

# **Church and State**

Theological Reflections in the Hungarian  
Reformed Churches and in the Korean  
Protestant Churches

# Studies in Hungarian and Korean Protestant Theology

Series Editors

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Edited by

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ÁBRAHÁM KOVÁCS  
and  
JAESHIK SHIN

## Editors' Preface

Encounters between Asia and Europe:  
Korean and Hungarian Reformed  
Theologies Meet in the Agora of the  
Secular World

The initiative of starting a Hungarian (Hun) and Korean (Han) theological platform arises from the realisation of common concerns, issues and interest that both societies face in spite of the fact that they are geographically apart. Several leading theologians from the two nations such as Jooseop Keum, Jaeshik Shin and Yoon-Jae Chang on the Korean side as well as Ábrahám Kovács, István Pásztori-Kupán and Gusztáv Bölcskei on the Hungarian side decided and agreed upon to initiate the HHTF, that is Hun Han Theological Forum, with a view to learn from each other and to contribute to the formulation of world Christianity. It has been intentionally set up like that so as to avoid the dominance of European centric theology especially, what is often Western European theology. The idea of establishing such a network was originally articulated in Edinburgh by two of the aforementioned persons who studied at the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World.

Both Hungarians and Koreans encountered the dismantling of their nations in the twentieth century despite of their will and were victims of the struggle of international superpowers. Thus the issue of patriotism/nationalism and division of their nation is a deep concern for both countries. In addition, they also have minorities in the surrounding countries as well as significant diasporas across the world, which raises questions for Reformed theology in need of an answer. Secondly, communism also made an indelible impact on the Korean and Hungarian nations, presenting issues such as reconciliation, forgiveness or the challenge to relate to an openly atheist state as a theist, Christ's disciples. Moreover, there is the ever-recurrent theme of the persecution of Christians.

Thirdly, secularisation is also a crucial issue for Hungarians who had faced a new world after the collapse of communism since 1989. At the same time Koreans also experienced an unparalleled and swift change since the 1990s. The newly emerging well-to-do society challenged the traditional forms of how to organise a society in which religion, including Protestant faith, played a significant part.

In 2015 we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the first free elections in Hungary after the collapse of Communism. Therefore, at the first meeting scholars coming from various theological disciplines were invited to offer papers on any aspect of the challenge that a European and an Asian form of Communism presented to the respective Reformed Christian communities. Papers were encouraged to address one of the following themes: reconciliation, unification of the nation and/or Christian churches, the issue of repentance of the collaborators, analyse the theological justifications of collaboration with Communism, uncover and write the stories of the forgotten Christian witnesses amongst lay people, theologians, and ministers during the persecution. The intention of the Forum has been to create a platform and a core group of scholars who wish to collaborate with each other in one of the proposed research areas and develop research topics that are relevant to the need of Hungarian and Korean Presbyterian churches in their own context and also learn from each other's similar as well as diverging experience.

The first volume is the result of the lectures and lively discussions when scholars learnt from each other. It is entitled "Church and State: Theological Reflections in the Hungarian Reformed Churches and in the Korean Protestant Churches". The book is divided into two larger thematic groups such as 'Historical Overview and Theological Perspective on the Context' and 'Critical Theological Thinking about Communism, Colonization and Totalitarianism'. Our hope is that these texts will stir further debates and new theological thinking is stimulated on both sides, in Hungary and Korea. Any book is best used if students read it, therefore, this volume hopefully will be used as a textbook for students who wish to study in a comparative manner topics that are evergreen for theologians, scholars of religion and historian. It is believed that the contributions made here will excite, provoke and initiate critical theological reflections that may be useful not only to the respective two nations but to the churches across the world with similar concern in Asia, Africa, the Americas, Australia and Europe.

Debrecen- Gwangju

8 May, 2019



PART I

*Historical Overview and  
Theological Perspective on  
the Context*



# The Structural Changes of the Church-State Relation in Korea, 1784-1945

## Introduction

The church-state relation is a social, theological, legal issue, which has continued to be raised in human history. Jesus gave the basic theological principle to this issue, by declaring "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."(Matthew 22.21). The rule of God cannot identify with the secular one. The church as a community of believers belongs to God, but is not the kingdom of God in itself and may not be completely separated from the state. So the church-state relation is the subject that always requires a new interpretation.

This study is to analyze the church-state relation, appeared in the Korea history from 1784 to 1945 and how the Protestantism (including mission and the church) affected the relation and was affected by it. It includes two periods of the late Joseon dynasty (1784-1910) and the Japanese colonialism (1910-45). Over the time, various groups of Christians responded to the power of state in a variety of ways, such as resistance, compliance, cooperation, and submission.

Previous studies in this area have mainly focused on the after the Korea liberation of 1945. Their research methods were also mainly around religious sociology. This paper is a new effort to research the church-state relation before the liberation in the perspective of church history and missiology.

For this study a historical approach and a way of typology will be used. Typology is at risk of too much simplification, but must be a useful tool in order

to compare with different patterns each other. There appear five types of church-state relation in terms of the Western Christian history.

1. Catacombs type: church being persecuted by a pagan country.
2. Religious state type: state being controlled by a religion
3. State religion type: state manipulating religious matters
4. Radical separation type: church's exclusive rejection against state intervention in church affair.
5. Separation type: friendly cooperation between church and state. Also there is an unfavorable separation type: such as in a socialist state and under a dictatorship.<sup>1</sup>

These types are not sufficient to describe the experience of the Korean church which conflicted with neo-Confucian state and Japanese Shintoism. Therefore, this paper also uses four kinds of state-religion relation which N. Jay Demerath classified as (1) religious states with religious politics, (2) secular states with secular politics, (3) religious states with secular politics, and (4) secular states with religious politics.<sup>2</sup>

## The Roman Catholic Church-State Relation in the Joseon Dynasty (1784-1873)

During a century, after the year of 1784, Joseon dynasty and the Roman Catholic Church suffered an extreme confrontation and conflicts. Joseon kingdom was a neo-Confucian state that exquisitely integrated their political philosophy and ethics. The government persecuted the Catholic Church as a Western evil teaching without loyalty to the king and filial piety to father, because the Catholics rejected to hold their ancestor memorial ceremony and had their own secret meetings, in which they taught the equality of all people in front of God. Also the ruling party often used the persecutions to purge their political opponents.

The Catholics responded to the persecutions largely in two ways. The first response was to appeal help to the foreign Christian power. In 1801, Confucian scholar, Hwang Sa-young wrote a secret letter on a small piece of silk to the Pope for the purpose of calling Western armed fleets into the country, but failed. Mr. Hwang said, "Even if this country may collapse, there must remain the holy

teachings.”<sup>3</sup> As a result it brought more brutal persecution. He misunderstood the Western world as a “nation of the Pope” and thought foreign powers too easy.<sup>4</sup>

The second one was to appeal mercy to the king and the people. During the great persecution in 1839, Jeong Ha-sang, a son of martyr, wrote a public letter to the king to explain the basic doctrines of the Church and to appeal that the Catholics were also “the children of the king.”<sup>5</sup> Mr. Jeong confessed “although we can commit sins to the Confucian gentry, but cannot get a sin to God.” At the time, the Catholics learned from the Chinese translations of Catholic books that the Catholic Church and its faith were superior to the country. By the way, the Catholic Church’s methods of responding to the persecutions grew more mature over time.

The relation between the early Roman Catholic Church and Joseon dynasty belongs to the catacomb type. Joseon was a Confucian state with religious politics in which the Church suffered the persecutions and martyrdom. Several thousands of the Catholics were killed by the government.

## The Church-State Relation in the End of the Joseon Dynasty (1884-1910)

In the end of the Joseon dynasty, the type of “religious state with religion politics” had collapsed by the invasions of foreign forces. The King Gojong and the Reformist Party recognized the Protestant Christianity as the means of modernization. In 1884, the first Protestant missionary Dr. Horace Allen was allowed to come into the Korea. The following Protestant missionaries tried to show the Protestantism as a loyal and patriotic religion. After some time, two types of belief were embodied in the Korean Protestant Church: one was the otherworldly-oriented personal salvation style; the other was the social commitment style for the rescue of the nation. The table below shows how the two Protestant beliefs maintained their own state-religion relations.

	1884-1900		1901-1910	
Personal Salvation style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loyal/patriotic religion</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apolitical Manifesto: church-state separation (1901)</li> <li>• Favorable relation b/w the missionaries-the dynasty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Revival Movement (1907),</li> <li>• Million Souls for Christ Movement (1909)</li> <li>• Favorable relation b/w the missionaries-Japan</li> </ul>
Social Commitment Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favorable relation b/w the church-the dynasty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent club movement (1896-88)</li> <li>• Tension b/w the church-the dynasty</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New People's Association (1907)</li> <li>• Persecution and Resist b/w the Korean Church-Japan</li> </ul>

*The Protestant Church and Modernization*

The Port opening of Korea (1876) took a significant change in foreign policy and religious policy in Korea. Huang Zunxian, a Chinese diplomat in Japan, proposed a diplomatic way, Joseon Strategy for Korea in 1880. "Religious teachings of the American Protestantism are not involved in politics at all, and there are many innocent and good-natured congregations."<sup>6</sup>

It was China's diplomatic strategy to bring the United States to the Korean Peninsula and check Japan and Russia. However it had a significant impact on the King Gojong and the Reformist Party to have a favorable position for the US and the Protestantism. The government signed a Korea-US Patron Treaty in 1882. In 1883 the King allowed the school and hospital to the American Missions. Korean Reformist intellectuals also wanted to introduce the Western civilization into the country. They thought that the Christianity was a way of modernization.

*The Separation between Politics and Religion as a Mission Policy*

The Missionary periodical, *Foreign Missionary* reads, "nothing could be more uncalled for, or more injurious to our real missionary work, than for us to seem to take any part in the political factions of Korea."<sup>7</sup> In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, political non-interference in the mission field was one of the most important mission policies. The reason is as follows:

1. The missionaries took for granted a culture of favorable separation of church-state according to the US Constitution.
2. They worried that their actions may unintentionally be involved in the political issues and it could also give adverse effects on the mission.
3. The US State Department didn't want the missionaries to be involved in a political maelstrom of the Far East. Their principle on Korea was that of "friendly neutrality" and "non-interference diplomacy." So they gave to the missionaries the ongoing attention through US diplomats.<sup>8</sup>
4. The missionaries remembered that there were ruthless persecutions against the Catholics until 1873. So they entered into friendly relations with the government.

*From a Loyal and Patriotic Religion to Social Involvement (1884-1900)*

(1) Independent Club and the political involvement of the church

The Protestantism started as a religion of loyalty and patriotism. On Sunday Christians hung a national flag on the church. They celebrated the birth day of the King and the Crown Prince.

Yet the Christian faith was linked to the political action such as political reform, national independence, and modernization in connection with Independent Club Movement (1896-1898). The Club tried to establish a "constitutional monarchy" and "parliamentary system." When it was dissolved by the pro-Russian government, the leaders were imprisoned and converted to Christianity there. In that time, the relation between the church and the dynasty was in high tension.

(2) The Early native Christians' faith

The Christian leaders of the Independent Club and the prison converters did not separate their faith from their national concerns. Their faith was a little different from the missionaries' one. Almost all of the prison converters joined the YMCA movement in 1904, soon after their release from jail. Later, they stood for their faith in the heart of the political and social movements for Korean independence from the Japanese colonialism.

The first ordained Methodist Deacon, Choe Byeong-heon gave a speech under the title of “the relation of religion and politics” at the Seoul YMCA in 1906. He saw the relationship between politics and religion as complementary as “outside and inside,” “cart and wheel,” “lips and teeth.”<sup>9</sup> He was critical to the missionaries when they tried to separate the church from the national concerns and make the native church apolitical.

For him, the religious doctrine and political ideology were not separated from each other but completed each other. So he thought that “the relation of religion and politics is like that of the heart and behavior”. He said “the right politics came from the right religion.”

#### *Apolitical Policy of the Missionaries (1901-10)*

##### Apolitical Manifesto of the Presbyterian Mission Council (1901)

The Presbyterian Mission Council made “Apolitical Manifesto of the Church,” in September 1901 and announced it to the churches all over the nation. It suggested the biblical sources for the separation between politics and religion: Romans 13: 1~7; I Timothy 2: 1~2; I Peter 2: 13-17; Matthew 22: 15~21; Matthew 17: 24-27; John 18:36. And it reads,

1. It is not the duty of foreign missionaries to interfere with the state affairs.
2. The affairs of the Church and those of the State belong to entirely different spheres and native Christians are instructed that it is not the function of the Church to rule in political matters.
3. We teach native Christians without being in violation of the word of God, serve the Emperor with loyalty, and obey rulers, and keep the law of the country.
4. The Church does not recommend nor forbid that individual Christians participate in the political affair or a political party.
5. The Church is a sacred institution. The building cannot be used for the promotion of its interests and group of people cannot be allowed for the purpose of engaging in political discussion<sup>10</sup>



This Manifesto was made to protect the church from possible political involvement and following oppression, to prevent the church from political pollution, and keep the church purity. However, the missionaries announced the insufficient information for the Korean church about what was the true meaning of "church-state separation." The US segregation policy between church and state was to prevent the intervention of the state in church affairs, not to prohibit political involvement of the church.<sup>11</sup>

This manifesto prescribed that the church cannot meddle in politics, but did not mention of the freedom of religion. As a result, even today Koreans think that the separation of politics and religion is to prohibit religion from their political involvement, but they do not know that religions affairs have to be preserved from political interference.

#### Different ways of the Missionaries and the Christian Nationalists

Japan won the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5) and became the winner of the Northeast. The United States tolerated the domination of Japan over Korea by signing the Taft-Katsura Memorandum (1905). After the Protection Treaty with Japan in 1905, the real political partner with the missionaries became Japan. The first nationalist movement of the Korean Christians was prayer for national salvation. On 9 May 1905, all of the Presbyterian Church from all over the country prayed to rescue the country for seven days. The Methodist Youth organizations, Sangdong and Epwit, also organized a prayer meeting, in which thousands of people gathered.

The church became a birth place for the national movement. Japanese tried to control the Korean church by using the missionaries. In the end of 1905, Japanese Residency-General Ito Hirobumi invited Rev. M. C. Harris, Bishop of the American Methodist Mission in Japan, and told him "From now on, entrust all the political affairs to me, and the missionaries take the responsibility of enlightenment and spiritual aspects of the Church for the future Koreans."<sup>12</sup>

In 1907 the Korean Protestant Christianity was divided into two lines: the religious movement and the national movement. The Righteous Army uprising took place in 1907 to resist the Japanese. The missionaries dismissed the nationalist evangelists and teachers from the congregation. They also examined strictly the church members who had strong political tendencies.<sup>13</sup> The Methodist Mission dismissed the Epwit Youth Association.

In the religious movement line, the Great Revival Movement took place. The Korean church had a rapid growth. The Presbyterian Church organized the Independent Presbytery, where the first seven Korean pastors were ordained. The missionaries emphasized the “spiritual characters” and “eternal Kingdom.”

In 1907, some of Christians in the national movement line set up the secret Sinminhoe (New People’s Association). They tried to achieve national independence by raising the national power through promoting education and increasing economic power. They provided the principle that independent Korea should be a Republic, not a monarch. However Christian nationalism in the both lines of Korean Christianity burst out in the March First Independent Movement in 1919.

## The Church and State Relation under the Japanese Colonial Rule (1910-1945)

In order to understand the church-state relations under the Japanese colonial rule, we need to review the state religious policy of the Japanese Imperial system, the changes of the relationship between Japanese and the missionaries, the relationship between Japanese and Christian nationalist movement.

The ways of the Japanese to deal with the missionaries were both cooperation and control. The missionaries were a good tool to control the gritty Korean church. Their friendly relation kept until the early 1930s when the US-Japanese relations deteriorated. On the other hand, Japan harshly suppressed Christian national movement, and worked hard to convert national leaders to pro-Japanese supporters.

“The social commitment style” and “the apolitical personal salvation style” lasted to the year of 1938, when the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea finally surrendered to the Shinto shrine worship. Since then no Christian national movement remained in the country. Only a few group of Christians lonely struggled against the Shinto worship in prison.

### *Japanese understanding of Church-State Relation*

Since the Meiji Reformation in 1868, “the Japanese government promoted the policy to adopt Shintoism as the state religion in order to establish a governing

body of the emperor.”<sup>14</sup> The Japanese government abolished the ban on Christianity in February 1873 in order to amend the Treaties with Western powers. Then Japan began to use Shintoism as an emperor ideology.

In February 1882, Japan’s Constitution article 28 stipulated the “freedom of religion” clause. However, the article 3 of the Constitution prescribed the clause of “sacrosanct of the Emperor.” So the “freedom of religion” was meaningless.<sup>15</sup> In 1907 it added the clause of “lese-majesty for the Shrine.” The Japanese Constitution established the Imperial religious state with a secular government.

### *Japanese Government and the Missionaries*

After the Korea annexation in 1910, Japan maintained preferential treatments such as extra-territoriality to the missionaries and gave a promise of cooperation for their mission work. It was to control over the Korean church. The missionaries also wanted to keep a favorable relationship with the Japanese for the missionary enterprise.

On the other hand, the missionaries believed that the Japan’s role in the civilization of Korea helped their role in its evangelization. Rev. Arthur J. Brown, the Secretary of the Foreign Mission of the PCUSA lettered to a Japanese government official.

What is the attitude of the missionaries toward the Japanese? There are four possible attitudes: First, opposition; second, aloofness; third, cooperation; fourth, loyal recognition. . . . [T]he fourth, loyal recognition, is I believe, the sound position. It is an accord with the example of Christ, who loyally submitted himself and advised His apostles to submit themselves to a far worse government than the Japanese and it is in line with the teaching of Paul in Roman xiii.<sup>16</sup>

But a handful of missionaries played an important role in the report of inhumane acts of Japan to the Western world. Especially they did so in 1911 when Japanese fabricated the “105-men Incident” by torture for the purpose of eliminating the Christian nationalist movement and in the events of the March First Independence Movement in 1919. The Japanese government accused the Korea missionaries of interfering in politics through pro - Japanese media. The missionaries defended that they did not intervene politically.<sup>17</sup> In fact, it was Japan’s plan to separate the church from the national movement. However, there were always inevitable tensions between Japan and the missionaries because of the following reasons.

