithful to Christ, it has to climax in clear persuasion and genuine conversion." To refer the perspectives of the seeker church leaders, see Ed Dobson, "When Foundations Tremble," *Leadership* (Spring 1993): 136; James Emery White, "Why Seekers Come to Church," *Leadership* (Summer 1998): 52. On the one hand, Dobson, who pastors a seeker-sensitive church, makes a sobering remark on the methodology the seeker-sensitive churches employ: "I must admit that at times I wonder if the culture has infiltrated the way we do outreach. People are coming to Christ, but at times I wonder how much of what we are doing is influenced by the spirit of the age." On the other hand, White, who also pastors a seeker-sensitive church, argues that the seeker churches grow due to their uncompromising message: "In a flourishing seeker-targeted church, you will hear every bit as much, if not more, discussion of sin, heaven, hell, the cross, repentance, commitment, and sacrifice as you will in any other model." To refer the position which combines both the critical and the incarnational point of views on this issue, see also Eddie Gibbs, *Church Next* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 221-3.

83. Jong Gi Min, 70.

84. See Moon Jang Lee, 57-9; Jong Gi Min, 70-1; Young Jae Kim, 75-6; Jin Hong Kim, 63-6; Bong-Ho Son, 261-4.

85. Jin Hong Kim, 65. See also Jong Gi Min, 70. The term the Korean

church does not necessarily mean every Korean church. Inarguably, some Korean churches oppose strongly “Shamanizing Christianity” and keep the pure forms of Christianity and the New Testament church. However, “Shamanizing Christianity” is still a formidable threat to every Korean church since it is surrounded by the sea of strong Shamanistic influence.

86. *Ibid.*, 65. See also Jong Gi Min, 70-1.

87. *Ibid.*, 65. See also Seung Soo Kwon, Chang Sam Yang, and Man Yul Lee, *Kyohoi Seung Jang Iyaki (Lectures on Church Growth)*, 234; Jong Gi Min, 72.

88. *Ibid.*, 65.

89. Moon Jang Lee, 59.

90. Jong Gi Min, 71-2.

91. *Ibid.*, 71-2.

92. *Ibid.*, 71-2.

93. *Ibid.*, 71-2.

94. *Ibid.*, 40, 42. Both presidents, who are leading two of the most influential and the largest seminaries in Korea, say that the core of the problem of the Korean church is that the spiritual growth of the believer is slow. In Hwan Kim asserts that the appearance of the Korean church looks great, but its inside is considerably unstable and shallow. Both men insist that the Korean church should shift its focus from the building projects to building leadership.

95. Interestingly enough, the majority of the Korean churches, including some Korean Southern Baptist, adopt a Presbyterian form of church government (It is well known that the majority of Baptist churches around the world adopt a congregational form of church government). Thus, it can be inferred that the structural problem of the Korean Presbyterian church is shared by other Korean churches which adopt the similar form of church government the Korean Presbyterian church has. Even some Korean churches, which do not have the Presbyterian form of church government, cannot avoid the influence of this Korean ecclesiastical structure. Young-Sik Noh, a Korean pastor and previous president of the Southern Baptist Seminary in Los Angeles, describes how his church plunged into a sudden conflict and experienced a painful turmoil when some influential lay people, who have different denominational backgrounds, challenged the pastor to adopt the Presbyterian form of church government. According to Noh, the conflict ended tragically after nine out of twelve deacons left the church. For more discussion, see Young-Sik Noh, *What Is the Problem of Korean Church Government* (Tae Jon, Korea Baptist Theological University/Seminary Publication Department, 1999), 25-37. One of the main reasons for the Korean’s preferring the Presbyterian form of church government is that for several thousand years Korean culture has embraced a horizontal, authoritative political and social structure, which is

the cultural product of the agrarian society and Confucianism. However, the radical change in the fabric of the Korean society and culture, which has been developed rapidly for the last five decades, is demanding revolutionary change in political, social, and ecclesiastical structures, and this strong desire for change is causing conflict and turmoil in modern Korean society and church. Another major reason for the Korean's preferring the Presbyterian form of church government comes from the fact that the majority of the Korean Christians consists of the Presbyterians. According to a recent report based on the statistics given by several Korean Protestant denominations, 62.5 percent of the Korean Christians are the Presbyterians. For a statistical information on the issue, see Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization, *Hankuk Kyohoi Mirae Report (The Future Report of the Korean Church)* (Seoul: Tyrannus Press, 2005), 305. For the Korean elder's perspective on the Korean's preference of the Presbyterian form of church government, see Young Il Im, "An Investigation on the Problem of the Presbyterian Form of Church Government," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (March 2000): 166. Im argues that the traditional Presbyterian form of church government should be reformed since the Presbyterian form of church government was fit for the Korean society dominated by Confucianism, not for modern Korean society which is no longer dominated by Confucianism. See also, Moon Jang Lee, "The Koreans, the Korean Church and the Problem of the Christian Worldview," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (October 2000): 71; Ahn 79-82; Moon, 89-90; Jung Eun Kim and In Hwan Kim, 40. Lee asserts that the Korean Christians identify the offices of the church, such as pastor, elder, Gwonsa (the highest office of lay women in the Korean church), and deacon, with the class or caste of the traditional Korean society, which was dominated by Confucianism. Hence, according to Lee, it is not easy to teach servant leadership, which was exemplified by Jesus, to the Korean Christians. Ahn and Lee aver that Confucianism, which stresses the importance of making a name, makes the Korean Christians embrace servanthood difficult. They offer a partial explanation on why the relationship between the pastor and the elder or between the elder and the deacon is not smooth in the Korean church.

96. Pastor Association for Church Renewal, "The Political Structure of the Korean Presbyterian Church Should Be Prepared for the Future," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (August 1997): 129-31. The research was conducted in the Hapdong Presbyterian denomination—the most conservative and the largest denomination in the Korean Presbyterian church. Sixty-eight percent of the Korean Presbyterian pastors who participated in the research said that the present structure, which is horizontal and authoritative, is not desirable, and 40 percent of the Korean Presbyterian Pastors maintained that the Presbyterian church's structure should be changed. In conclusion, the research states

that the tradition of the Presbyterian church needs to be changed. See also Lee Gyu Tae, *The Consciousness of the Koreans* (Seoul: Shinwon Press, 1995), 36-8. Lee asserts that the Koreans are "the slaves of the hierarchical mentality." This traditional mentality, however, is in transition, especially among the young Koreans and the Koreans living in North America and Europe, which is reflected in the response of the respondents.

97. *Ibid.*, 131.

98. Sam Yul Park, "The Level of the Recognition of the Korean Protestant Christians on the Renewal and Revival of the Korean Church," 171-2. According to the research, 38.7 percent of the respondents identified Christians' earnest spiritual desire and effort based on faith with the most important factor in terms of reviving the Korean Church.

99. Dong Ho Kim, *Saengsa-rul Kun Kyohoi Kaehyuk* (Desperate Church Reform) (Seoul: Kyuchang, 1999), 20.

100. Pastor Association for Church Renewal, 131. For renewing the Korean church, 40 percent of the pastors propose the utilization of a board operated by the laity, 32 percent of the pastors suggest to put the credence of the elder to the vote, and 15 percent of the pastors make a proposal of operating a system to require the elder to have the sabbatical year.

101. Young Han Kim, 27.

102. Dong Ho Kim, 23-4.

103. *Ibid.*, 24-5.

104. *Ibid.*, 27-8. Kim's reform idea includes the following. First, the retirement age of those who hold office in the church, including the pastor and the elder, should be reduced from seventy to sixty-five. Second, the pastor and the elder should make an appeal to the confidence of the whole church after they serve the church for six years. They can resume their ministries only after they earn the confidence of the church. Third, the elder cannot become the head of the department operated by the conference of the deacon and the Gwonsa (the highest office of lay woman in the Korean church). Danghoi, which consists of the pastor and the elder, establishes the policy and the budget of the church and monitor the activities of Jejikhoi, which consists of the deacon and the Gwonsa. See also Young Il Im, 162-9. Although Im argues from the perspective of the elder, he shares the same kind of reform idea Dong Ho Kim proposes.

105. *Ibid.*, 25. See also Young Il Im, 162-9. Although Im argues from the perspective of the elder, he shows the same kind of conviction and urgency Dong Ho Kim has. Im, who is now serving a Korean-American Presbyterian church as an elder, predicts that the Korean Presbyterian church will follow the declining pattern of the American Presbyterian church if it does not reform its church government.

106. Jung Suk Lee, "There Is No Future for the Secularized

Church," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (January 2005): 54-5.

107. Young Han Kim, 27.

108. McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth*, 9. The term "biblical church growth" is borrowed from the title of McIntosh's book, which was dedicated to Donald A. McGavran, since the term and meaning McIntosh confers to this term matches well with the point of this writer's claim in this article. Dr. McIntosh explains what biblical church growth means: "He (McGavran) coined the term church growth as a synonym for effective evangelism, which he believed include winning converts to Christ and helping them become responsible members of local congregations. . . I use the word biblical to make the point that, contrary to popular opinion, church growth is not based on sociology, marketing, or demographics. Church growth is a biblical concept, exploding from the life-giving nature of God."

109. Towns, ed., *Evangelism and Church Growth*, 120.

110. See Seung Soo Kwon, Chang Sam Yang, and Man Yul Lee, 153-4; Seung Hee Lee and Moon Sik Lee, 36-7; Ahn, 80. Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization, *Hankuk Kyohoi Mirae Report* (The Future Report of the Korean Church), 262. According to Ahn, this materialistic perspective is pervasive among the Korean Christians since the Koreans have the mentality to value success, which is the product of Shamanism and Confucianism, and the result without considering the due process. Moon Sik Lee also avers that one of the major problems of the Korean church is that the Korean church values too much on external things such as the scale of ministry, quantitative growth, earthly, secular, and materialistic blessings. He takes prosperity theology, the rapid Korean economic development in the latter part of the twentieth century, and Shamanism as the main causes of the materialization of Korean Christianity. According to the research, 25.5 percent of the Korean Protestant Christians (25.3 percent of non-Protestants) points out that the Korean church is inclined too much to the quantitative expansion and the external things. They point out the materialization of the church as the first and the greatest problem the Korean church is facing today.

111. Leadership, "An Interview with Rick Warren," *Leadership* (Summer 1997), 25. Warren does not assert this in an absolute tone since he says, "The percentage of members being mobilized for ministry and missions is a more reliable indicator of health than how many people attend services." *Ibid.*, 24. See Schwarz, 20; In *Natural Church Development*, Schwarz also admits that "quantitative growth in a church (size as well as growth rate) could be measured with a certain degree of accuracy." See also David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 119. Hesselgrave also avers, "In most situations numerical growth is an indicator of spiritual growth. But it is not the only indicator. It is important to realize that qualitative

growth is measurable in ways other than taking a head count (or making up a financial report)!"