(1) The Japanese interfered with educational mission and religious activities through the enactment of various statutes and decrees. (2) After the global Great Depression in 1929, Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931 as a way to overcome the crisis. In 1937 A military coup caused the collapse of the civil administration in Japan and the military invaded China. Therefore the US-Japan relations were worse and the Japanese government was also hostile to the missionaries. (3) the relationship between the two were even worse due to the enforcement of the Shrine worship to the Christian schools.

### *Christian National Movement under the Japanese Colonial Rule*

The Christian nationalist movement was powerless after the demolition of Sinminhoe by the 105-men incident (1911) but it revived as a social-political force through the March First Independence Movement (1919). In particular, the local organizations of the YMCA and YWCA set up the important foundation for the national movement. The Christian nationalist movement faced with the Japanese policy of “cultural governance”, economic deterioration, and socialists’ attacks in 1920s.

During 1920s the Christian nationalists focused on the campaign for Rural Enlightenment. In particular the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church set up their respective rural department in their General Assembly in 1928 after participating in the Jerusalem International Missionary Conference. The Christian nationalists and the Socialists founded together the Singanhoe (New Branch Association) in 1927. It is a national front against the Japanese rule.

In 1938 the Japanese police arrested the leaders of the two major Christian national organizations, Suyang Dongwuhoe (Friends for Discipline) and Heungeob Guragbu (Club for Business Encouragement). It was a multi-purpose stance to prepare for the war with the United States, which was closely related to these Christian intellectuals, while eliminating social unrest in order to carry out war with China. Japan enforced the Christian leaders to convert pro-Japanese collaborators.

The Christian nationalist forces took a role of social responsibility and made a great contribution to awaken the sense of nation when the official churches depended on the otherworldly conservative individual salvation.

*Church-State Relation in the Enforcement of the Shinto Shrine Worship*

In the 1930s, Japan strengthened the Japanisation of Koreans to maximize the exploitation of the land and people, while reshaping the Korean peninsula as a logistical base for a war of aggression. The Shinto shrine worship was a way to assimilate the Koreans into the Japanese policy. It was the emperor ideology which reigned over all religions and thoughts. Japan intended to divide the Korean church by using the church-state dichotomy. They argued, "The Shinto is a national ritual not a religion."

In the typology of state and religion, Japanese type was a secular politics with a religious ideology. It required total submission of other religions to the emperor ideology. The Korean church suffered the drastic persecution under the Shintoism as a state ideology. However there remained "catacombs type" at the end of the Japanese colonialism. Some of Christians didn't obey the Japanese paganism even in martyrdom and prison.

## Conclusion

This study is to examine the wide structural changes of the church-state relation before the Korean Liberation in 1945 and to investigate how the Protestantism influenced the relation and vice versa.

In the end of the 18th century, the Joseon dynasty was a neo-Confucius state with religious politics. The oppressed Roman Catholic Church appealed help to the France power or mercy of the King in order to acquire the freedom of religion. However they produced a lot of victims. It is a catacomb type of church-state relation.

The Protestant mission enterprise was comparatively easy as the type of "the religious state with religious politics" was collapsed. The King and the Reformist intellectuals recognized the Protestantism as the means of modernization. . The Protestant church revealed its self-image as a loyal and patriotic religion. So the church-state relation was in favor.

However, when the Korean Protestant Church combined the Independence Club's motion, aiming at a political reform and national independence, the pro-Russian government began to change its favorable attitude toward the church.

At this historical junction, the missionaries tried to make the church apolitical by declaring "Apolitical Manifesto."

Even though it was to protect the church and keep the religious purity, the declaration exercised a great deal of negative influence on the understanding of the church-state relation hereafter. The missionaries prohibited the Korean Church from participating in the national movement. In this period, two types of religious belief were embodied in the Korean church: one was the otherworldly-oriented personal-salvation style; the other was the social commitment style for the rescue of the nation.

After the Meiji Reformation in 1868, as an Emperor religious state with secular politics, the Japanese religious policy was to subordinate all the religions to the emperor ideology. From 1905 to the early 1930s Japan and the missionaries maintained the friendly relationship in Korea. But Japanese government severely oppressed Christian national movement. At the end of 1930s Japan and the missionaries became hostile due to the Japanese invasion in China and the enforcement of the Shinto-shrine worship.

After the Presbyterian Church surrendered the Shinto shrine worship in 1938, the majority of the Christian leaders walked on the way of a religious compromise and then pro-Japanese. Only small groups of Christians witnessed their faith at the cost of their life. It was another Catacomb type of church-state relation. Due to the Korean church's experience such as pro-Japan, apostasy and no freedom of faith, they became excessively adhesive to the conservative and anti-communist politics after the Liberation.

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- 11 WITTE, J.: Facts and Fictions about the History of Separation of church and State, in: *Journal of Church & State* 48, 1, (2006), 28-34. In the 18th century, the founding fathers of the United States claimed a 'separation of religion from politics with five goals. (1)To protect the church from the state. They had stated the "freedom of religion" in the Constitution for it. (2) To protect the country from religion. The separation of church and state was to help the movement to exclude ministers and religious persons from the public service in the states (3) To protect the freedom of the individual conscience from the force of the state or the religion or the complicity of both. (4) To protect the religious policy of the state government from interfering of the federal government. So as to do it, the parliament had stated that it cannot make a law establishing a state religion. (5)To protect society and citizens from unwilling religious or non-religious patronage.
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# The Influence of the Changes of 1989/90 on the Reformed Church of Hungary and Its Relationship to the State

On the theme of the state and church relationship the political changes of 1989/90 opened new possibilities for the Hungarian Reformed Church in many ways which also contoured the challenges as well. That is well pictured in the great number of publications (from the first decades after the changes) which gave reflection on a wide scale of possible levels regarding the new situation of the church. Real debate did not often happen for various reasons, but in some cases, for example in conference materials and articles, an attempt was made for public discussions, whereby the themes of “diagnosis and therapy”<sup>1</sup> clearly provided the framework. The lack of facts, as well as the often false diagnosis of the current situation in relation to past, present and future – meanwhile coloured with emotions, temper and unrealistic or not rightly placed expectations – all of these real difficulties are clearly detectable in the background of the theological elaborations, which are also now recognized in the evaluations of the evaluation.<sup>2</sup>

Next, as we continue to describe the ecclesiological situation of the Reformed Church of Hungary, we shall: 1) introduce the changes and challenges of the relationship of the church and state from the viewpoint of the state; 2) describe the search of the Reformed Church of Hungary for its identity and its role in the socio-political and cultural transitions; 3) sum up evaluations related to the

image of the church and our theme, and how the Reformed Church of Hungary made attempts to face the first decade after the changes – especially between 1990-2000.

### State Politics Towards the Church after the Changes of 1989/90<sup>3</sup>

In 1989, the church was freed from the pressure and control of the state which had almost completely paralyzed its work. A new time had started. István Bogardi Szabó differentiates three models which well characterise the relationship of the state and the church since the changes of 1989. These models reflect the different governments' politics towards the church. The first model takes place between 1990 and 1994, and its main feature was the rehabilitation of the church. The second model made an attempt to restrict the church between 1994 and 1998. The third model can be viewed as a cooperation between the state and the church from 1998-2002.<sup>4</sup> We can add that from the year 2002 until 2007 the model of restriction has been playing a determinative part in the state's politics regarding the church.

#### Rehabilitation Model between 1994 and 1998

The political climate around the changes of 1989/90, we can acknowledge that the winner of the first free election of the Hungarian Republic was the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF). The MDF which stood on a conservative value system held many similarities with the Christian values, therefore the acknowledgement of the historical churches' role in society was obvious. The MDF also made a notable effort to build a new relationship and cooperation with the churches. Their willingness was mainly restricted by their financial possibilities, and in some cases the theoretical basis of jurisdiction was not well prepared or well reasoned.

The Hungarian Parliament prepared a compensation for the church for their lost in the previous Communist System on a juridical level. The first step was the framing of the Act of freedom of conscience and the law of religious freedom. The preamble to the Act of 1990 on the churches, makes a special recognition of the importance of the church's role in maintaining the values in societies, building communities, their role in culture and education, and their important activity in public health care and maintaining the national self-consciousness.<sup>5</sup>

The agreements in 1990 guaranteed in the Constitution on the highest juridical level that the forty years were truly over. In Hungary the state's connection with the churches relates to the constitutional law as determined by Section 60 of the same Act, paragraph 3 in the Constitution and its interpretation of the Constitutional Court. According to this the state and the churches function separately from each other. As understood by the Constitutional Court, the relation of these two entities should be formed by the neutrality of the state. The following facts emerge from the principle of disestablishment in accordance with decision No.4/1993 (II.12.) of the Constitutional Court: a) the state may not join itself to a religious alliance, nor to any one of the churches separately; b) the state does not subscribe to any of the churches' teaching; c) the state does not interfere in the churches' internal affairs; d) it especially should not take sides in issues relating to faith; e) the state must treat the churches as being equal.<sup>6</sup>

The invalidation of the Agreement of 1948 between the state and church was the next step, which was followed by the commitment to the recompense for the losses of the church.<sup>7</sup> The recompense happened basically on two levels: 1) on the level of material goods which meant the rebuilding of church institutions and the theoretical working out of public financing; 2) the reestablishment and support on the level of the public duties of the church.

The attempt for the process of recompense happened in the context of the foundation of new religious communities, which was assured by the Constitution and created a paradox situation for the so called historical churches (denominations) in Hungary. By declaring neutrality from the time of 1990 the Constitution creates a crux for the rehabilitation of the so called historical church. The Constitution prescribes that every religious community should have the equal benefit from the ideological neutrality of the state, nevertheless the historical churches' expectation in the rehabilitation process was that they would yet receive special advantages. A tension between the newly founded religious communities and the traditional churches was unavoidable. The new formations of religious communities felt discriminated. The tension was also kindled by the political propaganda.

The purpose with the introduction of the 'American' model, whereby the church and state are completely separated, served the tendencies of laicism. In that model the state guaranties to not interfere with the churches, therefore preferring the American model – and this would mean neglecting

the recognition of the heritage of the historical churches. The application of the Constitution to church related matters could (or some may say should) result in an understanding wherein the historical churches are to be seen as no different from the plethora of newly founded churches. The guarantees which were assured by the laws of recompense and recognition of churches' social role (preamble Act, 1990), became very ambivalent in the interpretation and application, which depends on the actual political climate. The nature of this paradox of interpretation is evident from the next two models, the models of restriction and cooperation.

#### The Restriction Model which Played a Role between 1994 and 1998

At the election of 1994, the winner was the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) in coalition with the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ). It became clear that the Hungarian population gave a priority to materialistic values in their vote. The socio-economic difficulties which occurred with the changes of the system, the effect of the Communist brainwashing and the nostalgic feelings that "everything was better in the old system," contributed notably to the political and ideological socialist restoration. The result of the election also testified that the church had lost its basis in the Hungarian society. The new historical circumstance did not allow open persecution of the churches but the MSZP could vindicate and develop its time-tested methods learned from Communism, but now applied in the new setting - and that was enough to slow down the process of rehabilitation. The secret of their success lays in the fact that they maintained a whole net of economic interest independent from the law. The national culture and education were led by a left-wing liberal intelligentsia. The conjunction of these two processes continuously weakened the condition of the historical churches' role in society. In the Hungarian society the majority became economic victims of the transition, and the result of this was that people became more exposed and defenseless, and therefore the political propaganda often could easily reach its goals.

#### The Model of Cooperation between 1998 and 2002

The political climate radically changed after the election of the Young Democrats' Alliance (FIDESZ). The winning by the right wing was simply the result of the fact

that the Socialists could hardly fulfill any of their promises listed in their programs. Materialistic values played a major role in the election again.

With the winning of FIDESZ, Hungary was governed by a new political generation, who were freed from the troublesome earlier political inheritance. Their new understanding of the nation, church and state pushed the party to represent civil-national and conservative views. The recognition of the need for refreshed political insights and the readiness for change made FIDESZ a relevant political entity.

After 1998, the church found itself in a new situation. The new government's prime minister was Viktor Orbán, an active member of the Reformed Church who held his religious belief to be of importance. FIDESZ announced a completely different value system which circled around ethical and axiological basic notions such as honour, good and evil, truth and falsity, the protection of family life, patriotism and the cleansing of public life of corruption and propaganda, and so forth. FIDESZ not only recognized and acknowledged the importance of the historical heritage of the Reformed Church of Hungary but also urged the importance of the future mission of the churches in the life of the Hungarian nation. Working out the model of cooperation was a tangible reality, which was realized in a number of arrangements. The process of rehabilitation was accelerated and a new system of financial order was introduced which extended care to the role of church in public life. The support of the importance for the church to be present in culture and public welfare clearly meant a continuance and development of the rehabilitation model. It became clear that neither the model based on a complete separation of the state and church, nor the model of the restriction of the church, are suitable in the Hungarian context.

Behind the three models and most of their possible variants there are two major intellectual tendencies which predominate. One is based on a utopian fiction in which the church, the sovereignty of the state, and the individual are each other's opponents. In this tendency the inclination is more dominant in the direction of a complete separation and restriction. The other tendency acknowledges the reality of public life as an organic process, while also seeing the historical necessity of the separation of state and church to a certain extent, but the model of cooperation becomes determinative.<sup>8</sup>

## The Comprehension of the Reformed Church of Hungary about the State's Relationship with the Church after 1989/90.<sup>9</sup>

A short analysis on this theme in light of some of the evident actions of the Reformed Church of Hungary gains importance for the following reasons: 1) it can indicate if any changes have occurred in the understanding of the Reformed Church of Hungary about the state in comparison to its earlier view during Socialism; 2) it will also show how the notion of the state is nuanced or distinguished in the Reformed Church's understanding, in relation to the other elements of society; 3) we shall also see the effects on the understanding of the own immediate and long term duties and tasks of the Reformed Church of Hungary.

The Reformed Church of Hungary also had to face (like other churches as well) the run down infrastructure and its atrophied institutional structures which seemed hopeless, especially considering the relationship with its members. The organizations and associations of the common church membership did not function well any more. In many cases, their former motivators got old or died.

A notable amount of the energy of the church was engaged with the restarting of its institutions and obtaining financial resources. One of the high priorities of the restart was the recognition of the importance of the Reformed Church's teaching task in the unity of church and school. In the midst of the compensations by the state to the church, the priority was the reclaiming and reestablishment of the lost 'nationalized' church schools, on all levels of education. The mission task concentrated on the young generation, with the hope that in the context of the aged and empty local churches the church would be renewed by the younger generation, who were now receiving their education in the reopened church schools. In the year two thousand, the Reformed Church of Hungary maintained the same number of schools it had between the two World Wars. The success in quantities is not in direct proportion with the qualities but notable results had been achieved in church education. The substitution of experts is a longer process than a decade. With the reestablishment of the relatively great number of church schools, the church did not reflect clearly on its ideas about how it will settle accounts with rapidly decreasing demography, and how it will try to keep other areas of mission in proper balance, whose importance became obvious after a decade. The attempts related to the church's understanding of

its duties in correspondence to the society or the state was clear. The church mainly focused on the integration of the newly forming civil society.

After the changes of the political system, the first government started a partnership with the church, therefore the church almost without any conditions endeavoured to fulfil its field of activity in that connection, which basically bore the sign of a folk-church or state-church setting. The (re)building of the structure of the state and the church did not differ from each other as we have noted earlier. One of the principles was to continue where it had been stopped before the time of Communism, in order to find the way toward legitimacy and continuity.<sup>10</sup> Hence, the relationship of the church and the state was pictured according to the motives of the old 'fashion'. The observation by the sociology of religion that the church institution takes over the characteristic features of the political and social structures of its context became very evident in the Hungarian situation. The edge between the two sides, the integration of the church into society and the religious sphere engaging in politics, was very vague.<sup>11</sup> One of the most characteristic phenomena in the Reformed Church of Hungary after the changes circled around the following question: Should local pastors take part in party politics? It is also important to pay attention to the fact that the issue of repentance and the confession of sin shrank into insignificance beside the issue of the local pastors' participation in party politics. A great number of articles gave evidence to that in the official weekly newspaper of the Reformed Church in 1990.

The Hungarian Reformed Synod arrived at a decision on the issue and advised all pastors to not address any party political questions from the pulpit, nor to hold any positions in political parties, nor to be a candidate in electoral campaigns for membership in the Parliament. The Synod's advice was based on the plea that the vocation for being a pastor requires openness to all people, regardless of the political identity of the members of the congregation. Any office in party politics interferes with the pastoral work and can lead to a division in the congregation. Moreover, the Synod declared that if the local pastor accepts a mandate or political function, he or she is obliged to resign from his/her pastor's office for the time being.<sup>12</sup>

The aftermath history of the question proves the complexity of the problem. Basically two circles were formed around the pro- and contra arguments. On the one hand, the pastor who is active in daily politics falls into a trap easily

whereby the aim of (pastoral) completeness (pléroma) can be harmed by service of a party (pars).<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the danger of ignoring daily life activities such as politics would restrict the church's mission to become a salt and leaven in society.<sup>14</sup> Rózsai's suggestion gives the heart of the problem when he calls attention to the following distinctions. The pastor has to be distinguished from other church members, as does church life from the profane political life. Rózsai added a special remark that both areas can be practiced as the worship of God.<sup>15</sup> The Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary changed its earlier position and all the questions related to the issue were forwarded to the decision of the local congregation's presbytery, with a special note saying if there is a contested point in the local congregation, a higher church authority will settle the question.<sup>16</sup>

Isépy's evaluation on the practice of pastors taking upon themselves a role in political parties describes the tendencies as early as the spring of 1990:

Pastors who entered the political arena can draw a lesson from the election: They were measured and most of them "found lacking..." They were lacking suitability, eloquence, a competitive program, but most of all in finding their own identity... they wanted to uphold their lambkins unauthorized by the Lamb of God.<sup>17</sup>

The church's participation in the life of party politics did not end with these incidents. By the end of the nineties, the theme of church pulpit and politics became more influenced by party politics. The church slowly became a factor in politics while it was not prepared at all for the new possibilities and challenges, and therefore the representatives of the church were characterized by one of the extremities of party politics or being apolitical. A shifting of accent was present which threatened the theology of the church with ideologization again and became a real danger during the next decade.