112. Bong-Ho Son, 259.

113. *Ibid.*, 258.

114. *Ibid.*, 266-8. For example, the author says, "Once a newspaper reported that in one building in Seoul more than ten new congregations were competing with each other."

115. *Ibid.*, 266-7. The author discusses this improper conduct in the following perspective: "In order to increase church membership and the size of offerings, many churches accept members from other congregations without asking for any letter of recommendation. . . . Thus, any member being disciplined by one church can join another congregation and participate in the Lord's Supper without any problem. . . . The purity of the church is being seriously endangered for the sake of numerical growth."

116. *Ibid.*, 262. The author asserts, "Some Shamanistic elements are very effectively used [sic] by the Christian churches mostly without fully realizing their origin, in order to attract more people."

117. See Seung Hee Lee, *Miraesahoe-wa MiraeKyohoi: 21 Seki Hankuk Kyohoi Mega Trend (Future Society and Future Church: The Mega Trend of the Korean Church in the 21st Century)*, 50-1; Jin Hong Kim, 63; Moon Jang Lee, 58. Seung Hee Lee takes this amoral pragmatic mentality as one of the psychological characteristics of the Koreans and one of the "pathological problems" of the Korean church. The Korean's amoral pragmatic mentality must have come from Shamanistic thinking, which is self-centered, practical, amoral, and pragmatic, as Moon Jang Lee points out.

118. *Ibid.*, 51.

119. *Ibid.*, 51.

120. *Ibid.*, 51.

121. Bong-Ho, Son, 262-1.

122. Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization, *Hankuk Kyohoi Mirae Report (The Future Report of the Korean Church)*, 233. See also Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization, *Hankuk Kaeshingyoin-eui Kyohoi Hwaldong-kwa Shinang Euishik (The Church Activity and the Consciousness of the Faith of the Korean Protestants)*, 117. The statistical difference in the two different researches, which were conducted by the same organizations in 1998 and 2004 respectively, indicates that the Korean church has progressed in its attempt to improve its image in the Korean society. The task of improving its image, however, is very challenging since the respondents gave a much favorable evaluation to Catholics (25.7 percent) and Buddhists (34.8 percent).

123. *Ibid.*, 233. See also Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization, *Hankuk*

Kaeshingyoin-eui Kyohoi Hwaldong-kwa Shinang Euishik (The

Church Activity and the Consciousness of the Faith of the Korean Protestants), 117.

124. Byoung Kwan Chung, 68. Chung identifies the cause of the stagnation and decline of the Korean church with the fact that the Korean church has pursued excessively numerical growth for a long time, while relying on sporadic and superficial methods rather than a principle or a system.

125. Vergil Gerber, *God's Way to Keep a Church Going & Growing* (Glendale: Regal, 1973), 15-6. Gerber avers, "In the New Testament evangelistic effectiveness is a quality that is constantly measured in quantitative terms. Precise figures are given regarding the number of professions of faith (quantity). These are always based upon those who follow on, are baptized and continue in the Apostle's doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers (quality). Just as faith without works is dead, so spiritual growth in the New Testament is frequently expressed in terms of quantities. This is possible because quality and quantity are two aspects of the same reality."

126. Schwarz, 14. The meaning of term comes from Schwarz's concept of spiritualist. Schwarz defines the term "spiritualistic paradigm" as follows: "The significance of institutions, programs, methods, etc. is underestimated." This definition implies those who embrace spiritualistic paradigm underestimate institutional goals; therefore, they also underestimate the quantifiable aspect of church growth.

127. Suh Ku Cho, "Church Growth Is Not Good Enough," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (November 1997): 85-8. In this article, the author discusses the heavy burden and stresses Korean pastors experience in terms of their responsibilities to grow a church. He avers that the pastor needs to grow first in spirituality and character before he is fit to grow a church. He also asserts that the church, the Christian media, the Christian journals for the pastor should release the pastor from the burden of church growth and help him to grow first in order for him to be fit to grow a church. Cho's argument that the pastor needs to grow first in order for him to fit to grow a church is right, but he does not relate church growth to the essence of conversion church growth—the increase of the convert (the saved), not just the church goer. If Cho had been convinced that church growth means the very work the apostle Paul carried out throughout his life in the midst of much sufferings, burdens, stress, and great personal sacrifice, and that the numerical increase—not just for the number's sake but for the sake of the conversion of the lost—has profound spiritual meaning, he would have never complained the burden and stress the pastor experience in growing a church in such a way he did in this article and thus would have written his article in a totally different way. See also Bong-Ho Son, 257. Bong-Ho Son criticizes sharply the materialistic view, secular value, and the Shamanistic tendency of the Korean church. He, however, differen-

tiates himself from other critics, who uphold the qualitative aspect of church growth at the expense of the quantitative aspect of church growth, by maintaining a balanced view on the dynamics between the qualitative and the quantitative aspect of church growth. His following statement reveals his sense of balance on the issue: "Quantitative church growth is an indispensable requirement for countries like Korea where the majority of the population is still unevangelized. If a church does not aim at increasing her membership as a major goal, she is not healthy. . . . My criticisms, therefore, were by no means intended to discourage the Korean Christians from further efforts in evangelism or to keep Christians in other countries from learning from Korea's example. I would be the last to complain about the growth. On the contrary, I wrote this criticism in the hope that growth might continue in a better and healthier way."