During 1990-94 the Reformed Church backed the government of MDF which acknowledged the historical churches' role. The church did not begin any dialogue with the other political parties which thought differently. They were mainly seen as a monolithic enemy. Shortly after the changes it became obvious that after an impetuous start in the outward life of the church, more difficulties occurred as a result of the slowing down of the transition and development. The situation revealed that the church could not find its proper position in



regard to politics. The pastors should have pointed out the good moral values of the MDF; rather, the pastors were more interested in realizing their personal political ambition and finding ways to get individual financial sources to the different projects in the church. Kádár's observation is realistic when he sees the situation of the church as ancillary and as a beggar in relation to the state after the changes. The question of the financial survival of the church overshadowed the mission of the church. The church behaved indifferently toward the civil society which was coming to life again. A critical distance from party politics<sup>18</sup> and a relevant presence for public life did not characterize the church.<sup>19</sup>

The mistakes were vivid after 1994 when the constituencies of Hungary gave authority to the MSZP. The society made its political decision on materialistic values. The only motive that formed the majority's opinion was determined by which party would guarantee a higher living standard. The majority of the electorates believed that the changes of the system was complete, therefore most of them did not make any considerations on an ideological basis. The ideological contrast of morally good or bad, guilty or not guilty, and Christian or atheist hardly played any role. The promises of party programs in relation to materialistic welfare were determinative. It was evident that the church missed its target when it could not fulfil its special duty, the prophetic faithfulness<sup>20</sup> according to the special call which is not from this world.

A prophetic contradiction characterized the church in the time of 1994-1998. According to the application of the restriction model, the MSZP made notable steps to narrow down the condition of churches' social services. These four years were a time when the church spoke out against the politics of MSZP in the matters of: economic stabilization, social and family programs, the issue of the unemployed and homeless people, social-provisions<sup>21</sup>, the situation of the demographic decline and surgical abortion,<sup>22</sup> the discriminative financing program for public education in relation to church-schools, as also against the standstill of compensation for the churches,<sup>23</sup> and the disrespectful use of the name of God in the different media.<sup>24</sup> The restrictions by the government were not comparable to any open persecutions of the church. The restrictions toward the church and its programmes were a consequence of the MSZP's realisation that since they had won the election in 1994, the churches' voice and social role did not count for much. Thus, the MSZP enforced its own individual interest and purposes, which became more evident in the unscrupulous capitalism and privatization.

Fazakas's comments have significance, namely that during 1994-98 the Reformed Church of Hungary arrived at the point where it could have realized that the conditions to fulfil its social role and duties cannot only depend on outward circumstances.<sup>25</sup> The Reformed Church of Hungary had already faced a number of critical points of such realization in its long and short term history. In 1936, Karl Barth in his inaugural lecture in Sárospatak made the following statement which calls attention to the same problem:

The different options which are given and could be given by the state have to be put on a scale by the church. The possibility of the church's structure as a folk-church, free-church or confessing-church are all not more than only an option which comes and can come only outwardly.<sup>26</sup>

László Ravasz's statement referred to another similar moment in 1945: "The question is: are we going to be a free-church in a free-state, or a second class state-church, or are we becoming a confessing-church in a hostile world? All this depends on what value the state ascribes to the church."<sup>27</sup>

The changes in the outward possibilities drove the church to raise a notable protest and confession during the time of 1994-1998. The behaviour and actions of the church can be evaluated as a mirroring of the power structures of that time. It became obvious that the historical churches were not alone in fulfilling a role in politics and society. A number of other tendencies, such as secularisation, (post)modernisation, technological revolution, and globalisation called attention to the fact that the strategy to continue the organisation of the church and all its activities as it was before Communism, was now impossible. The ambivalence of continuance can be clearly characterised by the fact that the church constitution attempted to be continued where it had stopped in 1948. During the constitutional activity that started relatively soon after the changes of 1989, the church was seeking its historical traditions. The Reformed Church of Hungary sought good examples in the constitutions from the past, however it insisted on keeping the strongly centred organisational pattern, which was established in the enactment of 1967. It did not consider that the world's, the church's and the church members' way of thinking had greatly changed. Thus its structure came into conflict with its stated principles.

Another feature of this time was the vital question of nationhood in connection to the concerns of the Gospel. For Hungarian Protestantism this question was always a special task because of the difficult historical contexts in the life of the Hungarian nation. The Protestant Churches were committed to the national independence since the sixteenth century as we introduced earlier. In the post-Communist countries, which had suffered under the yoke of the interests of greater powers using the flag of internationalism, the intensity of the national self-awareness was a natural reaction after the changes of the political system. That process is also detectable in case of Hungary where the Reformed Church tried to have a notable role. The historical wounds of the Hungarian nation, especially "Trianon," came to a front, although effective answers for the historical injustice was straggling behind. Rather, the different political parties according to their limited (mis)understanding of the historical and political reality gave their different suggestions about how to settle accounts with the traumas which were often involved in the political propaganda. These tendencies also took place in the Reformed Church. And this led part of the church to involve itself in the loyalty to the aims of far right wing political parties. In some cases the concept of nation was absolutised and was raised to a metaphysical status, often dangerously approaching nationalism as a pseudo-religion. The sources of these tendencies are also clear from the socio-economical and political difficulties which we have already introduced in this chapter. The danger for the churches lay in the temptation that the boundaries of the national self-awareness and Christian identity would merge into each other - for which we have seen a number of frightening examples in recent past (church) history.<sup>28</sup> The above quoted Ervin Vályi Nagy's paradigmatic view also emphasises and warns against these tendencies related to the church and the world.

The outcome of the election of 1998 was that the FIDESZ - MPP<sup>29</sup> could form a government and in its politics gave a favourable position to the so called historical churches. The contradiction or restriction model between the state and church was interrupted, and the model of cooperation started, whose causes and consequences we have mentioned above. Beside the number of actions by the government which truly saw the churches as partners, the churches were not only recognized by financial data in the state budget but the service to the society by the church also took on a determinative role. The

most evident outcome was an agreement between state and church<sup>30</sup> whereby the state and the church could set up the principles of a partnership. This was a new script in the line of the history of agreement between the state and the church. The church declared that the agreement was not carried out by any compulsion, rather its motivating source was the critical solidarity with the state and society.<sup>31</sup> A new dimension was opened in the debate about the church's role in politics, which seemed to be overruling the interest of party politics. The visible church in its own understanding could not avoid being a political entity, which was directly or indirectly connected to the life of the polis. The agreement evaded any possibilities of power struggle for any positions or professions of allegiance. According to the mentality of the agreement, the outward church politics could not be in contradiction with its inward norms which regulates its life and aims. Most evaluations - from the year two thousand<sup>32</sup> - rightly ask the following question, which is also obvious from the earlier description of the history of the Reformed Church of Hungary since the changes: Was the church ready for and capable of the task which was set up in the preamble of the agreement? Before answering the question we can also ask another question: what led to the success of the FIDESZ-MPP winning the election? Gyula Horn<sup>33</sup> bitterly noticed that the MSZP lost the election because the priests and pastors of the churches made a campaign against them on the pulpits and other places. Unfortunately, Horn's remark was not true; the church did not have such an influential role on its members. Horn's remark may ease the responsibility of the MSZP for the lost election, but in reality the population turned against the MSZP since hardly anything had been accomplished from the promises of their electoral campaign. The majority of the Hungarian population faced serious existential problems on all levels of their life. The trust of the Hungarian electorate's majority in the FIDESZ-MPP was not more than it had been four years earlier as trust in the MSZP: the hope for a better life according to the measurement of materialistic goods. The same mentality was present in most members of the church. That mentality also differed from the mentality of the principles of the agreement between the state and the church. In practice, the standard of the agreement was measured on the scale of finances: How much financial support will be given to the church? The principle of a free-church in a free state must be maintained for the church, step by step, to reach spiritual and financial self-maintenance. Révész's clearly phrased the main reason for

that in 1946: "Opportunistic aims cannot impede the church in the preaching of the Gospel, which is the lifelong task of the church, and the state as social or political organism cannot make itself dependent on the church to fulfil its duties which come from its nature."<sup>34</sup>

Provisionally, it is important to make the following remark: The complete separation of the state and the church is impossible; either we see the question from the standpoint of the state's jurisdiction over the church, or we see this from the standpoint of the church's autonomy. The individual, who practises his or her rights according to the freedom of religion, could be a member of any kind of religious organisation; however, the individual's right in this matter will be transformed to a collective right because he or she is the citizen of the state as well.<sup>35</sup>

While a clear perspective of the state and church relationship is not actualized, the church will be under the pressure to accept the outward possibilities and thus its commitment to its context may overrule or even contradict its own existential nature. Financial dependence (negative or positive) on the state and the mentality which gives priority to materialistic values can easily put the church into service of an ideology. One of the sources of the problem is that since the changes the Reformed Church of Hungary only concentrated on the definition of the state in the perspective of executive authority (actual governments).

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# Nationalism and Martyrdom: Shinto-Shrine Controversy during the Japanese Colonial Regime in Korea

## Christian identity and Nationalism: Conflict with Colonial Power

While Catholicism in Korea was established and developed amid earlier conflicts between the Joseon Dynasty government and western powers, Protestantism in Korea settled down into the local context during a period of national crisis occasioned by an Asian power. Indeed Protestant Christianity appears to have functioned as a foundation for overcoming the national collapse especially after the Protectorate Treaty in 1905 and the Annexation in 1910 forced by Japan. Unlike Catholicism, which was still often regarded not only as an agent of western imperialism but also as a heterodox doctrine opposed to the modernising ruling principle of the government, Protestantism in Korea was positively and closely associated by Koreans with nationalism throughout the Japanese colonial regime. In particular, during the early harsh 'military' rule from the Annexation in 1910 to 1919, when any political organization and action was banned by an iron fist military policy, Koreans used the Protestant churches and mission schools as the largest Korean community at the time for their socio-political activities. The organization of Epworth cheongnyeohoe, the Epworth Youth League at Sangdong Methodist Church in 1905 to resist Japanese rule over Korea; the

organization of Shinminhoe, the New People's Association, in 1907, the strongest Korean nationalist organization at that time, whose promoters were Korean Christians; Gukche bosang undonghoe, the Association for Redemption of the National Debt in 1907, which was spread by most Korean Christians to launch a campaign to repay the immense amounts of debt from Japan; the March First Movement in 1919, and so on.

This means that the most vital category of people to be put under the Japanese control at that time were nationalist Korean Christians. It is clear that under Japanese rule Protestantism in Korea and Korean nationalism were positively and closely associated each other. Naturally prominent church leaders such as Kim Gu, Seo Jae-Pil, Yun Chi-Ho, and Jeon Deok-Gi, became national leaders, though many of them collaborated actively with the Japanese in the last two decades of Japanese colonial rule in Korea, an issue which left bitter memories.

A specific example of the nationalist Protestantism in Korea is shown in the March First Movement in 1919. The 'Dokripdan Tonggomun' (Notification Statement for the Participant) supposed to be distributed especially to the Christians during the early stage of the movement prohibited the partakers from making "any insult and violence of beating or stoning" of Japanese, and required "three-times-prayer everyday, fast on Sunday, and Bible reading provided".<sup>1</sup> Taking this non-violent peaceful way of the Movement, Protestants took part in the demonstrations to restore "freedom bestowed from Christ following God's will".<sup>2</sup> Even Rev Shin Seok-Gu, one of the thirty-three representatives, confessed that he had participated in the Movement because he had realised his 'dual sin' in accepting the "loss of the nation" and in making "no efforts for its restoration," after hearing God's voice during day-break prayer.<sup>3</sup> Given the facts it might be said that the PCK's major motif of participation in any independent movement was their religious consciousness. There was little gap between religious identity as a Christian and ethnic/national identity as a Korean. Their involvement in the independence movement was a way of participation in Christ' suffering on the Cross. Indeed, both in physical socio-political activism and in metaphysical spirituality, the PCK played a significant role in national independent movements.

In the view of the Japanese colonial authority, therefore, the PCK, which worked as the well-organized headquarters of national liberation, was the first and major obstruction to their rule of Korea. The PCK were "obnoxious" to the Japanese government,<sup>4</sup> which was therefore harsh with Protestant churches

throughout Korea. Of the brutal massacres of the Protestant Christians, 43 members of Sancheon Church were killed instantly and 20 heavily injured by indiscriminate gunshot; some Christians were killed by 'crucifixion' in Seoul; 29 burned (including 6 adherents of Cheondogyo) at Jeamri Church in Suwon; and so on. These are just representative cases of slaughter targeting Christians.<sup>5</sup>

As emphasised by the Protestant missionaries who witnessed Japanese forceful suppression in Korea at that time, the wholesale arrest of pastors, elders, other church officers, and lay Christians and beatings were "simply because they are Christians":<sup>6</sup> their identity was Christian. This observation brings to mind the martyrs' identification as Christian in front of the interrogators in the early Roman period. The Japanese military and police force's "brutality torture inhuman treatment" and massacres towards Christians during the Movement were also perceived as "religious persecution".<sup>7</sup> Indeed, 'Protestantism allied with nationalism' was the core identity of the PCK under Japanese colonial rule. Recognizing this identity of the Korean Protestant Christians, the Japanese government undertook a variety of suppressions and persecutions to destroy the nationalism of Korean Protestant Christians.

After the March First Movement had politically failed to gain Korea's total independence from Japan, most PCK leaders turned their back on direct political involvement opting for 'pure' Christianity and an 'apolitical stance' bearing in despair. However, most PCK leaders' apolitical stance was challenged by the national Shinto issue in the 1930s when the colonial government forced all people to worship at Shinto shrines as a patriotic act under the 'assimilation' policy.

### The Shinto Shrine Controversy in the 1930s onwards<sup>8</sup>

The 1930s was a period of rising of militarist totalitarianism in Japan. Japanese ultra-conservative military political group launched a series of aggressive wars. Provoking the Manchurian incident in 1931 and establishing the pro-Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932, the Shanghai invasion in 1932, the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, and the Pacific war in 1941, the militarists implanted a strong 'assimilation' policy in their colonial countries propagating the idea of 'Pan-Asianism' or 'the Greater East Asia Co-Prospersity Sphere'<sup>9</sup> on the basis of the Emperor-god system, the spiritual and ideological basis of Japan during the war time. These ideologies justified Japanese expansionism and entangled the

colonised in the war, rhetorically glorifying it as a “holy war”,<sup>10</sup> and fortifying the common obligations toward the empire under the Kominka, the imperial-subject-making policy. From 1936 onwards, Minami Jiro, Governor-General of Korea, coercively pressed a series of assimilation programs on colonised Korea under the Kominka policy such as bowing to the East, reciting ‘the Pledge of the Subject of the Empire,’ adopting Japanese names, and using only Japanese in public, claiming the discourse of *naisen ittai*, which means ‘Japan and Korea are one body.’<sup>11</sup> Among them, the enforcement of Shinto shrine worship marked an arguably religious aspect of Japanese imperialism.<sup>12</sup>

The apolitical stance of the Protestant Church in Korea in the 1920s was, therefore, seriously challenged by the Japanese colonial government’s incremental pressure to attend rites held at State Shinto shrines as a ‘patriotic’ act. This coercion of Shinto Shrine worship especially from 1938 faced Protestant Christians in Korea with a “two-fold problem: performance of the rituals would be contrary to their own sense of nationalism as Koreans, and idolatrous as Christians.”<sup>13</sup> It was a conflict not only of beliefs between Protestantism and national Shintoism but also two national allegiances held by Japanese and Korean. Participation in State Shinto rites was not a religious problem for the Japanese Protestant Church which had already been officially persuaded by the state in November 1936<sup>14</sup> to conclude that the rituals were merely memorial rites without significant religious content.<sup>15</sup> Catholics in both Korea and Japan revised their attitude to State Shinto rites through the announcement of the Concordat between the Office of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda and the Japanese Government on 26 May 1936,<sup>16</sup> the core content of which was that the Vatican allowed Catholics to participate in State Shinto rites, accepting them as a patriotic duty rather than an idolatrous act.<sup>17</sup> As a result the participation in Shinto rituals was a problem only for Korean Protestant Christians. However, by 1938, when the Presbyterian Church of Korea finally conformed, all Protestant churches in Korea as a denominational level surrendered to the Japanese colonial government admitting the attendance at Shinto rituals as a patriotic duty.

Though the Church officially surrendered to the coercive pressure, some devoted Protestant Christians, most of whom were theologically conservative, refused to conform, following literally the first three of the Ten Commandments. Accordingly, the Japanese police force arrested over 2,000 Protestants who failed to make clear answers to the three questions given to them: “(1) Was Shinto-

shrine worship a national rite or a religious rite? (2) Which was higher, Amaterasu Omikami (Japan's highest god) or Christ? and (3) Which was more important, state or church?"<sup>18</sup> The imprisoned had been severely tortured and over 200 local churches were compulsorily closed for resisting attendance at State Shinto rites. Of those Protestant Christians, at least 50 were said to have been killed as a direct result of their refusal to do shrine worship during the period 1938 to 1945.<sup>19</sup> However, the exact list of names and number who died for resisting shrine worship is not yet clear. Allen D. Clark,<sup>20</sup> Samuel H. Moffett,<sup>21</sup> and Min Kyoung-Bae<sup>22</sup> insist the figure is 50 Protestants or more, following Kim Yang-Seon,<sup>23</sup> whereas Bruce F. Hunt<sup>24</sup> gives over 30, Kim Seung-Tae<sup>25</sup> presents 25, and Yi Chan-Yeong<sup>26</sup> listed 22 Protestants who choose death for their stance against State Shinto shrine worship.