128. Kye Jun Lee, "The Vitality of the Church Is Shown Through Self-Sacrifice," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (November 1997): 47-9. In this article, Kim defines evangelism according to the theological tradition of the liberal Christianity by insisting that evangelism includes the concepts of peace, balance, and justice. He then develops his argument on evangelism on the basis of these concepts. The evangelical concept of evangelism, however, is left out in his argument on evangelism and thus the emphasis on the end of purpose of evangelism—numerical increase of the saved—is missing in his argument on evangelism. See also Won Bae Kim, "Small Thing Is Beautiful," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (November 1997): 49-53. According to the theological framework of liberal Christianity, Kim charges exclusively that the Korean church has pursued only growth, achievement, and largeness. He insists, using the thought and argument of the German philosopher Ernst Friedrich, who wrote *Small Is Beautiful*, that the Korean church should find the value in small things. Kim asserts erroneously that the meta-church concept developed by Carl George is an antithesis to the mega-church concept embraced by the Korean church. In his fierce but inaccurate criticism on so-called the covetous mentality of the Korean church that pursue only growth and largeness, the foundation for the numerical growth of the church crumbles. See also Byoung Kwan Chung, 68-9. Chung avers that this position is found in the Korean liberal churches and even in some Korean conservative churches. He also argues that liberal theology and its influence over the Korean church is one of the major reasons for the decline in the Korean church. See also Jung Eun Kim and In Hwan Kim, 46. Jung Eun Kim, president of one of the most influential and the largest seminaries in Korea (Jangshin Seminary), says that "the influence of Enlightenment is considerable in the Korean church." See also Sun Hee Kwak, "Sunkyo Shinhak-juk Chupkun (Missiological Approach)," in *Hankuk Kyohoi Sungjang Dunhwa Bunsuk-kwa Daechaek* (The Analysis of the Slow-

down of the Korean Church and the Measure), 105. Kwak, who founded and built one of the largest Presbyterian churches in the world in his life time and holds a doctoral degree in missiology, asserts that one of two reasons for the stagnation of the Korean church is the negative impact of the liberal theology on the Korean church. He says bluntly, "Many (Korean) young theologians are the pastors only in word but the communists in reality."

129. See Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization, *Hankuk Kyohoi Mirae Report (The Future Report of the Korean Church)*, 66-7; Chi Jun Noh, "An Investigation on the Trend of the Increase and Decrease of the Members of the Korean Church in 1990s," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak (Ministry and Theology)* (November 1997): 126. According to Hanmijun and the Korea Gallup research, the Korean Protestants consists of only 21.6 percent of the whole population of South Korea. The Korean Protestants grew only 0.9 percent in the number of believers from 1998 to 2004, while the Korean Buddhists grew 3.2 percent in the number of believers from 1998 to 2004. The research also shows that the growth rate of the Korean Protestantism is diminishing gradually: 2 percent (1984-1989), 1.5 percent (1989-1998), and 0.9 percent (1998-2004). According to Noh, those Korean churches, which have more than three hundred members, plateaued while other Korean churches were experiencing stagnation or decline in the 1990s. Their growth, however, does not come from the evangelization of the lost, but from the transference of the members of other churches which have less than three hundred members. Thus, according to Noh, the phenomenon that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer is deepening in the Korean church. Noh challenges the Korean pastors of those churches, which have more than three hundred members, not to be indulged in expanding their churches through absorbing the members of other churches, but to find out the way to save the whole Korean church. The only way to achieve this necessary and urgent thing, however, is conversion church growth.

130. See Seung-Hoon Myung, *Kyohoi Kaechuk-eui Walli-wa Chunlyak (The Principle and the Strategy of Church Planting)* (Seoul: Kukminilbosa, 1997), 66; Ahn 78; Noh, 128. Myung avers that unfavorable leadership transition creates a lot of problems in the Korean church today since the Korean churches are weak in building and empowering the next generational leaders, and this problem is becoming more serious. According to Ahn, unfavorable leadership transition in the Korean church comes from those pastors who try to maintain their dream and way of ministry by installing and controlling their successor. They prefer their sons for their successor to guarantee security. Unlike America, Korea has a history of having a feudal dynasty maintained by heredity and is still under the influence of Confucianism which is father-centered and kinship-oriented. Thus, Ahn asserts that it would not be virtuous for the son, although he is an excellent spiritual person, to succeed his

father in the Korean context, since the Koreans feel hurt and are hostile toward heredity. One of the signs, that the Korean church leadership is aging, comes from the findings of the research conducted by Noh and his team. It shows that those Korean churches, which have a longer history, tend to stagnate or decline because of their increasing exclusive mentalities.

131. Won Bae Kim, 50.

132. Seung Hee Lee, *Miraesahoe-wa MiraeKyohoi: 21 Seki Hankuk Kyohoi Mega Trend (Future Society and Future Church: The Mega Trend of the Korean Church in the 21st Century)*, 51-4. Lee adds syncretism, which permeates the every corner of both the religious and secular life of the Koreans, onto the list of the "pathological problems" of the Korean church. According to Lee, the Korean's religious syncretism not only facilitated the numerical growth of the Korean church, but also discouraged the qualitative and intrinsic growth of the church. The Korean's religious syncretism, just like their amoral pragmatic thinking, must have come from Shamanistic thinking which lacks morality and historicity. See also Jung Eun Kim and In Hwan Kim, 40-1. In Hwan Kim, president of one of the most influential and the largest seminaries in Korea (Chongshin Seminary), points out theological syncretism as one of the weaknesses of the Korean church.

133. Towns, ed., *Evangelism and Church Growth*, 20.

134. Son, 257.

135. Won Kyu Lee, *Hankuk Kyohoi Udiro Kago Itna (Where Is the Korean Church Going?)* (Seoul: Methodist Theological Seminary Publishing Company, 2000), 293.

136. Underwood, 5.

137. Pierce and Anderson, 11.

138. Won Kyu Lee, *Hankuk Kyohoi-eui Hyunshil-kwa Chunmang (The Reality and the Prospect of the Korean Church)*, 182; Seung Hee Lee, *Miraesahoe-wa MiraeKyohoi: 21 Seki Hankuk Kyohoi Mega Trend (Future Society and Future Church: The Mega Trend of the Korean Church in the 21st Century)*, 43-7. The authors point out that the unusual receptivity of the Koreans toward Christianity comes both from the Korean's turbulent social environment and their intense and syncretic religiosity.

139. Edward C. Pentecost, *Issues in Missiology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 147-57. Pentecost discusses the various causes that affect the receptivity of men to the gospel. They include communication process and historical, sociological, cultural, and anthropological factors. See also Michael Pocock, "The Sovereignty of God in Missions," in *Overcoming the World Missions Crisis*, ed., Russell L. Penney (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 76-8. Here, Pocock discusses the resistance of men to the gospel in terms of the sovereign will of God from the Calvinistic viewpoint.

140. Seung Soo Kwon, Chan Sam Yang, and Man Yul Lee, 196-200.

141. Ro, "The Korean Church: God's Chosen People for Evangelism," in *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, 17-8. George T. Brown, *Mission to Korea* (New York: Board of Missions, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., 1962), 5. Korea entered extreme isolationism after having a devastating seven-year war with Japan, which was initiated by Japan, in the late 1500s. Brown states, "Because of the ruthlessness of this invasion [,] the minds of the Koreans were poisoned against all foreigners. From this time on Korea became the 'Hermit Nation,' determined to resist every attempt of the outside world to pry open her closed door."

142. Wasson, 50.

143. John Kim, 114-9. Kim identifies the intense spirit of anti-communism of the period (from 1953 to 1970) with one of the major factors of the growth of the Korean church.

144. Korean Broadcasting System, "Owul-eui Chaek" (The Book of May, A Project of the 25th Anniversary of 5.18), in *TV Talks on Book* (Seoul: KBS, 2005 [on-line]); accessed 19 May, 2005; available from <http://www.kbs.co.kr>, Internet. In this forum, professor Nu Ri Kim argues that the Korean society in the 1970s, which was put under the dictatorial government dominated by Korean military personnel, was in fact barrack. He also avers that in the 1980s all kinds of radical ideas, which the western society experienced for the past two hundred years, were experienced in Korea to some extent, and in the 1990s the condition were developed in new paradigms.

145. Ro, "The Korean Church: God's Chosen People for Evangelism," in *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, 17-8. See also David O. Moberg, *The Church a Social Institution: The Sociology of American Religion* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), 440. According to Moberg, "Conditions which have commonly contributed to past revivals include social maladjustments and rapid intellectual advance. When people are frustrated, they seek an outlet for their feelings or turn to what they hope will be a solution."

146. Won Kyu Lee, *Hankuk Kyohoi-eui Hyunshil-kwa Chunmang* (The Reality and the Prospect of the Korean Church), 50-3.

147. Won Kyu Lee, *Hankuk Kyohoi Muet-I Munje-inga? What Is It All About the Korean Church?* (Seoul: Methodist Theological Seminary Publishing Company, 1998). 182-6.

148. Seung Hee Lee, *Miraesahoe-wa MiraeKyohoi: 21 Seki Hankuk Kyohoi Mega Trend* (Future Society and Future Church: The Mega Trend of the Korean Church in the 21st Century), 35-6. Lee avers that the political and military tension caused by the military dictatorship at the time led the Koreans to seek for the comfort in religion and thus made a positive impact to the growth of the Korean church.

149. See Won Kyu Lee, *Hankuk Kyohoi Muet-I Munje-inga? (What Is It All About the Korean Church?)*, 182-6; Young Han Kim, 3. Kim

insists that the rapid growth of the Korean church at the end of the 1970s and at the beginning of 1980s came from both the social environment, which consisted of the loss of the social identity and the sense of economic estrangement caused by the political, economic, and social changes in Korea, and the conservative theological position of the Korean church, which focused on the salvation of an individual soul.

150. Suh Haeng Lee, "Hankuk Sahoe-eui Bujung Bupae The Corruption of the Korean

Society," in *Hundai Sahoe Munje (The Problem of Modern Society)*. ed., Young Bok Koh (Seoul: Institute for Society and Culture, 1991), 503.

151. Myoung Jin Lee, "Yeudang Chiciyul 10 Percent Iha-ro Churak" (The Support Rate of the Party in Power Falls into 10 Percent Level) (Seoul: Chosunilbo, 2005 [on-line]); accessed 9 June, 2005; available from <http://www.chosun.com>, Internet. Lee reports, on the basis of the recent research conducted by R&R, that the party in power of Korea, which was put in power by the Korean electorate just a year ago because of its clean image and high morality, is collapsing rapidly because of the several incidents of political and economic corruptions of the present government.