Because the PCK could not take a unified stance, a significant conflict arising between those who resisted the Shinto shrine worship and those participating in it. Rallying the refusal in Gyeongsang province in December 1939 in order to transform sporadic individual resistance into a systematic one, Rev Han Sang-Dong, determined some principles for effective refusal. What is interesting is that their code of conduct included 'aggressive separatism' saying, "destroy the pro-Shinto worship presbyteries, reorganise new presbytery by the non-attendees, do not be baptised by those who participated in the rites, etc", and in March 1940 in Manchuria, Rev Lee Gi-Seon declared, "refuse Shinto worship unto death, do not send children to the schools compromised on the issue, and do not attend the churches acquiescing in the requirement of attendance in Shinto worship." They formed a separate community of resistance.<sup>27</sup> Apart from the disunity between conformists and opponents on the Shinto shrine issue, the Korean Protestants' internal conflict became a significant obstacle to declaring those who were killed amid the Shinto shrine controversy as martyrs.

Here we touch on the political nature of martyr-making in this, perhaps the clearest example of the interweaving of religion and power. The post-independence polarisation of the PCK increased in large part due to this issue of pro- and anti-Japanese behaviour, exacerbating the division of the Church. Even under the immediate occupation of the Korean peninsula after liberation from Japan in 1945, the North being occupied by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and South by the United States of America (USA), there could be no clear historical resolution of the 'pro- or anti-Japanese issue' because it

was linked to pro- or anti-communism. This impasse is still the basis of argument today in Korean Church, but in order fully to comprehend it, we need to look to the start of this political wrangle after the end of the First World War.

## Martyr-Making of the Protestant Church in Korea

Though Protestant Christians' death took place through the Korean Conspiracy Case in 1911, the March First Movement in 1919 and the result of Shinto Shrine controversy during the late 1930s and 1940s, they were not designated as Protestant martyrs before independence from Japan because it would have been impossible so to designate any opposing Japanese rule during colonialism. However, when the nation was liberated, those who died in consequence of the Shinto Shrine conflict were immediately designated as Protestant martyrs not in whole ecclesiastical level but in personal by local Christian groups or churches. They were designated officially as PCK's martyrs in 1983.

Given the tensions during the colonial time between resisters against and conformists to Japanese rule, Methodists had a more unified response, the Presbyterian Church of Korea found greater problems in the aftermath of occupation. In 1947, they held a memorial service to commemorate only 'the Presbyterian Christians martyrs' who died in consequence of the Shinto Shrine conflict in Seungdong church in Seoul.<sup>28</sup> The tension between conformists and resisters led to the division of the Presbyterian Church,<sup>29</sup> central power being taken over by the group of pro-Japanese Christians during the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMSiK, American) and Rhee Syng-Man's regime based on the ideology of anticommunism. Accordingly, the martyr-making recognition of Christians who fought against Shinto Shrine worship, suffering from imprisonment and severe torture, and memorial events for them, were no longer carried out after 1947 given the dominance of the pro-Japanese church authority on the ground of anticommunism in the Presbyterian Church.

Despite the martyr-making process of the PCK for at least 50 Christians killed amid the Shinto shrine controversy though carried out in personal level, those Christians killed amid the Conspiracy Case in 1911 and the March First Independence Movement in 1919 still remained without religious identification or were deliberately excluded from those martyr-making processes even though those two situations were clearly perceived by the PCK authority and missionaries

as Christian persecutions carried out by Japanese colonial power. Even the Japanese colonial authority had acknowledged that their suppression especially targeted Christian groups, characterising the PCK's involvement in national patriotism, using a metaphor of Church and State relationship taken in particular from the case of Christianity in Roman period and the English Roman Catholics in Elizabeth and James I.<sup>30</sup> It is, therefore, easy to infer that there might have been numerous Christians sacrificed amid the engagement for independence during the Japanese colonial regime. Yet the PCK counted only 69 PCK Christians, in particular Presbyterian and Methodist Christians, killed by shooting, torturing or severe beating<sup>31</sup> amid two incidents. The PCK designated just a few martyrs among the 69, but other deaths still remained without any investigation or attention on the official ecclesiastical level. However, the PCK were swift to pay attention to those killed by communists outside Korea, especially in Manchuria and Siberia, in the 1920s and 1930s: those killed by Japanese military forces for their nationalist activities as Christians within Korea were largely ignored.

### Apolitical Attitude of the PCK in Making Martyrs

Leaving other characteristics of the PCK's martyr-making work for a while, let us look first at the PCK's apolitical stance, to discern why so few of those deaths amid the Korean Conspiracy Case and the March First Independence Movement were designated as martyrs by the PCK while those deaths caused by Shinto shrine controversy were immediately named as PCK martyrs.

The PCK's apolitical attitude towards secular politics was launched after the failure of the March First movement in which the PCK was actively involved in various types of national independence movement. This attitude was sustained until the Shinto shrine controversy in the 1930s, especially in 1938. Ostensibly the anti-Shinto shrine movement was perceived as a type of independence movement carried out by conservative devotional Christians. However, their anti-Shinto shrine worship stance was also based on their view that it challenged their Christian identity, forcing idolatry not ethnic national identity as Korean Christian: the secular political authority, the colonial power, did not agree. Indeed the PCK wished clearly to distinguish the sacred from the secular, yet in actuality there could be no way for such a dichotomy, especially while their nation was

under colonial regime that the sacred Christian identity was clearly appeared in secular nationalism. Whether the PCK perceived it or not, martyrdom is the most religious ideology, yet at the same time it is the most political one. Yet the PCK still asserts their apolitical attitude even as that relates to interpreting a death as martyrdom. Min Kyoung-Bae says that though anti-Shinto shrine worship can be represented as a resistance movement based on national identity, it was actually fidelity to God to follow his commandments rather than idolatry concluding: "martyrdom is loyalty towards God not a resistance act".<sup>32</sup>

This apolitical attitude also contributed to defend the church from secular oppression, in particular Japanese colonialism and imperialism, proclaiming that martyr-making work is only a sacred matter not a secular one, and they did not directly mobilise any Christian into the independence movements. According to this reasoning, the PCK honoured those deaths during the colonial periods, 1905-1945, caused by the Shinto shrine conflict, while other deaths occurring amid the Conspiracy case and the March First movement were largely ignored. For the PCK, deaths caused by those two incidents concerned secular politics, for which the better term for the dead is national patriot rather than martyr, though the PCK clearly noted that deaths amid the two cases were caused by the Japanese colonial power's religious persecutions.

Indeed, the PCK's selection of deaths during the Japanese colonial period, in which those deaths caused by the Shinto shrine controversy immediately took precedence in making martyrs, whether official or local basis, while others caused during the Conspiracy Case and March First Independence movement were excluded from the martyr-making process, was a result of the PCK's apparently apolitical but actually anticommunist attitude. On one hand, by placing the Shinto issues only on sacred ground by paralleling it with the Roman emperor worship, they regarded those killed amid the controversy as true disciples of Christ who witnessed unto death as the early period of Christians did. For the PCK, it was, therefore, natural to make them martyrs: other deaths based on more nationalist causes were identified as deaths not for God but for the secular nation, which were patriotic not martyr's deaths. On the other hand, by placing themselves on the ground of the anticommunist ideology supporting the USAMGiK and Methodist Elder Rhee's political group, pro-Japanese churchmen, including conformists on the Shinto issue, could maintain their power both in secular and sacred space. The result was those killed as Christians during the Japanese colonial regime



were not made martyrs. However, PCK's 'apolitical' attitude to the process of martyr-making dramatically changed under the entrenched anticommunism in South Korea after the Korean War in 1950.

The sudden division of the Korean peninsula just after Korea's liberation in August 1945 along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel was a result of the hegemonic ideologies of western powers in the Cold War. In the process of that division and establishment of each government in North and South, the ideologies functioned as "an unyielding belief system, which often seemed stronger than their faith".<sup>33</sup> Churches were inevitably forced into ideological choices. The PCK leaders even stood in the frontline of that struggle advocating and supporting the division of Korea. The political situation of the Korean peninsula during five years from Korea's liberation on 15 August 1945 to the Korean War on 25 June 1950 saw Protestantism in Korea deeply involved in the ideological struggle against communism. Thus the Korean War from 1950 to 1953 was a turning point in the martyr-making of the PCK. Many Christians who died during the War were immediately designated as martyrs of the PCK amid the War, on the basis of an anticommunist ideological purpose.

At this juncture, it is worth noting that those immediate martyr-designations of anticommunist martyrs after Korean War show that the PCK's apolitical tendency for making martyrs in the Japanese colonial period had turned into the active politicisation of the martyr-making operation of those killed by the communist army during the Korean War under the ideology of anticommunism. It suggests that the PCK's collection and exclusion of Christian deaths caused before and during the Korean War was carried out to enforce the political anticommunist ideology of South Korea, abandoning their 'apolitical' stance which had been strongly kept after the failure of the March First Independence Movement. Taking up the anticommunist nationalism entrenched by Rhee's political strategy in the post-colonial period in South Korea, the martyr-making process of the PCK was re-launched in earnest in the 1980s.

By starting to make anticommunist martyrs, the PCK's apolitical attitude actually became political, yet until now the PCK insists on their apolitical attitude towards martyr-making process and secular politics. However, in practice, under the ideology of anticommunism they are the most politicised group, enthusiastically making anticommunist martyrs and proclaiming those designated anticommunist martyrs were killed to secure South Korean society,

thus merging the sacred and the secular. In this sense, whether recognised or not, the PCK faced a serious dilemma in its making of martyrs: on one hand they still maintain an apolitical stance for investigating death-events before 1945 while on the other they make their best effort to collect deaths killed by communists after the 1920s when communism was introduced to Korean Christians.

This suggests that the martyr-making work of the PCK is closely involved in the construction of the discourse of anticommunism which was internalized in the whole of South Korean society and consequently became the ruling ideology through and after the Korean War. This also suggests that the PCK's martyr-making functioned as an effective tool not of propagating gospel but of making propaganda for the ideology of anticommunism which was deeply rooted in the PCK and secular society. From 1983 until now, the driving feature of making official martyrs in South Korea has been to make anticommunist martyrs. This phenomenon seems to be a result of an intended interpretation based on the optional collection of death-events under the ideology of state power, anticommunism. In other words, the martyr-making process of the PCK was playing its role in the propaganda for anticommunism.

It is clear that the martyr-making process of the PCK was utilised not in inviting the believers to the witness or declaration of gospel, but to anticommunism. The PCK played a vital role in maintaining and proclaiming anticommunism quite apart from the propagation and declaration of gospel.

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# The History of the Hungarian Reformed Theological Thought – An Outline

The Hungarian theological thinking has been in an organic interaction with the Western type of the Christian teaching since the time of its birth in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Of the pre-Reformation movements that played an important role in its preparation, it was Hussitism that might have had a direct impact on it. A sign of this is that the first Hungarian version of the Bible was referred to as the “Hussite Bible”. Of the ecclesio- and socio-critical movements within the medieval church, the “Observant” branch of the Franciscan order had a powerful influence on it (e.g. preaching in the vernacular, puritan lifestyle). Almost all of the important figures of the Hungarian Reformation came out of the ranks of the observant Franciscans! \*

*Peregrinatio* ( i.e. pursuing studies abroad by Hungarian students of theology) was an important point of contact to the Western European universities. As a rule, after concluding their studies -at home, Hungarian students spent several years at German, Dutch, Swiss or Scottish universities and they returned with the most up-to-date theological knowledge. In the beginning, the University of Wittenberg was frequented the most. It is important to note that the reason for the Reformed students to study in Wittenberg was not that much Luther but Melanchton. The three pillars of Melanchton’s theology: *pietas, humanitas, eruditio*, i.e.: the life committed to following Christ, the ideal of the humanistic scholarship and cultural education made a powerful impact on the emergence

and on the consolidation of the Hungarian Reformation. The controversy on the issue of the Holy Communion between the German and the Swiss Reformation (In what way is Christ present in the Lord's Supper?) made the Hungarian students to attend Dutch, Swiss and Scottish universities after 1580, instead of German ones.

Among the Swiss Reformers, it was not Calvin, but the Reformers of Zürich: Zwingli and Bullinger who had the most influence. The difference in emphasis was most apparent in the fact that the Swiss Reformation did not remain solely within the boundaries of the church but had an impact on the whole society. This answer was more compatible with the Hungarian circumstances of the time, as an answer was sought about the will of God, while the country lost its independence and the prevailing ecclesiastical and political structures were falling apart. These circumstances are important because, in the Hungarian Reformation, the question of the freedom of the gospel was closely linked to the question of the freedom of denominations and to the national freedom. The roots of a theological interpretation of history were found in the Book of Judges. According to this, if the people sin against the will of God, God sends a foreign rule as a punishment. If the people turn back to God and if they repent from their sins, God's grace sends a liberator under the leadership of whom they regain their freedom and independence. A notion of the parallel of the fate of the people of Israel and of the Hungarian people appears here very powerfully.

The Hungarian Reformed church adopted her first two fundamental confessions in 1567: the Heidelberg Catechism of 1563 and the Second Helvetic Confession which was published in 1566. These two confessions, which still have binding authority today, show an evident influence of the theology of Calvin. The impact of the Reformation was incredibly strong, by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century more than 90 % of the Hungarian population was Protestant, and predominantly Reformed.

The history of the next centuries is a history of the theoretical and practical problem of the denominational freedom and of the national independence. The Hungarian Reformed people live between the pressing forces of the Turkish and of the Austrian (Habsburg) empires, under political, economic and denominational oppression. It is characteristic of this oppression that one of the Habsburg ministers of State declared that "Hungary must be made poor, German and Catholic". This shows the substance of the imperial way of thinking. The people need to be deprived of its economic, cultural and religious independence (autonomy) and they will be obedient subjects.

The age of bloody and bloodless counter-Reformation (the first denotes the open and violent persecution, the latter the intimidation by legal and administrative means) ends by the so-called Edict of Tolerance in 1781, which, though did not yet provide for a full scale equality of denominations, granted more freedom of action for the Protestants in the empire of emperor Joseph II.

The connections [to Western Christianity] were kept alive even under these stressed circumstances, mainly by translating theological works (Calvin: The Institutes, Heidelberg Catechism). The spiritual literature was flourishing, especially influenced by English and Scottish Puritanism. Prayer books and sermons aimed at encouraging the reading and understanding of the Bible and the expression of the faith in one's own mother tongue, according to the principle of the priesthood of all believers. Of the Dutch theologies, it was the so-called theology of the covenant (Cocceius) that became well-known and accepted. According to this, God reveals God's will in a series of covenants throughout the history of salvation. The fulfilment of this is the new, universal covenant given in Christ. The believers, as the members of this covenant may live their freedom, received in Christ, in the communion of the congregation and of the church. This freedom has got an order; that is why the question of church discipline becomes so emphatic in the Reformed theology and in the practice of life in the congregations. In the Calvinist thought the disciplining authority of the community plays an important role among the notes of the true church, next to the pure proclamation of the Word and the proper administration of the Sacraments. Another important emphasis is laid on the notion that the consequence of justification is a holy and a grateful life. The emphasis on the individual sanctification becomes prevailing in the Hungarian Reformed theology and spirituality especially as a result of the influence of German Pietism and of English Puritanism. The practice of pious life - *praxis pietatis* - with a focus on the individual believer is a kind of reaction to the rationalist and liberal theologies. However, if it becomes exclusive, it necessarily leads to a narrowing of the scope which loses the Vision of the universal claim of the Christian message and of the reality of Kingdom of God as it is revealed in the world.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Hungarian Reformed theology had undergone the "anthropocentric turn", too, i.e. the analysis of the religious person, and of the religious experience got into the center of the theological thought. According to this approach, the worship service is not an act in which God makes an impact on

the individual by God's Word and Spirit, but the worship service is an expression of the faith experience of the religious person and community. The sermon is a speech with religion as its subject, which provides for an aesthetic experience at its best. By this the conviction of the Reformation according to which the proclamation of God's Word is God's Word, is lost.

The important question of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was how the heritage of Calvin can be lived in a changed, modernized environment. The different approaches of theology are not separated from each other distinctly, no extreme schools of theologies are developed. Categories of academic and believing theologies emerge but they never lead to secession within the church. The controversy of the historical and ecclesiastical Calvinism was confined to the question whether the existing ecclesiastical structures were suitable for the renewal or renewal would make new structures necessary. The permanent subject of the debate was the institutionalization of the missionary and diaconal work of the associations, and this debate is going on even today. Does the church sustain its institutions (schools, social care) or the institutions are the sustainers of the church. This is the way the question is asked today.

It is an undisputable fact that Karl Barth's theology made the strongest impact on the Hungarian Reformed thought. One of the reasons for this was the fact that most of the systematic theologians had been Barth's students before. Another of the reasons was that Barth, a Western theologian of great respect, who was not an anti-Communist, suited the strategy of survival of the church leadership in the time of a Communist dictatorship quite well. By this we already touch upon the following problem: in the Reformed Church in Hungary, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the church leadership instrumentalized theology, i.e. theology was used in order to serve the objectives of church politics. This so-called "theology of the serving church" was to prove that the sole' fundament of existence of the church is that it affirms the new, Socialist social order without any reservations. When it was emphasized that that theology has got an ecclesiastical function, it was meant that doing theology was a privilege of church functionaries. The independence of theology was a recurring subject in the past half century. Theology may only be done under the control of the church leadership, according to their instructions, this is the only legitimation of her existence. This *cantus firmus* appears again and again in many forms in different declarations. Centralization is applied here, too. Topics of training courses for ministers were determined by



the center, with speakers from the center, with a series of well- choreographed and closely controlled responses. The reaction to this was a passive resistance by many and this has still got a lasting effect today. So much energy was consumed by the denial of inner identification that no desire for change remained in the ministers even when the opportunities got open. The church leadership of today is not free from the attitúdé of worries about theology either. The humble and meek voices claiming independence for theology are usually confronted by referring to the looming danger of decadent Western "luxury theologies" which are churchless and far removed from the reality of the congregations. The critical assessment of the Reformed theological work of the past decades is a task for the generation of today. In order to avoid the danger of a mere hunt for scapegoats, but to experience this as a cathartic ministry, a real theological work needs to be done. Theology can only be measured by theological criteria. Following Barth, István Török points to an important theological aspect when he identifies a Christological heresy in the theological direction which adds a supplement to the ancient creed: "Jesus Christ is Lord". This supplement, that claimed more and more space for itself until it became the determining factor sounded like this: "... for this reason we say "yes" to Socialism".

A realistic assessment of the situation on a biblical basis could not lead to anything else in a legitimate way - i.e. according to the Word of God - than to confession of sins and to repentance. The declaration of confession of sins by the Council of the Synod in 1946 testifies, in a way which is equally relevant today, that the church *"did not fulfil her prophetic office. She did not care sufficiently for the purity of the proclamation of the Word, she did not maintain proper discipline among the leaders of the church, she got lazy of töve, entered into compromises with the powerful and gave room for worldly rules in the church"*. The voice of individual responsibility is not missing either from this confession: *"...We confess on behalf of all members of the congregations that we were neither attentive hearers nor faithful doers of the Word...Our light was not shining, our salt got tasteless, and our life did not give glory to the Heavenly Father."* The motif of confession remains, but its scope is narrowing. On the one hand, the meaning of the confession of sins, according to the Pietist tradition, is concentrating on the lack of moral integrity in the life of the individual, which leads to ignoring the historical dimensions and of the reality of the structural evil. On the other hand, the confession of sins becomes a suitable slogan in all the cases when the church wishes to express even a mild

form of criticism on the distorted, ungodly and inhumane actions in the social and political life. Referring to the confession of sin is used to remind the church that she had lost the right of influencing and of criticizing because she did not practiced her prophetic office consequently in the past. This confession cannot be followed by trust in the God's mercy and in the intercession of

Jesus Christ, and a hope that renewal and life rises after the true confession. According to the above- mentioned interpretation, the sole consequence of the confession cannot be anything else than silencing of criticism, making loyalty the highest virtue, identifying the new social order with goodness, or sometimes even with the Ultimate Good, dutifully renewed declarations of faithfulness, and a voluntary retreat from life and from social publicity - caused by the motive of accommodation - to within the walls of the church, from where it is only possible and allowed to step out when being called. A narrowed and instrumentalized concept of the confession of sins became thus one of the important causes of the distortion of the image of the church.

Self-criticism - in the form of confession of sins - appears demonstratively at great historical turning points and it disappears wholly thereafter. Confession of sins has always got a reference in the past, it has thus no legitimacy in the presence. There is only one good way: the way we are walking. This is eventually nothing else than absolutizing the relative. Who speaks out against this is a subversive element.

Neglecting the criterion of "relationality" is shown by the uniformization of the differing theological-spiritual streams. The impact of the wave of awakening was an important element in the shaping of the image of the church. As the associations were dissolved or merged [into the church], a form of ecclesial life disappeared which had been an answer to the demand on smaller fellowships. This form was officially declared as unwanted. Instead of integrating this element into the church, it was suppressed and it made both parties unhealthy and broken. There was no healthy dialogue between the marginalized revivalist movement that was forced to go illegal and the church leadership. This was characteristic of the style of the church leadership in general. A mechanism of "order-report-control" made the sphere of trust less and less possible. Trust was replaced by trustworthy people. A crisis of confidence that surfaced with an elementary power in the times of social crises (1956, 1989) was a logical consequence of this condition. As the different opinions and different types of spirituality were not in

touch with each other on an equal basis, opinions got petrified and extreme, and they surfaced as such in the very moment when State apparatus - that had been exercising patronage - ceased to guarantee the internal status quo of the church.

Social changes, in the course of which the lifestyle of the peasantry - which counted as a social basis of the Reformed church - was destroyed, played a very important role in the shaping of the image of the church as well. Declarations that presented the Socialistic reorganization of the agriculture as an undisputable achievement betray a serious lack of the sense of reality and a missing theological reflection. These declarations did not count with the fact that this new economic form that ignores the elementary rules of functioning of the economy, can never be profitable and it does not meet the criterion of human proportionality. The ambivalent process of urbanization made formerly independent congregations unable to survive and the church was not able to react properly to the challenges of a secularized environment. A consequence of the loss of the social basis the marginalization of the laity and a recently emerging "anti-clergy" sentiment. The disappearance of the critical laity contributed largely to the low quality of work and to the laxity that can be experienced in many areas of the life of the church and to the silent acceptance of the consequences of contra-selection.

Our situation today is characterized by a strange contradiction. On the one hand, the society, after the changes of 1989, looked upon the church with almost messianistic hopes and expected the only true solutions from her. The public character of the church has become evidently stronger. The church can only fulfil the new tasks offered in a structure of a people's church (*Volkskirche*). This would be a return [to a previous situation] that does not count with the whole reality of today and tomorrow. It is true that the church does not have her source of life in this earthly reality, but it is even less possible that she lived by the restoration of the systems of institutions of the past. It is not possible to start to work on the new or newly offered tasks without an internal clarification of matters.

The need of internal clarification has the following meaning for us: To formulate the fundamental questions about the relationship of theology and the church, about the legitimate way of doing theology and about how to find a distinct Hungarian Reformed theological profile, and to make an attempt to give an answer to these questions. The first of all these, is the rediscovery and practice of the dialectic tension between the critical reflection of faith, the spiritual forms of the living of the faith, and the governance of the church

supporting the undisturbed functioning of the activity of the life of the church. Where this tension is abolished, the living organism is replaced by uniformity, to be followed as the highest virtue. Whether it is one of the forms of spirituality or the government of the church that “instrumentalizes” theology, it harms the whole church. Distortion of the image of the church and distortion of theology are realities that necessarily and essentially belong together.

It can be encountered again and again in evaluations of the theology of-service (both by the official church and in official Marxist statements) that the socio-ethical propositions of the Hungarian Reformed theology were not born out of theoretical analyses but out of “mere obedience”. In practice, this sentence means that the theological-theoretical work, the recognition of reality and the confrontation with the praxis that had been necessary for these socio-ethical steps were entirely missing. There are declarative arguments that there were biblical notions and a Hungarian Reformed theological tradition in the background of practical decisions, but these arguments are not convincing. The way between the biblical notion and the practical consequence is simplified and shortened too much, and the actual “argument” is that “time will prove that we are right”. What Arthur Rich describes when writing about the distinction of real and false determinations, came true here. He defines false determinations as the one of which critical analysis can discover that they are caused by individual or corporate interests. Emphasizing that they cannot be changed serves to maintain and legitimize these conditions. “Mere obedience” meant the acceptance of things that did not meet the criteria of “factuality” and of “human proportionality”. Therefore, this sentence is the expression and indirect confession of a narrowed theology. This is not written out of a “frivolous misuse of the charism of being born later” but as a warning for today. Politics and representatives of economic structures tend to refer to “false determinations” today, too. For instance, it is a reference to a “false determination” to say that a Corporation which purchases newspapers with different political leanings are driven solely by one aspect which is profit. The absolutization of this one - in itself legitimate - aspect makes taking other aspects into consideration impossible. Reference to “we knew what we should have done, too, and we did what we could” is not convincing, as, at a later stage, the reader has got the impression that it was the best possible world ever. The theological legitimization of this was not necessary.

Theological work was eventually subordinated to the church leadership which pursued a "strategy of survival". This had fatal consequences for theology, because "the difference between an honest theology and the church leadership is, that theology is not ready to make compromises". A "strategy of survival" is not suitable to provide a guidance which is in accordance with reality. "Survival" is a characteristically apocalyptic term, which focuses solely to help the individual and the community through an imminent catastrophe.

A characteristic formulation of the cynicism and of the carelessness, by which the actual theological work was measured in the past era, is an - unwritten - proverbial definition of the key aspects of the study of theology by a church official: "Two things must be cared about: 1. It must not say that God does not exist; and 2. It must not say "Long live Miklós Horthy!". This obviously means, on the one hand, that appearances must be kept up, no attention should be drawn, our Reformed people must not be scandalized, and, on the other hand, the System is holy and must not be harmed, *and* it is untouchable by any criticism (as it is unchangeable, thus it is given an absolute character), and, at most., it can and should only be legitimized. Forgetting this, theology will suffer of the condition of "tunnel vision": it may sometimes have to look into the "tunnel" of the barrel of a gun pointed at it, but, after a period of time, he keeps having the vision of this "tunnel" even when the gun had already disappeared.

Instrumentalized theology is always a selective theology. One of the phenomena of the theology instrumentalized by the church leadership which „awaits analysis is a selective Barth- interpretation and its effects which go as far as to a Docetist understanding of the revelation and of the proclamation of the Word. This, on the one hand, made it possible that several new phenomena of human life, of culture and of Science were not addressed (because this was declared a forbidden zone for the church by the ideology), and, on the other hand, I am convinced, that it contributed to the superficiality and to the low quality of the sermons. We can make a long list of examples of selective exegesis, and of Bible studies actualized by shifting of emphases.

Instrumentalized and selective theology is always narrow and narrowing. We may have been spared of some fashionable and extravagant theological trends during the past fifty years, but, let us consider it, whether this sheltered existence was not provided on the expense of confrontations with real big questions and theological problems. If we just look at an outline of the European history of

theology of the last half of a century, it is evident that we - partially or entirely - owe answers to unavoidable questions. (Demythologization - '40s, criticism of religion -'50s, secularization - '60s, the so-called "post-Christian" era - '70s, new religiosity-'80s).

This narrowness had an effect in the structure of theological training, too. I do not doubt that a great deal of "strategy of survival" contributed to this, but it would be a fatal misunderstanding to maintain it without any changes. Another form of narrowness was the loss of contact with other areas of science. As the present time of conjuncture, when theology and theologians are looked upon as curiosities, is going to pass, it will be evident how a new integrative-interdisciplinary paradigm will be formed on this area.

There are also personal aspects of the narrowness. As in other denominations, a generation of "great theologians" was almost swiped away, many of them became victims of the interests of church politics, deprived of possibilities to teach and to publish. The question of followers is an urgent one and it demands serious efforts.

I think that the Hungarian Reformed theology as a whole basically tends to be a conservative theology, free from extravagant and extreme theological trends. Its task is to help the membership of the church - which is based on a personal faith-commitment - to consider their faith in Christ as the most personal public cause. To help them to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God in a way that its wholeness gets manifest in the individual, confession of faith, in the confession of faith in the communion of the congregation and of the church, in the work for peace and for justice and in the responsibility carried for the created world.

# Church, Minjung and the State in North Korea

## INTRODUCTION

The issue of church and state takes us to the heart of mission because the Gospel is the good news in every part of human life and society. Throughout the history of the Church in Korea, the issues of church and state, religion and society have been deeply connected to the development of the Korean churches. Indeed, an important factor in Christianity's success in Korea has been its frequent identification with political movements promoting Korean nationalism, independence, democracy, and Korean reunification. Especially in Northern Korea before the division of the peninsula in 1945, and in North Korea after it,<sup>1</sup> the church-state relationship has been one of the crucial issues determining the fate of the churches.

Before the partition of the Korean peninsula in 1945, the majority of Christians in Korea lived in Northern Korea. Pyongyang, the capital city of North Korea, was referred to as the "Jerusalem of East Asia" by missionaries,<sup>2</sup> indicating that Northern Korea was the vibrant center of, in particular, Protestant Christianity.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, however, the Protestant church in North Korea was officially closed down, and virtually ceased to exist from 1958 to 1972. After the partition in 1945, the Protestant Christians in North Korea collided with the Communist regime in a brief competition for political hegemony.<sup>4</sup> This collision resulted in the persecution of Christianity in North Korea, and most Christians evacuated to South Korea during the Korean War. There were only about 50,000 'remnant'

Protestant Christians and about 20 ordained ministers left behind the Iron Curtain after the war.<sup>5</sup> There is some evidence that these remnant Christians in North Korea continued in conflict with the Communist government even in the post-war context.<sup>6</sup> Because of this conflict, the Communists did not allow any religious freedom for the Christians from 1958 to 1972, during which they operated a hostile religious policy known as the "Anti-Religious Campaign."<sup>7</sup>

In 1972, the North Korean government lifted its ban on Christianity and the Protestant church in North Korea started to revive. Instead of entering into conflict with the government, the North Korean church now worked within its Communist context. Two churches were built, the theological seminary reopened for ministry training, and the Bible and hymnbook were again printed. Christianity, which had been considered as "anti-revolutionary social opium,"<sup>8</sup> was re-evaluated as "a partner of the reconstruction of socialist fatherland and the reunification of Korean peninsula"<sup>9</sup> by the Korean Worker's Party (KWP). This change in the state's understanding of Christianity brought widened religious freedom allowing worship, Eucharist, baptism and restricted church planting.

In spite of this revival of the Protestant church in North Korea, the history of Protestant Christianity in North Korea has been little known to the outside world. Most historians focused their questions on whether or not the revival of Protestant churches in North Korea was a simply matter of political propaganda. The church-state relationship, it must be emphasized, is the starting point of the criticisms launched by Christians from the South against the North Korean Church. It is also a crucial actor in both the disappearance and, later, the revival of the Protestant church in North Korea. By focusing on the church-state relationship, this article will argue that the revival of Protestant Christianity in North Korea was due to sustained efforts by the North Korean Christians to articulate their Christian identity within the Communist context.

## Theological Criteria for the Analysis of Church-State Relations in North Korea

In this paper, the historical paradigms of church and state relationship will be re-examined not simply chronologically, but interpretively. Three approaches will be used in the analysis of church-state relations. Each approach has its own justification.



Firstly, a *minjung*-centered approach, arising from the liberation of the oppressed, will be justified by the historical evidence that Northern Korean Protestantism is characteristically the 'church for the *minjung*.<sup>10</sup> A *minjung* perspective precludes a privileged focus on elites in writing a history of the Korean church. Rather, it pays attention to the struggle of the *minjung* for the transformation of history. *Minjung* theologians insist that "*minjung* are the subject of social history,"<sup>11</sup> and their story is viewed as the center of history in *minjung* theology.

Secondly, a post-Cold War approach will be justified on the basis that Christian socialism was an influential movement among Northern Korean Protestants during the period of Japanese colonial occupation of Korea. This has not yet received an objective assessment due to subsequent Cold War confrontation between South and North Korea. There is evidence that most Korean history writing, including ecclesiastical history, has served to emphasize the legitimacy and superiority of each one side over against the other, promoting one of the two systems, or ideologies, and attacking its opposite. Church history written from the perspective of South Korea demonstrates a tendency toward anti-Communism, sometimes resembling McCarthyism.<sup>12</sup> This is used to justify the division of the Korean peninsula and keep the North Korean Church and South Korean Church separate. This thesis will attempt to develop a post-Cold War perspective in writing a history of northern Protestantism that strives for the reconciliation and reunification of the two Koreas.

Lastly, a post-colonial approach will be adopted in order to overcome the academic legacy of Japanese colonialism. For example, Korean mainline churches still keep silence on the issue of *Shinto* shrine worship. It is a responsibility of church historians to criticize the mistakes of churches in the past, so that they will not be repeated.

Of these three approaches, the *minjung*-centered approach is the most important filter that will be used to understand church-state relations, as applied to Protestant Christianity in North Korea. The struggle of the North Korean Church for the *minjung* in the process of the revival will be clarified. Moreover, it will be shown that the *minjung*-centered approach is a criterion for understanding the proper relationship between church and state in each historical context of North Korea.

This approach links up with the way church-state relations were conceptualized as an important ecumenical agenda, as far back as the Oxford

Conference on Church, Community, and State in 1937.<sup>13</sup> Rather than addressing church-state relations on a bilateral axis, the conference “triangulated” the issue by re-conceiving it in terms of church-community-state relations.<sup>14</sup> Community did not mean “national community” as a structural and legal element of the nation-state.<sup>15</sup> Rather, the conference considered grassroots communities in approaching the church-state relations.<sup>16</sup> There was a strong intention to construct the issue from a grassroots people’s perspective. This thesis will apply the same triangular approach to the analysis of the characteristics of the church-state issue of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, so as to include the *minjung* perspective as a dynamic element of the relationship.

This unique triangular approach of Oxford was a result of the concern of the ecumenical movement for suffering people. It is of interest that the notion of “community” was brought into the question of the relationship between church and state at the moment when the ecumenical movement was confronted with the totalitarian claims of the Nazi Third Reich.<sup>17</sup> In this context, the Oxford conference deliberately intended to clarify church-state relations for the sake of the church’s witness for “people”. Oxford did not restrict its attention to traditional legal problems, but concentrated primarily on the witness and service of the church in society. The reasoning behind taking church, community and state together was clearly that the church’s first concern should be how the Christian community can best serve suffering people in the wider community, not how it can secure its own institutional rights within the political system. The conference called all Christians “to a more passionate and costly concern for the outcast, the under-privileged, the persecuted, the despised in the community and beyond the community.”<sup>18</sup> The Oxford approach therefore refuses to divorce the church’s relation to the state from its service to the community and its social responsibility.

The Oxford conference recognized the dual citizenship of Christians to church and state and “the dual loyalty to God and Caesar.”<sup>19</sup> However, it affirmed, “It is God who declares what is Caesar’s. Therefore, whatever the choice may be, the Christian must, whether as a member of the church or as a citizen, obey the Will of God.”<sup>20</sup> The conference understood that Caesar (the state) is “ordained by God” as “servant of justice”<sup>21</sup> for His people, but still stands under God’s authority and judgment:

We recognize the existing States as historically given realities, each of which in the political sphere is the highest authority, but which, as it stands itself under the authority and judgment of God, is bound by His Will and has the God-given aim of upholding law and order, of ministering to the life of the people united within it or the peoples or groups who are so united, and also of making its contribution to the common life of all peoples.<sup>22</sup>

The Oxford Conference acknowledged the authority of the state, but recognized it as relative not ultimate, an authority that can only legitimately be for the God-given purpose of serving the “welfare” and “life of people.” The Oxford Conference declared that the state is not the ultimate source of law, “not the lord, but the servant” of the people. In spite of this God-given purpose, the conference recognized that in reality, “often the state becomes an instrument of evil,”<sup>23</sup> which oppresses the people.