152. Young Wan Lee, "Hwang Woo Suk Kyosoo Choigo Kwahakja Duenda" (It Is Certain that Professor Woo Suk Hwang Will Become the First Best Scientist) (Seoul: Chosunilbo, 2005 [on-line]); accessed 28 May, 2005; available from <http://www.chosun.com>, Internet. According to Lee, the Korean government offers about 3 million dollars per year to Professor Hwang to support his stem-cell research. In comparison with the American government's cautious policy for stem-cell research. The Korean government's aggressive policy in this area is controversial in its ethical stance. Most Koreans, however, support Professor Hwang and the Korean government in this research. This indicates how strong secular humanism controls modern Korean society. See also Gretchen Vogel, "Korean Team Speeds Up [sic] Creation Of [sic] Cloned Human Stem Cells," *Science* (20 May 2005): 1096. Vogel writes on the futuristic impact of the political, ethical, and social implications of Hwang's research: "The dramatic increase in efficiency suggests that creating genetically matched ES cell lines for patients needing some kind of cell transplant might not be impractical. 'It's a breakthrough that I didn't think would happen for decades,' says development biologist Gerald Schatten of the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, an advisor to the Korean team and an author on the paper. Development biologist George Daley of Harvard University calls the work 'spectacular.' And the work may influence the ongoing political debate over whether research with human ES cells, whether cloned or not, is ethically justified. 'Some people will hate it, others will love it,' says Rudolf Jaenisch of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. 'But it puts the discussion on a very firm footing now. People will have to rethink the argument that it's

not efficient.” See also Alice Park and Christine Gorman, “Inside the Korean Cloning Lab,” *Time* (30 May, 2005): 55-9. According to Park and Gorman, Woo Suk Hwang and “his team, using Dolly-the-sheep techniques, had [sic] created 11 [sic] human stem-cell lines perfectly matched to the DNA of human patients—a giant leap beyond anything any other lab has achieved” (55-6). They also describe the response of President Bush and the White House to this incident: “Hwang’s methods are controversial, however—particularly in the U.S.—and the White House immediately criticized the experiment. The process is called somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT), but most people know it colloquially as therapeutic cloning. ‘I am very concerned about cloning,’ President Bush said in response to the news, ‘I worry about a world in which cloning becomes accepted.’ If Congress manages to pass a bill it is considering that would lift some of the restrictions on stem-cell research in the U.S., the President promised to veto it” (56). See also Young Wan Lee, “Hwang Woo Suk Kyosoo-ga Whata” (Professor Woo Suk Hwang Came) (Seoul: Chosunilbo, 2005 [on-line]); accessed 10 June, 2005; available from <http://www.chosun.com>, Internet. Lee reports how much affection and admiration the Koreans scattered throughout the world have toward Hwang these days. He describes how Hwang receives a hero’s welcome by the Koreans living in other countries during his visit to the countries they live in. Korean Air Lines offers a premium first class seat to Hwang for free for ten years, which is an epoch-making measure. See also Jung Hoon Kim, “Jung Jin Suk Daejugyo-nun Hwang Woo Suk Kyosoo-eui Yungu-nun Salin-gwa Kata-rago Malhaeta” (Archbishop Jin Suk Jung says that Professor Hwang’s Research is like Murder) (Seoul: Chosunilbo, 2005 [on-line]); accessed 11 June, 2005; available from <http://www.chosun.com>, Internet. Kim reports that the Korean archbishop made a strong oppositional statement to Hwang’s research and demanded an immediate stop of the research. Since the archbishop thinks Hwang’s research assumes the destruction of human embryo, which is like murder, and facilitates the appearance of human cloning, he concludes that this research must be stopped even though Hwang’s research is alleged for treating difficult diseases. The Korean archbishop’s view reflects the mainstream Korean Evangelical’s attitudes on the issue. These two contrasting reports show how the conservative Christian’s stance is unpopular in the backdrop of a highly secularized modern Korean society. See also Han Soo Kim, “Chulgisepo Yungu Galdung Gobi-rul Numgyutda” (The Conflict on the Stem-Cell Research Has Passed Through the Crisis) (Seoul: Chosunilbo, 2005 [on-line]); accessed 12 June, 2005; available from <http://www.chosun.com>, Internet. According to Kim, the Korean archbishop made a critical statement against Hwang’s stem-cell research. Since the Korean society shows a great interest in treating difficult diseases and becoming rich, it neglects to point the dangers and ethical problems the research implies.

In discussing the ethical problems in relation to Hwang's research, Kim states that Hwang, a devoted Buddhist, emphasizes the quality of life by saying that it is the cycle of reincarnation in this life to save the life of a person through cell research. However, the representative of the Korean Catholics stresses the sanctity of life by insisting that human life as the very image of God should be protected. As Hwang's statement shows, the Buddhist's idea of the cycle of reincarnation can be used to support the pragmatic (and inhumane) view of those who stress the quality of life. In this sense, modern Korean society, which has both the advanced technology to manipulate human life and a prevalent idea to rationalize the destructive use of that data, without mentioning the amoral pragmatic mentality of the Koreans, has a high potential to become the most secularized society in the world.