Therefore, the Oxford Conference concluded, “The church in differing historical situations may be called to take differing positions either of co-operation, criticism, or opposition.”<sup>24</sup> It is significant that the Oxford Conference recognized all possible relationships between church and state according to socio-historical contextuality. However, what was important was that within the triangular relationship between the church, the community and the state, the notion of the “community of grassroots people” was the crucial criterion determining whether the church’s proper relationship to the state was one of cooperation, criticism, or opposition.<sup>25</sup> If a state acts as the servant of the community of grassroots people, a church may cooperate. However, when the tyrannical state oppresses the people against the Will of God, the church has to oppose the state. Indeed, this triangular approach of Oxford was a remarkable development in the ecumenical debate on church-state relations, affirming people-centered or community-centered criteria over against legal or bureaucratic considerations.

Applied to the Korean context, the Oxford notion of “community” can be replaced with the Korean notion of *minjung*, which means the community of marginalized people in Korean society. Therefore, in this thesis, the Oxford approach will be applied to the North Korean context as a triangular filter of “Church, *Minjung* and State”. This triangular relationship of church, *minjung* and state will be used as an analytical tool in order to ascertain what the proper relationship between the church and the state ought to be in North Korea

## Historical Paradigms and Assessments

### *The Minjung-Centered Oppositional Paradigm*

Protestant Christianity was introduced to the Korean peninsula through the 'northern route.' It arrived in a northern Korean society that suffered from economic, social and political discrimination, in relation to Southern Korea, at the end of the Joseon Dynasty. Against the traditional caste system of the south-centered Confucianism, northern Protestantism engaged in the enlightenment of social equality among the northern *minjung*. Northern Protestantism developed the idea of social reformation, which emphasized a republican polity, emphasizing the role of the people against that of the monarch. Translation of the Bible into *Hangeul*, the language of *minjung*, gave the *minjung* a new vision of the Kingdom of God, where every human being is equal.

When Korea was colonized by Japan, the exploitation by the Japanese colonial government concentrated on Northern Korea because of its mining industry, and in order to prepare the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. Under these conditions, Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea developed as an important focus of the independence movement, in particular through leading the March First Independence Movement. Korean nationalism thus became an important characteristic of northern Protestantism. When the Japanese imposed *Shinto* shrine worship to suppress the rise of Christian nationalism, the northern Christians strongly resisted, on the grounds that it was an issue of *status confessionis*. By leading the independence movement, northern Protestantism was recognized as a patriotic religion by the northern *minjung*.

In summary, therefore, the church-state relationship in Northern Korea before independence modelled a paradigm of Christian opposition to the state, aimed against both the south-centered Joseon Dynasty and Japanese colonial rule. In the development of this oppositional paradigm, the notion of being the church of the *minjung* was important in Northern Korean Christian self-identity. Northern Protestantism understood both the Joseon monarchy and the Japanese colonial state as tyrannies that oppressed the *minjung*. Therefore, resistance against the state was justified on the grounds of the liberation of the *minjung*. Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea was highly respected by the *minjung* as a patriotic and, indeed, a *minjung* religion. It can be concluded that this oppositional

paradigm of church-state relations was a major cause of Protestant Christianity's original success in Northern Korea.

### *The Competitive Oppositional Paradigm*

During Japanese rule, both Protestant Christianity and the Communist movement, especially Kim Il-sung's anti-Japanese guerrillas, were centers of the independence struggle in Northern Korea. With liberation, a new phase began. Northern Protestantism and Communism now encountered each other as ideological rivals in the task of nation building. The Christian attempt to take political hegemony through organizing the first modern political party in Korean history was offset by Kim Il-sung and his followers, who established a Communist regime with the support of the Soviet Army. Kim Il-sung invited the Christians to cooperate in national construction through joining a united front. However, the Five Province Joint Presbytery (FPJP) in North Korea rejected this option, and fell back on the oppositional paradigm of church and state that had prevailed during Japanese rule. The northern Christians argued that Christianity could not co-exist with atheistic Communism. Therefore, the Christians competed for political power through organizing Christian parties and clashed with the Communists over several political issues, and most notably that of the boycott of the general election.

In this process of political competition and conflict with the Communists, the northern Protestant Christians lost the support of the *minjung*. One of the main reasons behind the competition and conflict was the issue of land reform. The northern Christians rejected the Communist land reform in order to maintain their recently upgraded social status, in which they had risen out of the *minjung* to become part of the elite. As a consequence, the northern *minjung* welcomed the Communist policy of social reform, but did not favor of the northern Christians' attempt to gain political power. Because of the Communist suppression and the disapproval of the *minjung*, the political initiatives of the FPJP finally collapsed. With the outbreak of the Korean War, the majority of northern Protestant Christians evacuated to the South to avoid the discrimination and persecution they expected to experience under Communist rule.

The above oppositional paradigm between the church and the Communist state succeeded the traditional paradigm of opposition between church and state before liberation. However, the position of the church altered after liberation, by the fact that it lost the support of the *minjung*-axis. From this we can conclude that in the development of an opposition paradigm against state, the support of the *minjung* is a crucial factor. Without it, Christianity could not succeed in North Korea.

### *The Diplomatic Cooperative Paradigm*

With the establishment of the North Korean state in 1945, a cooperative paradigm developed between the leaders of the North Korea Christian Association (NKCA) and the new Communist government emerged. The NKCA recognized that the Communist social reform was necessary in North Korea. Therefore, they supported the Kim Il-sung regime, and participated in the United Front of North Korea. The NKCA and the Communist regime thus developed a cooperative paradigm of church-state relations.

Although this Christian group was a minority within the northern churches, it held ecclesiastical power with and through Communist support. The NKCA leaders introduced a radical renewal program to root northern Protestantism in the Communist soil. However, this process of renewal was largely dependent on the support they received from the Communist state, and was carried out through a top-down method. The theological justification or basis for this approach was very weak, and in any case deficient. When the Korean War broke out, the NKCA leaders continued their cooperative paradigm by supporting the Communist cause against the UN "Police Action," which carried the support of the WCC and western churches. However, their cooperation resulted in failure because the majority of northern Christians, including many leaders of NKCA, fled to the South during the war.

Thus, just as the FPJP's opposition to the Communist government lost the support of the northern *minjung*, so too the cooperation paradigm of the NKCA failed to find support among the grassroots Christians in North Korea. Although the NKCA supported the land reform, and declared its intention to work for the *minjung*, most of its activities were actually concentrated on securing

ecclesiastical power through a bureaucratic approach to the Communist state. While the FPJP aimed at obtaining the secular political power through competing with the Communists, the NKCA aimed at the same thing through diplomatic cooperation with the Communist leaders. Both eventually failed.

The original intention of the NKCA was to renew the church-state relationship through rooting northern Protestantism in the Communist soil. Although the NKCA aimed to be a church for the *minjung* in theory, in practice, its activity was focused on diplomatic cooperation with the Communists. The NKCA failed to achieve an authentic renewal of the northern churches because it attempted to achieve the renewal simply through bureaucratic changes.

Although by 1949 the NKCA had become the only representative Protestant organization in North Korea, it paid the price for its uncritical cooperation with the government. The NKCA became a sort of religious spokesman for the Kim Il-sung regime. The diplomatic cooperative paradigm of the NKCA resulted in a dependency of the church-axis on the state-axis at the expense of the *minjung*-axis. Its uncritical cooperation with the secular state also brought about an identity crisis in the NKCA in regard to public issues.

### *The Paradigm of Catacomb*

After the Korean War, only one fourth of Protestant Christians and a few NKCA pastors remained in North Korea. However, they were not able to reconstruct their churches because of the social antipathy toward the Christians, the great majority of whom had supported the enemy during the war. In this context, the remnant Christians (who were not part of the NKCA) again collectively boycotted the general election, as an action aimed against the Kim Il-sung regime. This boycott brought about a severe "Anti-Religious Campaign" by the Communists. The Communist state legalized a policy of social discrimination against the Christians. Anti-Communist underground Christian leaders were executed, and anti-Christian propaganda and slogans were displayed across North Korea. Because of the NKCA's concentration on a bureaucratic approach, it was not able to provide a theological justification for the continued existence of Christianity in North Korean Communist society.

Consequently, the remnant Christians were in difficulty to openly enjoy religious life after 1958. They gathered in underground house groups for secret and simple worship from 1958-1972. The state-axis absolutely overwhelmed the church-axis, and did not allow any religious freedom. This paradigm of church-state relations was similar to the paradigm of the Catacombs in Rome during the Neronian persecution.

The discrimination and persecution practiced against Christians in North Korea from 1958-1972 points to the failure of the former church-state relationships, developed by the NKCA and the FPJP. Both the competitive oppositional paradigm of the FPJP and the diplomatic cooperative paradigm of the NKCA had ignored the axis of the *minjung*. Therefore, when the Communist state introduced its hostile ideological attack on northern Protestantism, the remnant Christians were neither able to justify their Christian existence in the North Korean Communist society, nor able to receive any support and sympathy from the *minjung*. This taught northern Protestantism an important lesson: a diplomatic rapprochement with the state was clearly not enough to secure the survival of the church; rather it had to be a church "with" and "for" the *minjung*. Furthermore, it would have to articulate a theological understanding of the significance of Christian churches in a Communist society.

In spite of the terrible climate created by the Anti-Religious Campaign, the remnant Christians kept their faith by existing underground. This experience trained the remnant Christians so that they could keep the seed of faith, withstanding the most severe and trying conditions.

### *The Minjung-Centered Cooperative Paradigm*

From 1972 onwards, the political situation in North Korea changed, with the Communists becoming tolerant towards the remnant Christians because they no longer regarded the Christians as a political threat. Moreover, for the Communists it was necessary to use the Christians for propaganda purposes, demonstrating to the outside world that religious freedom existed in North Korea, during the political competition with South Korea. Therefore, the state was willing to permit limited religious freedom for the remnant Christians to enjoy free worship through the rewriting of the article on religion in the constitution. But this did not allow for public evangelism and religious education.



However, the subjective efforts of the remnant Christians for promoting a revival of Christianity were more important than constitutional change. They gathered together and re-established the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) as their national ecclesiastical organization in 1972, and reopened house churches. The revived KCF established the Platform for cooperation with the state, developing leadership institutions for the churches, providing a new translation of the Bible and hymnbook, instituting a system of registration, and engaging in North and South dialogue with the assistance of the WCC, for the external development of the revival. The institutional efforts of the KCF as the vehicle for the revival of post-1972 Christianity in North Korea proved successful. However, this revival was concentrated on quantitative rather than qualitative growth.

When the revival was stabilized, northern Protestantism began to search for internal qualitative renewal. The institutionally-revived northern churches sought to express their theological identity through the Christian-*Juche*an dialogue. One of the distinctive results of this dialogue was an increase of mutual understanding between the Christians and the *Jucheans*. The northern Christians accepted that the *Juche* Idea is not merely an expressing atheistic materialism, for it emphasizes that spiritual consciousness in what determines the course of history. On the other hand, the *Jucheans* also recognized that Christianity is not simply the opium of the people. Moreover, both found that there is a similarity between northern Protestantism and North Korean Communism in that both have developed a *minjung* and a *minjok*-centered approach. This enabled the northern Christians to justify their presence in North Korean Communist society theologically (notwithstanding the fact that this theological work still needs to be deepened), while at the same time the *Jucheans* and the new leadership of North Korea gradually moved towards a more positive reinterpretation of Christianity.

While the former cooperation paradigm practiced by the NKCA and the KWP had merely been a diplomatic one, the new revived cooperative paradigm was based on mutual understanding through theological and ethical dialogue. The point of convergence between the two different systems of thought was the similarity of their understanding of the *minjung* as the subject of history. This similarity has served as a theological justification of the KCF's cooperation with the Communist state. Consequently, the article of "anti-religious propaganda," which had been the legal foundation of the Communists' discrimination towards the Christians, was deleted from the constitution in 1992.

While the Christian-*Juche*an dialogue motivated the *minjung*-centered theological renewal of northern Protestantism, the development of Social *Diakonia* Mission was the practical renewal of its *minjung*-centered mission. North Korean people have been suffering from famine since 1993. In this context, the northern churches became committed to relief works for the suffering people with the material support of the South Korean and world churches, and through this experience the northern churches developed their diaconal identity. Although it is too early to evaluate the Social *Diakonia* Mission, there can be no doubt that it has proven itself as one of the chief characteristics of the revival of northern Protestantism.

The dialogue and *diakonia* brought about a positive change in the North Korean understanding of Christianity. In this meaningful renewal, the *minjung*-centered cooperative approach emerged as a new paradigm of church-state relations in North Korea. Northern Protestantism introduced the *minjung* as the dynamic element in a revived understanding of church-state relations.

Through the above summary and assessment, we can conclude that northern Protestantism has developed diverse historical paradigms of church-state relations, and that each paradigm decisively influenced the fate of the northern Protestant churches. The issue has not been merely a legal and institutional debate on specific issues like religious education, religious tax, state church or free church etc. Rather, has been a response to the whole modern history of North Korea, with its major themes of colonization, national construction, war, famine etc.

### Conclusion: The *Minjung*-Centered Approach in Church-State Relations

Protestant Christianity in North Korea has experimented with a wide range of historical paradigms of church-state relations, from opposition to cooperation, and each paradigm influenced Protestant Christianity's success or failure in North Korea in different ways. In this experience of success and failure, the notion of a *minjung*-centered approach was a key issue, which decided the appropriateness of each paradigm.

Through our examination of the various historical paradigms, we have identified that the concept of the *minjung* has to be included in the bilateral relationship between church and state for establishing a proper relationship. The Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State had already argued in 1937 that the “community of people” remains an essential criterion for proper relations between church and state. In the North Korean context, this means that the notion of the *minjung* has to be the criterion for determining whether the northern church should oppose the state or cooperate with it. If the state developed policies in favor of the *minjung*, and the *minjung* support their government, the church can cooperate with the state. However, if a government is tyrannical and oppresses the *minjung*, the church cannot allow the legitimacy of the government, and must oppose the state. Therefore, the triangular approach of church, *minjung* and state is a highly relevant analytical methodology for the northern churches in critically assessing their church-state relations.

No single answer can be given to the theoretical question of what the best relationship between the church and the state in North Korea would be, because the socio-political context has always been changing. It all depends on the nature of the changes taking place. The northern churches have experimented with diverse relationships between church and state, offering different responses to different changes occurring in the context. Sometimes their response has been appropriate and authentic, at other time not.

Church-state relations are not simply a matter of defining the differences between the two entities in such a way that each can fulfil its task without interference from the other.<sup>26</sup> Rather, it is possible for the church to accompany and assist the state in the spirit of critical solidarity, in order to embrace the welfare of God’s creation. In this respect, the current cooperation of the northern churches with the state is meaningful because there is remarkable solidarity between the church and the state in serving the suffering *minjung*.

However, on the other hand, there are also increasing criticisms of the North Korean totalitarian state both inside and outside North Korea. As well as the increase in the number of economic refugees since the famine, political refugees too are dramatically increasing. Here, although the current *minjung*-centered cooperation paradigm has been successful since 1972 for promoting the revival and renewal of northern Protestantism, the changes now happening, which may be called the signs of the times, need to be read and interpreted carefully when

developing the paradigm of cooperation with the state. If the northern Christians simply support their Communist state without critical assessment, when the political situation is suddenly changed, for instance in the case of the Kim Jong-eun regime collapsing, they might lose the support of the *minjung* again. Therefore it is necessary to recognize that the current cooperation paradigm is not a permanent one. It is not necessary to be content with the current position because the context of the state and *minjung* is always changing, which is why a renewed critical theological assessment of the situation is always required.

There is a principle of ongoing reformation in the Reformed tradition. The northern church, which has generally preserved Korean Reformed tradition, must be reminded that *ecclesia reformanda semper reformanda est*.<sup>27</sup> The church that is reformed is always in need of being reformed. The origins of this famous slogan are obscure. It does not come from Calvin but a later period.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, it is an appropriate slogan for use among the anonymous grassroots participants, the *minjung* in Korean conception, in the struggle for ongoing reformation. As church-state relations in North Korea have been developed in diverse paradigms due to changes in the socio-historical context, the current paradigm of church-state relations cannot be regarded as permanent. The only permanent feature is that the church must always identify itself with the suffering *minjung* for the ceaseless reformation of itself, and must continually evaluate and reshape its relationship with the state accordingly.

## References

- 1 The terms 'Northern Korea' and 'Southern Korea' will be used as shortened names for 'the northern region of the Korean peninsula' (*Hwanghae, Pyeongan, and Hamgyeong* province) and 'the southern region of the Korean peninsula' (*Gyeongsang, Jeonra, Gyeonggi, Chungcheong and Gangwon* province) before the partition in 1945. The terms 'North Korea' and 'South Korea' will be used where appropriate in place of the official names, 'Democratic People's Republic of Korea' and 'Republic of Korea,' for the period after 1945.
- 2 CLARK, A.: *A History of the Church in Korea*, Seoul, CLS, 1971, 159.
- 3 About 65% of the total number of Protestant Christians in Korea prior to 1945 was in the northern part. In the Presbyterian church, the majority of the Korean Church, the figure was even higher, at 75%. These percentages are based on statistics given for Korean Christianity in the years 1941-1942 by the Institute for Korean Church History (IKCH). See, IKCH (ed.), *Hanguk Gidokgyo ui Yeoksa* (A History of Christianity in Korea), Volume 2, Seoul, Gyomunsa, 1990, 261, which indicates that 223,339 of 351,222 Protestant Christians in Korea were in the northern part, and that, within that figure there was a total of 256,575 Presbyterians, of whom 191,254 were in the northern part.
- 4 MASAHIKO, S.: Christianity in North Korea after the Liberation, 1945-1950, in: Kim, H-S. (ed.): *Haebang hu Bukhan Gyohoe Sa*, (A History of the North Korean Church since 1945), Seoul, Dasan Geulbang, 1992, 36-40.
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- 8 *Ibid.*, 5.
- 9 PARK, S.D.: A New Perspective of the *Juche* Idea on Christianity, in The Association of Korean Christian Scholars in North America (ed.), *Christian Faith and Juche Philosophy*, Seoul, Sinangwa Jiseong Sa, 1993, 86.
- 10 CHOO, C.Y.: *A History of Christian Theology in Korea*, Seoul, CLS, 1998, 8-10. Jae-yong Choo insists that it is necessary to re-write the history of the Korean church from a *minjung* perspective.
- 11 KIM, Y-B.: Theology and Social Biography of the Minjung, *CTC Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No.3, 1984, 67.
- 12 "McCarthyism means a fanatical opposition to elements held to be subversive (e.g. members of Communists parties), typically accompanied by the use of tactics involving personal attacks on individuals by means of widely publicized indiscriminate allegation, especially on the basis of unsubstantiated charges." *Longman Dictionary of the English Language*, 1984.

- 13 The official report of the Conference on Church, Community, and State held at Oxford in July 1937 was OLDHAM, J. H.: (ed.): *The Churches Survey their Task: Report of the Oxford Conference*, London, G. Allen & Unwin, 1937. The seven volumes of reference books were also published in the same publishing company. See, Vlsser't Hooft, W. A. - Oldham, J. H.: *The Church and Its Function in Society*; Jessop, T. E. et al.: *The Christian Understanding of Man*; Dodd, C. H. et al.: *The Kingdom of God and History*; Niebuhr, R. et al.: *The Christian Faith and the Common Life*; Aubrey, E. E. et al.: *Church and Community*; Oldham, J. H. (ed.): *Church, Community, and State in Relation to Education*; Dulles, J. F. et al.: *The Universal Church and the World of Nations*; about the observations and findings of the conference, see Bell, G. K. A.: *Christianity and World Order*, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1940; see also, Fenn, E.: *That They Go Forward: An Impression of Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State*, London, SCM Press, 1938.; Rouse, R. and Neill, S. C. (ed.): *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Geneva, WCC, 1993, 587-592.
- 14 Originally, the theme of Church, Community and State of the Oxford Conference was proposed by J. H. Oldham in 1934 at the request of the Universal Christian Council. See, Oldham, J. H.: *Church, Community and State: A World Issue*, London, SCM Press, 1935.
- 15 BELL, G. K. A.: *Christianity and World Order*, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1940, 54-56. Bell, who was Bishop of Chichester, particularly criticized the German understanding the notion of "community" as "national community" (*Volk*) in relation to nationalism. In fact, German theologians translated the "community" in Oxford as *Volk*. See, ALTHAUS, P. et al.: *Kirche, Volk und Staat: Stimmen aus der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche zur Oxforder Weltkirchenkonferenz*, Berlin, Furche-Verlag, 1937.
- 16 E. Barker clearly stated this intention of the Oxford conference. See, E. E. AUBREY et al.: *Church and Community*, in: *Op. Cit.*, 21-60.
- 17 About this confrontation, see, OLDHAM, J. H.: *Church, Community and State: A World Issue*, London, SCM Press, 1935, 8-14.
- 18 OLDHAM, J. H.: (ed.): *The Churches Survey their Task: Report of the Oxford Conference*, London, G. Allen & Unwin, 1937, 74.
- 19 FENN, E.: *Op. Cit.*, 65.
- 20 OLDHAM, J. H. (ed.): *Op. Cit.*, 82.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 79.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 78.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 79.
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 *Ibid.*, 77-80.
- 26 VISCHER, L. (ed.): *Church and State: Opening a New Ecumenical Discussion*, Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1978, 10.
- 27 Concerning the study on *semper reformanda*, see the thorough study of Hungarian-Swiss scholar BARCZAY, G.: *Ecclesia semper reformanda*, Zürich, EVZ-Verlag, 1961.
- 28 HESSELINK, I. J.: *On Being Reformed*, New York, Reformed Church Press, 1988, 119.

# The Empty Centre - Separation of Church and State - A Christian Model?

In this paper the Christian models of the separation of church and state are demonstrated using four biblical concepts. In the first part of the paper, five models of church-state relations are described in the light of Romans 13,1-6. First, the Constantinian concept of the Christian state is presented, both in its Eastern (caesaropapism) and Western (covenant of throne and altar) versions, followed by the presentation of two models of the Protestant Reformation: the Lutheran model of the 'two empires' and the Calvinist model of the world as the "theatre of the glory of God". As a fifth model, the radical separation of church and the secular state is described, in the context of the underlying concepts of the Enlightenment and Modernism.

## The "Roman 13 model"

In the Christian Holy Scripture no systematic elaboration on church-state relations can be found. The nature of the Scripture is such that certain hermeneutical tools need to be applied if we intend to distract any concept on this matter. Traditional exegetical and biblical approaches on Christian concepts on Church and state relations often refer to two biblical texts, which present us with two very different embodiment of the state. In the Epistle to the Romans, in chapter 13, the state ( or

ἔξουσία, authority, NIV) is described as it should be functioning according to God's will: "1. Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. 6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour. 8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law."<sup>1</sup> In this approach the state is functional: it fulfils tasks by which it qualifies to the title of being "God's servant". In this case the state functions "for your good". It will commend what is "right" and will punish what is "wrong". If the state is functional, the Christians are summoned to be obedient to it. It would of course be historically wrong to extrapolate an all-encompassing theory on church-state relations from this text (e.g. it speaks about the relation of individuals to authorities, and it implies obviously that Christian persons are not in any positions of authority themselves, thus reflecting the situation of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, when the Christian church was a diaspora in the "heathen" Roman Empire). However, authorities as described in this text can be taken as a model of a well-functioning state, to which Christians – and the Christian church – relates positively. In the history of Christianity five basic versions of the church-state relations were developed in the context of a positive perception of the nature of the state (i.e. the "Roman 13 model").

## Christian Empire

According to the concept of the "Christian Empire" the church and the state are largely overlapping and they permeate each other. In the Eastern Roman Empire



the emperor was both head of the state and head of the church (caesaropapism). The state and the church exercise authority together, the clergy is seen as an official body of the state, and the state backs the church with its full (even military) weight. The church, on the other hand, provides religious authority to the state, the church “sacralises” the state. The state is looked upon as the “servant of God” indeed, but more than that: the emperor represents in this world the Pantokrator Christos, Christ to whom all authority (ἐξουσία) is given on heaven and on earth (Mt 28,18). Next to the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire, a similar structure could be observed in city-state of Edessa or in Armenia after the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

## The Covenant of Throne and Altar

A similar, but still different structure of church-state relations was developed in the West. In the Middle Ages parallel structures of church and state were built up and they entered into a close alliance with each other (though not without controversies and conflicts from time to time) in order to create Christian Kingdoms. In the case of the “covenant of throne and altar” the two entities – church and state – could be well distinguished: they functioned as two distinct bodies. Their alliance was not permanent, and they represented two separate centres of authority with ever changing patterns of loyalty and conflict. Kings and emperors were supported or excommunicated by the church, other kings and emperors offered or withdrew their (often military and financial) support of popes and counter-popes. The whole European - and later, in the early Modern era, overseas - society was conceptualized as a “body of Christians” (Corpus Christianum, Christendom) where the state exercised secular, “worldly” authority while the church exercised spiritual authority over “the souls”. In practice, the church was widely involved in “worldly” politics, even with its own financial network, management of property and of military power. Unfortunately, people with other religious affiliation – Judaism, Islam – or with heterodox views on Christian doctrine were practically excluded from these societies or even suffered persecution. The church “sacralised” the state in this model as well, but church-state relationship was more complex than in the Byzantine one.

## Protestantism: two Empires

In the context of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, two distinct versions of church and state relationships were developed. The Reformation did not challenge the concept of Christendom/Corpus Christianum (with the important exception of Anabaptism) but a thorough re-conceptualisation of church-state relationships took place.

In the Lutheran tradition, the concept of the “two empires” prevailed. According to it, the state has got a God-given mandate to govern in worldly terms while the church has got a divine mandate to give spiritual governance (Regime) to people. The task of the state is to provide good order of the society, to exercise justice and to protect the Christian church. In a distinctly separate mandate, the primary task of the church is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to care for spiritual life (piety and eternal salvation) of the people. Of course pious, Christian princes and kings are the ideal leaders to provide optimal circumstances for the ministry of the church. Church and state are separate bodies with clearly different mandates and realms of responsibility, but, practically, they are not separated. In an “ideal” case, they work closely together for the public good of the society as mutually independent structures, but, in the same time, persons holding positions of authority are under the spiritual oversight of the church. In this model, the church does not understand herself as a “sacraliser” of the state: their cooperation is more operational and practical.

## Protestantism: God’s Glory in the World

In the Calvinist approach the whole world is looked upon as the place of manifestation of God’s glory (*theatrum Dei gloriae*). A consequence of this is that the mandates of the church and that of the state are not different: both are to serve the glory of God, though by their own means. The authorities (the “magistrates”) are “God’s servants” entrusted to govern the community according to God’s will. The church is also “God’s servant” entrusted to preach God’s Word and to administer the sacraments. In this vision there are areas where the task of the church and that of the state meet each other: especially when exercising discipline. In this model the separation of church and state is unimaginable: the

two entities are to work together as closely as possible. This is why there were places – Geneva or Debrecen – where the city council and the church council were identical for a period of time.

## Radical Separation

On Sunday, December 2, 1804 the coronation of Napoleon to be the Emperor of the French took place in the Notre Dame in Paris, in the presence of Pope Pius VII. During the ceremony, when the Pope was supposed to place the crown upon the head of the Emperor, Napoleon grasped the crown and put it on his own head with his own hands. This symbolic act heralded a new era in the relationship of the church and state. Napoleon expressed that his rule and his authority is not derived from divine powers as mediated by the church. In a conspicuous mixture of royalist and republican traditions the emperor followed the philosophy of the Enlightenment and that of the French Revolution: all powers come from the people. The church was still present – but it was more an instrument and a provider of the scenery: it gradually lost its influence on the public sphere. In this model the state thus does not require any religious legitimacy. The state functions according to the constructive agreements of the people consisting of the society. Mandate is given to representatives (“deputies”) who are entrusted with the responsibility to manage the public issues at different levels: local councils, regional bodies, nation states and, eventually, international organizations.

According to Lesslie Newbigin,<sup>2</sup> in modernity facts and values are separated radically. This is also reflected in the role of religion (church) in modern societies: state and authorities function in the the world of facts.<sup>3</sup> The public realm of facts is ruled by laws: by natural laws based on empirical observation and by legal rules based on agreements of the community. The authorities are to govern people on behalf of the community, observing the rules (the “facts”) which are indisputable. In this concept, the church functions in the realm of values, which are subjective and optional. The church has no privileged role in the public sphere: she is one of the many “offers” on the “market of worldviews”. In this concept church and state are separated radically: the church relegated to the realm of “civil societies” or “non-governmental organizations”. The state pursues a policy of neutrality regarding values and world views. However, in this model, it is still possible that

the state, according to the assessment of the church does fulfil the criteria set by Romans 13 (among others). If this is the case, the church can come to the conclusion that the state acts as “God’s servant”, i.e.: it fulfils the duties of a “good state”. The church can decide to be obedient to the authorities and to accept the rules set by a neutral state. In this case, even a cooperation of the church and the state is possible: not based on religious convictions, but in the service of the common good: e.g. in helping the needy. While entering into cooperation to the state on well-defined areas of life, the church may always reserve to herself the right – and evangelical duty – of criticism in cases when the state would deviate from providing justice, peace, unity and dignity for all people. Radical political separation of the church and the state thus does not necessarily mean a hostile relationship of them. Furthermore, this situation is quite similar to that of the early Christians in the “pagan” Roman Empire.

However, this leads to an important historical question. It is of course known from history that Christianity did develop further after the 1<sup>st</sup> century and within less than a quarter of a millennium it became the dominant religion of the Roman Empire (cf. Edict of Milan, 313). Adolf von Harnack<sup>4</sup> and others argue that this was a result of an organic development of a religion with great transforming potential. If this is the case, the modernist radical separation of church and state is an abnormal, retrograde condition: the church is truncated of her real dimensions when it is confined to function as one of the many civil societies. However, Franz Overbeck<sup>5</sup> and his followers offer another assessment of the same developments: they say that the transition of Christianity from a radical spiritual movement of Jesus of Nazareth and his followers to a state religion of an empire was a fatal distortion and resulted in the loss of the “Christ-quality” of the Christian church. In this latter case the radical separation of the church and the state provides the church with the chance of getting rid of all “historical ballasts” (power, wealth, influence) and return to the radical prophetic religion of its founder.

### The “Revelation 13 model”

In the second part, the relations of the church to a dysfunctional state is described, in the light of Revelations 13,1-9. Let me cite here a biblical text from Revelation

13:1 “And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. 2 The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. 3 One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. 4 Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?” 5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. 6 He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. 7 He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. 8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. 9 He who has an ear, let him hear.”<sup>6</sup>

This biblical text is often interpreted as an apocalyptic description of the state which has released itself from its God-given duties and elevated itself to the status of a totalitarian entity, a replacement and mimic of God, claiming authority over all realms of life. In this case separation of church and state is not a chosen option but it is forced upon the church, either by violent oppression or by theological reasons. The case of the Confessing Church in Nazi Germany (Barmen Theses, 1934), of the churches of South Africa under the apartheid (Belhar Confession, 1982) and a symbolic action of the “Eastern Circle of Friends” in the Soviet Union are examples for this situation.<sup>7</sup>

## Barmen

Facing the development of a totalitarian state under the Nazi regime and a movement in Evangelical Church which made an attempt to compromise with these claims of the state, the Synod of the “Confessing” Church in Germany, convened in Barmen, issued a theological declaration which addressed the question of church and state relations. The Barmer Theologische Erklärung

describes the question in the following way: "Scripture tells us that, in the as yet unredeemed world in which the Church also exist the State has by divine appointment the task of providing for justice and peace.[...] The Church acknowledges the benefit of this divine appointment in gratitude and reverence before him. ... We reject the false doctrine as though the State, over and beyond its special commission, should and could become the single and totalitarian order thus fulfilling the Church's vocation as well. We reject the falls doctrine, as though the Church, over and beyond its special commission, should and could appropriate the characteristics, the tasks, and the dignity of the state, thus becoming an organ of the State". (Theological Declaration of Barmen, 1934, V.)<sup>8</sup>

The text of the Barmer Confession thus rejects an even partial identification of church and state. The text opts for clear distinction of the tasks and realms of responsibilities of the church and of the state. It implies that a well-functioning state respects these distinctions and when it is not the case, a state can be deemed as theologically dysfunctional. In the historical situation of the Nazi dictatorship, the leaders of the Confessing Church saw no option as the radical break with the state. They opted for voicing a direct and critical prophetic assessment of the situation and chose different ways of active and passive resistance. ( e.g. Dietrich Bonhoeffer opted for engagement in a political action, participating in a conspiracy against Adolf Hitler, Karl Barth chose for emigration to Switzerland). In this case a theologically motivated separation of church and state took place.

## Belhar

The same attitude can be discovered in the context of the Belhar Confession (1986) of the then Dutch Reformed Mission Church of the Republic of South Africa. Although the text does not speaks explicitly about the relation of church and state, the whole Confession itself witnesses an approach in which the state - pursuing policies of apartheid in that time RSA – is deemed to have abandoned its duty as a provider of justice, peace and unity, therefore it is a dysfunctional state. The reaction of the church in this particular case is that of exercising prophetic criticism, naming the names of the sins of those in power: "...in the following of Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others." (Belhar Confession (1986), 4.)<sup>9</sup> It

is known from history that this church did not stop at raising a prophetic voice but many members and leaders of it participated actively in the struggle to dismantle the apartheid state. In this way the church separated herself theologically – and also practically - from a state which fell in the “category of Revelation 13”.

### Subcarpathia, 1947

A third example of an ecclesial reaction to a dysfunctional state is the action of so-called “Eastern Circle of Friends” in post-WWII Soviet Union. A group of Hungarian Reformed pastors came together regularly to share experiences and to encourage each other with prayer and Bible study in the ever worsening situation in the region of Subcarpathia (Transcarpathia), that time a part of the Soviet Union, now Ukraine. They called their informal group “Eastern Circle of Friends”. These pastors ministered in a triple minority situation: they were serving an ethnic Hungarian minority in the Ukrainian society, they were a religious minority in an ideologically atheistic state and they were a confessional minority in a predominantly Orthodox context. As they observed the multiple manifestations of totalitarianism of the Stalinist state, they felt themselves called to raise a prophetic warning. In 1947, a group of young pastors wrote a personal letter to Stalin, in which they called him to repentance. Two of the ministers volunteered to sign the letter with their own names and they handed it personally to the KGB, the all-feared secret service of the Soviet Union. “Great Stalin! God broke down German fascism by the blood of sons of the Russian nation and of other nations. You vindicated even the glory of the victory to yourself. You placed yourself in God’s place in every respect. Along vast fields of wheat large signs were posted with the boasting text: ‘Without God, without prayer, but by chemicalisation and by tractors’. This is why the Lord will humble you, as God did with Nebuchadnezzar. Your own sons will despise you. While you still have time, turn into yourself and give glory to the majestic God. This will serve also the benefit of your people. Haughty Belshazzar was lost overnight together with his empire” This letter was signed by Rev. József Zimányi and Rev. Barna Horkay.<sup>10</sup> The group was arrested in the same year and they were sent to forced labour camps. They were released after 8 years. It is noteworthy that all of them survived and the signers of the letter both lived beyond the fall of the Soviet Union.

In this quite simple, and almost childishly naive letter the same pattern of thought can be discovered as in the highly elaborated theological texts of Barmen and Belhar: if the state abandons its duty to serve the common good, the church has no other choice than to express her dissociation from the state and separate herself – both theologically and practically – from a dysfunctional state.