153. Gyu Tae Lee, "Yihon-eui Kodok Pyunsu" (A Variable of Loneliness in Divorce) (Seoul: Chosunilbo, 2004 [on-line]); accessed 6 January, 2004; available from <http://www.chosun.com>, Internet. In his column, Lee says that South Korea (47.4 percent) is ranked as the third highest in the world in terms of the divorce rate after the United States (51 percent) and Sweden (48 percent). He also says that South Korea is recorded as only non-Caucasian country in the list of ten nations, which record the highest divorce rate in the world. Tragically, one of two new couples experiences divorce in Korea these days. See also Hye Run Kang, "Hankuk Yusung-eui Woososung" (The Korean Woman's Excellences) (Seoul: Chosunilbo, 2004 [on-line]); accessed 29 August, 2004; available from <http://www.chosun.com>, Internet. In her article touting the excellences of the Korean woman, Professor Kang insists that the soaring divorce rate in Korea comes from the fact that modern Korean women no longer tolerate the traditional male-oriented culture and the structural inequality enforced at home and in modern Korean society.

154. Seung Soo Kwon, Chang Sam Yang, and Man Yul Lee, 162-3.

155. Won Sul Lee, Mun Sik Lee, and In Yong Park, "What is the Paradigm of the Future Ministry?," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (July 1997): 30-41.

156. Chung Hoon Lee, "Yudaesang Ishipal Percent-ga Sungkyunghum-i Ita" (Twenty-Eight Percent of the Korean College Students Experienced Sex) (Seoul: Chosunilbo, 2005); accessed 26 May, 2005; available from <http://www.chosun.com>, Internet. According to the research done by Chosunilbo, 27.7 percent of the respondents (Korean college students) experienced sex. The report shows that 61.1 percent of them oppose the view that sexual purity should be maintained prior marriage. It also reveals that 40.9 percent of them said that it is all right for man and woman to live together without promising marriage. In addition, 85.3 percent of them oppose the view that those who have sexual relationship should marry. The research concludes that the traditional values (of the Koreans) on sex has collapsed. See also In Jung

Huh, "Gupjung Hanun Sexless Couple" (A Rapid Increase of Sexless Couple) (Seoul: Chosunilbo, 2005 [on-line]); accessed 29 May, 2005; available from <http://www.chosun.com>, Internet. According to the research conducted by Chosun Daily News and three other institutions, 63 percent of the respondents (married women) said that it is all right to have sex outside of marriage. Tragically, this shocking information reflects the low level of morality within modern Korean society. The causes of this radical shift in sexual values come largely from drama, movies, internet, and the elevated status of women in modern Korean society, according to the research.

157. Won Kyu Lee, *Hankuk Kyohoi-eui Hyunshil-kwa Chunmang* (The Reality and the Prospect of the Korean Church), 25-37. See also In Yong Park, "Pray for Revival in 1997," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (July 1997): 108.

158. Jang, 48-50. According to Jang, the clear and intensive leftist tendency and activities of the younger generation (called "386 generation" in Korean)—the Koreans who are in their 30s or 40s mostly—have provoked the political participation of the conservative Korean churches. Jang says that the political activism of the conservative churches, which seem to follow the American pattern of the "New Right" movement led by men such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, may dispel the younger generation, which abhors the conservative message and stance of the Korean evangelical churches, further from the Korean church. See also Jasper Becker, "Dancing With [sic] the Dictator" (New York: New York Times, 2005 [on-line]); accessed 9 June, 2005; available from <http://www.nytimes.com>, Internet. In this column, Becker, who is the author of *Rogue Regime: Kim Jong Il and the Looming Threat of North Korea*, describes accurately the leftist tendency of the South Korean government, but fails to point out the root of the problem—nationalistic leftist ideology of the younger generation ("386 generation"), which supports and controls the leftist policy of the South Korean government. Becker's article, however, reflects exactly the same perspective of the conservative Koreans have toward their government: "Since South Korea's president at the time, Kim Dae Jung, met with North Korea's Kim Jong Il in 2000 (and pocketed a Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts), Seoul has gone to remarkable lengths to gain the North's trust. Unsurprisingly, the only real changes under this Sunshine Policy have occurred in South Korea. And efforts by President Roh, who was elected in 2002, to engage Kim Jong Il have led him to plunge his own nation into North Korea's world of lies. . . . For example, Seoul no longer sees any evidence of North Korea's crimes: the government tries to keep South Korean newscasts from showing a smuggled tape of the public execution of 'criminals' by the North that has been broadcast in Japan and elsewhere; reports that China is shipping refugees back to North Korea are denied by the Roh government; the North's testing of

chemical weapons on live prisoners goes largely unmentioned; and even Pyongyang's apparent preparations for nuclear weapons tests are played down. . . . South Korea, a member of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, has abstained for the last three years from voting to condemn the North for its abuses. The South's latest national defense white paper even indicates that Seoul no longer considers the North to be its 'main enemy'—which implies that the presence of American forces on the peninsula is no longer necessary. Because Seoul chooses to regard the North as a friendly neighbor, it no longer wants to help North Koreans fleeing the regime—even though its Constitution declares that these refugees have the legal right to become citizens of South Korea." The leftist tendency in South Korea will last, probably will deepen, until the two Koreas achieve reunification. If the leftist tendency persists in South Korea, it will work against the growth of the Korean church.

159. Korea National Statistical Office, 151.

160. Sun Hee Kwak, 98-99. Kwak, who holds a doctoral degree in missiology, avers that the stagnation of the Korean church is not strange since the church in any country begins decline if per capital GNI exceeds 10,000 dollars. See also Frank G. Beardsley, *Religious Progress Through Religious Revivals* (New York: American Tract Society, 1943), 41. Beardsley shows that economic prosperity has had an adverse effect upon Americans by diverting the minds of the people away from God.

161. See Appendix C. It shows that the growth and decline of major religions in Korea are tied closely to the changing conditions of the Korean society.

162. Ted Ward, "The Korean Church of the 21st Century Should Be Prepared for the Pluralized Society," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (December 1999): 45-7; Jang, 50-1. Jang avers that the secularization is becoming pervasive not only among the liberals but also in the public in modern Korean society, and thus the traditional Christianity emphasizing traditional ethics is losing ground. Christianity in Korea, according to Jang, will have to choose either to be secularized by accommodating itself to the secularized public or degraded to become a minority by keeping the traditional moral principles strictly. See also Peter Wagner and In Yong Park, 30-6. Wagner avers correctly that the Korean church is the most traditional church in the world. He points out the strict adherence to the traditional music in the Korean church as an example. Since the Korean church is the most traditional church in the world, this situation creates difficulties for the Korean Christianity to adjust its attempts culturally to a rapidly changing postmodern Korean society, which values secularization and pluralization.

163. See Seung Soo Kwon, Chan Sam Yang, and Man Yul Lee, 165-6. Seung Hee Lee and Moon Sik Lee, 43. Seung Hee Lee defines the lifestyle of modern Koreans in three words, namely, "abundance, desire, and consumption." Moon Lee anticipates that the problem of the next

generation is not poverty, growth, democracy, or freedom, but a culture, which is characterized by pleasure and unlimited competition.

164. See Jang, 50-1; Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization, *Hankuk Kyohoi Mirae Report (The Future Report of the Korean Church)*, 27-8, 66-7, 142. Seung Hee Lee and Moon Sik Lee, 43; Noh, 128. Jang, who is professor of systematic theology, anticipates that the influence of Christianity will be diminished in Korea but maintained somehow until the present younger generation becomes grown-up because of the buildings and the real estate of the Korean church. In the following generation, however, Jang expects that Christianity in Korea will be degraded into a minor religion for those who grow in the Christian tradition and work for the Christian institutions. Jang's expectation may be overly pessimistic, but the downtrend or decline of the Korean church could begin soon. According to the research, the growth rate of the Korean Protestantism is diminishing gradually: 2 percent (1984-1989), 1.5 percent (1989-1998), and 0.9 percent (1998-2004). The diminishing growth rate seems to indicate that the actual downtrend of the Korean church could begin in ten years. According to Seung Hee Lee, about 40 percent (precisely 33.7 percent according to the Gallup research) of the Korean believers who are the members of a church, do not come to church often. Seung Hee Lee anticipates that the number of nominal Korean Christians will increase gradually in the future. The research conducted by Noh and his team supports the claim that those Korean churches, have a longer history, tend to stagnate or decline because of their increasing exclusive mentality and behavior.

¹⁶⁵. Seung Hee Lee and Moon Sik Lee, 37, 43; Noh, 129; Jang, 51.

According to Seung Lee, the Korean church has a hard time in attracting young people to the church recently since there are some problems in the church, which are repugnant to young people, such as the installation of the office of senior pastor by succession, pressure on offerings, and the use of offerings. The greatest problem, however, is that the Korean church is not effective in offering help to improve the quality of life, the central concern of young people today. According to Noh, the number of children, and junior high and high school students are decreasing considerably in the Korean church these days. This condition is caused in part by the time consuming demands placed upon students as they prepare academically for the extremely difficult entrance examinations for university enrollment. Even after the exam, those who fail to go on to university do not come to church due to humiliation and those who enter university do not come to church since they are busy in adjusting themselves to a new world. This enormous pressure of the exam is keenly felt even by the elementary school children and deters them to come to church. Amusement, through various devices such as video, computer, internet, T.V., and caricature, is another formidable deterrence to check kids to come to church. See also Wager and Park, 31-3.

Park points out that the Korean church is now engaging an uphill battle with the influence and teachings of the traditional religion such as divination, medicine man ("Moodang" in Korean), and Shamanistic influence. Wagner says that the revival of the traditional culture in Korea today is not an unique phenomenon, but follows the recent international pattern to reestablish the past culture. See also Kwang Ho Lee, 45. Lee asserts that today the influence of Shamanism is becoming much stronger not only in modern Korean society but also in the Korean church. See also Hanmijun and The Korea Gallup Organization, Hankuk Kyohoi Mirae Report (The Future Report of the Korean Church), 102. The research supports the claim that the influence and teachings of Shamanism and traditional Korean ideas are still prevalent in the Korean society

166. In Jung Huh, Min Sun Park, and Miri Kim, "Youkbaekman Single-eui Him" (The Power of 6 Million Singles) (Seoul: Chosunilbo, 2005 [on-line]); accessed 20 June, 2005; available from <http://www.chosun.com>, Internet. The findings of the research done by Chosunilbo and Research Plus show that the single Koreans take "financial strength" (63.7 percent) as the most important matter and take "religion" (0.6 percent) as the least important thing in living the single life. Although this finding is confined to the single person, it indicates that a large portion of modern Koreans is indifferent to spiritual life and much less receptive to the gospel.

167. Sung Nak Choi, "Between the Challenge of Reality and God's Interference," *Mokhoi-wa Shinhak* (Ministry and Theology) (January 2005): 87.

168. *Ibid.*, 86. Jung Eun Kim and In Hwan Kim, 40. According to the presidents of the most influential seminaries in Korea, the strength of the Korean church is the following: Bible-centered, a great tradition of fervent prayer and singing, faithfulness to the church, passionate spirituality, voluntary giving, and conservative faith.