As demonstrated above, the separation of church and state cannot be considered historically as a “Christian model”: it must be concluded that in most of the history of the Christian church there were geographical areas where church and state was not separated. There were times - between the fourth and eighteenth centuries, thus for 1400 years - when a relative majority of Christians of the globe lived in a situation where church and state was either almost identical or were in close alliance with each other. However, it is important to note that in the same periods of time parallel models existed elsewhere: autochthonous churches lived in minority situations in the Muslim world or in India, or, in the form of Nestorian communities, even in emperor’s court in Beijing, in medieval China. In these cases the separation of the church and state was not a question of choice but it was a necessity, caused by the political and religious environment. The same was true for the churches of the non-Western world after the global expansion of the Christian religion between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is also important to note that that the situation of the minority, mission and diaspora churches were – in spite of all historical differences – more similar to situation of early Christianity, as it is described in the texts of the New Testament – than the situation where the church occupied positions of power. The question can be raised again in the context of the von Harnack-Overbeck debate: When both models – the alliance of church and state and the (involuntary) separation of church and state existed side by side on the globe, which of them represented Christianity more authentically: the church which infused and transformed all areas of life and created a great Jewish-Christian civilisation with all its beautiful architecture, literature, art and music, but, in the same time, made use of the authority and the power structures of the state, or the minority churches, which lived separated from the state, in a more humble existence similar to the early Christians, but also with limited influence to the whole society.



In the third part of this paper some recent developments are analysed which might play a role in redefining the concept of the separation of church and state today. It is argued that institutional separation of church and state is getting less and less relevant in the context of postmodern religiosities and that the modernist narrative of separation of religion and the public sphere is getting inadequate, too. As religion is on the return in many spheres of life, and in new formats (community, cathedral, charismatics), the question is raised whether it is going to have consequences to the role religion (including Christianity) is going to play in the public, political realm. Attempts of a “re-sacralisation” of politics shall be demonstrated using the example of present-day Hungarian politics.

Our concepts of separation of church and state were very much informed by the discourse of modernity. Religion was often looked upon as something outdated, old-fashioned, which was on the recess and which had a diminishing influence on modern, autonomous, “grown-up” humans. But, surprisingly or not, religion has “come back” - political sciences often use the symbolic year of 1979, when the Islamic revolution in Iran took place, when a society on its way to Westernisation has turned “back” to a religious political system. There is an ongoing debate about the nature and extent of the “come-back” of religion. But there seems to be consensus about the fact that it is not a restoration of pre-Modern religiosities that can be observed.

In the post-modern world religion is “coming back” in a different shape: instead of reviving of traditional religious institutions (like churches) a religiosity has been emerging which is personal, subjective, pragmatic, often fluid, fragmented and artistic, but which has a general distrust in institutionalisation. According to the term coined by Grace Davey and others it is “believing without belonging”<sup>11</sup> which, in the case of Christianity, takes shape in forms like “community”, “cathedral” and “Charismatics”. As people tend to seek and exercise religion outside of the institution of the church, the question can be raised whether the discourse of modernity about the separation of church and state is legitimate today. Is it not the case that institutional separation is getting rather irrelevant, if religiosity takes place “elsewhere” in the public domain? In the public domain indeed, as postmodern religiosity does not function any more according to the dichotomy of facts and values. As the border between the empirical and the imaginary is getting more fluid and as the very concept of “fact” becomes epistemologically dubious, religious convictions, world-views or spiritual talk becomes “normality”

(again?) on the public fora. This raises another question: whether we are about to experience a paradigm shift in the way religion, including Christianity would play a public role. It seems likely that the emphasis may shift from institutions to personal religious convictions of political actors. All these may result in a new phenomenon regarding the problem of separation of church and state: it may be described as a post-post-Constantinian religious set-up. More than 1700 years after the Edict of Milan attempts of re-sacralisation of the public life might be observed.

The political life of present-day Hungary may serve as an example here. The present government – not independently from a publicised personal religious conversion of the prime minister – has undertaken a large scale support program of churches: church buildings are renovated, a very high amount of formerly public schools are handed over to (Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist) churches, institutions of social care are either transferred to churches or it is encouraged and financially supported to establish new church-owned social institutions. In one of the most secularised countries of Europe this cannot even be explained by an attempt to gain votes. The philosophy behind this is different: the political leadership in charge of the government is convinced that the future of the country largely depends on the mental condition of the population. Therefore the infusion of a deeply secularised society with Christian values belongs to their political strategy. According to the rhetoric of the Hungarian government, the churches are not expected to do anything else than to fulfil their own mission and the state expects that by this the mental condition of the people would improve. This intentional “re-sacralisation” of the society does not fit into the pattern of the post-Constantinian, modernist concept of the separation of the church and state. It is often argued in Hungary these days that the church and state are constitutionally separated but the church and the society should not be.

The scene is more complicated than this, of course. As Philip Jenkins in his brilliant book on the religious trends in Europe<sup>12</sup> demonstrates, next to postmodern religiosities, the growing presence of Christian churches from non-Western cultures (because of the phenomenon of global migration) add up to this picture as well, just as the much-debated problem of the growth of religious fundamentalism.

In the fourth and final chapter of the paper some remarks are made to the question of the separation of the church and state today, in the light of the

concept of the ‘citizenship in the heavens’ and of the lack of God’s image in the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Jerusalem.

## Citizenship in the Heaven

In Philippians 3,20 the New Testament refers to the image of a veteran city in the Roman Empire, of which Philippi was one. The inhabitants of these veteran cities lived in different parts of the empire, but their citizenship was Roman. They lived in a city in a far-off province as if they were living in Rome – with the necessary adaptations. The letter to the Philippians says that “...our citizenship is in heaven”. / ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει.<sup>13</sup> According to this image, the centre of belonging, the point of reference and orientation of the Christian church is not “here”, it is “elsewhere”. The authentic model of the presence of the Christian church in this world is that of a pilgrim, who belongs to elsewhere and who is under way towards a goal which is yet not in her possession. It is *ecclesia viatorum* – the church on its way, or as the new mission statement of the WCC puts it: “church on the move”<sup>14</sup>. A church with a citizenship in heaven has got no fixed centre here on Earth, it is oriented toward something which is “not there”, it is in “heaven”. The centre is empty, it is left open, because if anything – a political concept, ideology or person - would fill it, it would occupy and thus substitute the Kingdom of God – which is not yet here in its full consummation.

The Hungarian Reformed systematic theologian Ervin Vályi-Nagy proposed, too, that in the light of the “emptiness” of the Holy of Holies of the Temple, the church can never bind herself to any political system in order to “sacralise” it.

“Our relationship to politics, to the public institutions of any time cannot suffice in a blind obedience to authorities, as if they were the earthly representatives of God. No! Authorities (at least in modern democracies, thus in “normal cases”) are elected and authorised by humans; they are not divine but a very human institutions. They can legitimately count on our responsible cooperation for the sake of the common good. However, our political engagement cannot be a fanatic commitment to one or other movements or party programs. We are committed to God and to people, committed to their eternal salvation, to their earthly well-being, in freedom and in relative independence. We do not wish to and we must not to keep pace with politics, neither as a trailer of it nor as a revolutionary avant-garde.

We need to fulfil our Christian task, in “unreliable”, not unconditional, temporary alliance sometimes with this and sometimes with that movement. We are free and we want to keep the space free for the coming of the Kingdom of God, we want to prevent it from sacralisation. This is our specific responsibility”.<sup>15</sup>

The church is thus always in a temporary alliance with the state, constantly analysing its functioning in the light of “models” of Romans 13 and of Revelation 13 and reserving to herself the right of prophetic criticism on the issues of justice and human dignity, with a reference to God as the highest instance, who cannot be captured by political or religious concepts. God is always totally different. In Christological terms: The incarnational, kenotic way of Christ’s presence in the world must be taken into consideration together with the belief that all authority is given to Christ on heaven and earth. The church lives in this eschatological assurance, according to the life of Christ, as pilgrim people towards the fullness of Life. That is why the church is always alien to the context of her time, although it is present in it with full commitment to service in solidarity. The separation of church and state is not a political concept but an ecclesiological necessity in Christian theology: it belongs to the nature and mission of the church.

By way of conclusion let the words of the Lutheran theologian Trutz Rendtorff lead us in our further reflections about the future role of Christianity. Rendtorff speaks about Europe here but his words may apply to a global context, too: “Christianity can contribute to the future of Europe with renewing the truth, which is this: God is not represented in strength and power, God is not to be worshipped in ruling and in authority, but by recognising humanity, which is based on mutual respect and which respects what was the beginning of Christianity in a secular way: that God is merciful and that God dwelt among humans as a friend of the people. This is the criteria according to which one can measure to what extent Europe is Christian.”<sup>16</sup>

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PART II

*Critical Theological Thinking  
about Communism,  
Colonization and Totalitarianism*





# Communism, Capitalism, Conservatism and Consumerism in the Korean Protestantism

## Introduction

Korean Protestant Church is one of the youngest churches in the history of Christianity. Korean Protestant Church, however, with Korean Catholicism, has been one of the most dynamic churches during the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since the introduction of Catholicism in 1784 and of Protestantism in 1884, Christianity has grown up continuously and become the largest religion in Korea with over eleven million members and about 28 percent of the Korean population in a variety of denominations. Considering the comparatively short history of Korean Protestantism, the process of its growth could be viewed as a unique success in the history of Christianity.

Many discussions and researches have been investigated the factors of the growth with its characteristics in Korean Protestantism, from various perspectives. There have been some key terms to present the features of Korean Protestantism, such as conservatism, anti-communism, pro-America, growth-oriented ministry, the Gospel of prosperity, and so on. Some of those terms are related to the contexts of Korean Protestantism, and the others reflect its contents. The former and the latter could be regarded as the external and the internal factors of Korean Protestantism. The aim of this paper is to describe some characteristics of Korean Protestantism in relation to the external context of Korean Protestantism. That

is, some characteristics of Korean Protestantism will be delineated with the pair relationship between the external factor and the internal one.

To achieve the goal of this paper, the writer will choose four key words: Communism, Capitalism, Conservatism, and Consumerism. Communism and Capitalism have powerfully influenced on the formation of Korean Protestantism directly and indirectly. These two terms, Communism and Capitalism, represent the external factors which have paved the way to growth of Korean Protestantism. The other two words, Conservatism and Consumerism are other pair of internal factors which connote the features of Korean Protestantism. The writer will deal with two pairs for describing the characteristics of Korean Protestantism respectively: Communism and Conservatism, and Capitalism and Consumerism. The relation between two terms in each pair could be considered as that of 'selective affinity' in a Weberian context.

With these external and internal factors in Korean Protestantism, another term, megachurch, is selected to draw the features of Korean Protestantism. During the rapid growth of Korean Protestantism, many megachurches have emerged and become a symbol of Korean Protestantism. Megachurches in Korea could be categorized into two types according to their emerging contexts: a refugee megachurch and an urban migrator megachurch. These two types of megachurch are consonant to two pairs of external and internal factors, respectively.

The first type of megachurches was resulted from some established churches by refugees from North Korea between 1945 and 1950. In this type of megachurch, an ideological anti-communism and theological-political conservatism were linked together and enforced to each other. The second type of megachurches had emerged during the period of economic development from 1960s to 1990s. As the Korean economy has been incorporated into global capitalism, a rapid migration from rural to urban area happened on a massive scale. New migrants from rural areas contributed to the increase their memberships of new emerging megachurches. Those megachurches became a bearer of the spirit of capitalism and consumerism, embodying the business-oriented structure and operation, and proclaiming the material success and consuming the blessing, so called, the gospel of prosperity. Younknak Church and the Yoido Full Gospel Church are the representatives of two types of megachurches, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

This paper consists of three main sections to describe the some features of Korean Protestantism. Following this introduction, the geography of Korean

religions is depicted in the second section, in which the transitional status of Korean Protestantism is exposed in relation to other religious traditions. The section three will deal with the 'communism and conservatism' in its formation of the first type of megachurches in Korea. The section four, entitled, 'capitalism and consumerism' examines the features of Korean Protestantism during the period of industrialization with a second type of megachurches. Finally, a Summary and prospect are described as a conclusion.

## The Geography of Korean Protestantism: Past and Present

### *Current Religious Landscape in Korea*

Korea has been a religious pluralistic society, which is a mixture of very different backgrounds: Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, and other religious traditions. Shamanism, as a native religion, has lasted for 5,000 years in Korean history. Even Buddhism and Confucianism were both imported religions, they had been extremely influential in ancient times as a national religion for 1,000 years and 500 years respectively. Considering those religions in Korean history, Christianity has a rather short history: Catholicism has 230 years and Protestantism 130 years.

Compare to the Western society in which Christianity once had been a dominant religion and is still functioning as a major influential religion, there is no major religious group in Korean society. Even though Christianity and Buddhism are two major religious groups alongside Confucian morals and Shamanistic traditions in Korea, more than half of Koreans have no religious affiliation.

According to 2015 statistics compiled by the Korean government, 56.9 percent of Korean has no formal membership in a religious organization. Only 43 percent of Korean express that they associated themselves with a certain religion.<sup>2</sup> Within the religious people, there is a dominance of Protestantism, Buddhism, and Catholicism. The census shows that 19.7 percent of the population (about 9.7 millions) belongs to Protestantism, 15.5 percent to Buddhism (7.6 millions), and 7.9 percent to the Catholic Church (3.9 millions). The rest adheres to various new religious movements including Won Buddhism, Cheondoism, and Jeungsando.

Religion	1950-1962		1985		1995	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Christianity		5-8%	8,352,000	20.7%	11,390,000	26.0%
Protestantism		2-8%	6,487,000	16.1%	8,505,000	19.4%
Catholicism		2.2%	1,865,000	4.6%	2,885,000	6.6%
Buddhism		2.6%	8,059,000	19.9%	10,154,000	23.2%
Other		92.4%		2.1%		1.2%
No Religion				57.3%		49.6%

Religion	2005		2015	
	Number	%	Number	%
	13,461,000	29.2%	13,566,000	27.6%
Christianity	8,446,000	18.2%	9,676,000	19.7%
Protestantism	5,015,000	10.8%	3,890,000	7.9%
Catholicism	10,588,000	22.8%	7,619,000	15.5%
Buddhism		1%		
Other	-	47.1%	-	56.1%
No Religion				

*<Table 1>Demographic trends of the main religions in South Korea, per censuses<sup>3</sup>*

The results of 2015 census show a changing landscape of Korean religions. Some features of 2015 census could be summarized as follows: with the loss of about 3 million members Buddhism became a second largest religion in Korea followed by Protestantism; Korean Catholicism has lost about 1.1 million members and stopped its rapid growth between 1995 and 2005; Korean Protestantism has gained about 1.2 million new members after 2005 census. Since the introduction of Catholicism in 1784, followed by the arrival of Protestant missionaries in 1884, Christianity has proceeded to become the largest religion in Korea.

One of the notable features of 2015 census was against an expected anticipation in general: the continuous stagnation of Buddhism, the rapid declination of Protestantism, and the rapid growth of Catholicism. Before 2015 census, Korean government had carried out the census every 5 years. The census had showed the shifting of each religion in Korea during the last 20 year (1985-2005). In particular, the years between 1995 and 2005 turned up the appearance

of the changing religious geography in Korea. During the above period, the growth of Buddhism is 3.9 percent, while that of Protestantism was -1.6 percent, and the number of Catholics increased 74.4 percent. Considering the population had increased 5.6 percent, in fact, Buddhism had stagnated, Protestantism had declined, and Catholicism had rapidly rushed upward. For Korean Protestantism, the crisis was evidently reflected on the 2005 census.

There have been a few different interpretations on the unexpected shift of religious demography depicted in 2015 census. Two factors need to be considered in relation to 2015 census. The one is a census method. Until 2005 census, every census was a complete enumeration. However 2015 census was a partial survey in which only 20 percent of population was selected as a sampling household. Moreover, 48.6 percent of sampling survey responded via internet. The different method of census, which favors to young generation, could cause an unexpected result of religious trends in Korea. Even though 2015 census shows the growth of Protestantism, Korean Protestant congregations have lost their memberships continuously. Many Korean Protestants, considered themselves as Christians, have left local congregations and won't join the regular worship on Sunday. A research in 2017 shows that those unchurched Protestants is 19.8 percent of Korean Protestantism. The number of unchurched Protestants is about 2 million and its percentage has increased from 10.4 percent in a 2012 survey.<sup>4</sup>

### *The Changing Landscape of Korean Protestantism: Growth and Stagnation*

In 1900, Korean Christians was only one percent of the population.<sup>5</sup> As Protestant missionaries had played a significant role in the modernization of Korea, they had achieved a remarkable success in the growth of its memberships. They established schools, universities, hospitals, and orphanages. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity, with their wide spectrum of missionary activities and programs, was identified with modernization and social reform. Presbyterian missionaries were especially successful over the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup> Another historical factor for the growth of Korean Protestantism is that Christianity is not a religion of imperialism but that of liberation. In neighboring countries, such as Japan and China, which have the smaller numbers of Protestants, Christianity is the religion of imperialism and that of enemy.

Since the early 1960s, when Korean Christians scarcely topped the one million mark, the number of Christians, particularly Protestants, has increased faster than in any other country, doubling every decade. Korean Protestantism grew exponentially in the 1970s and 1980s, and despite slower growth in the 1990s, caught up to and then surpassed Buddhism in its number. There are 100,000 pastors, over 60,000 churches and about 9 million Protestants making the South Korean church one of the most vital and dynamic in the world.

As can be seen from the below table and diagram, the quantitative growth of Protestantism continued since the Korean War, greatly increased in the 1960s, reached its summit in the late part of 1970s, decreased in the 1980s, and was discontinued after the mid-1990s.<sup>7</sup>

Year	Total Population	Protestants(rise/fall)	Percent to Total Population
1950	20,188,641(1949)	500,198*	
1960	24,989,241	623,072* 1,524,158(+)	
1970	31,435,252	3,192,621*	
1980	37,046,815	7,180,627**	
1985	40,419,652	6,489,282	16%
1995	44,553,710	8,760,336 (+35%)	19.7%
2005	47,041,434	8,616,438 (-1.6%)	18.3%

<Table 2> The Numerical Change of Korean Protestants (1950-2005)<sup>8</sup>

During the entire thirty years between 1960 and 1990, the number of Protestant churches had increased seven times. The rate of increase by ten-year unit was 175 percent between 1960 and 1970, 65 percent between 1970 and 1980, and about 69 percent between 1980 and 1990.<sup>9</sup> During those periods, the increasing ratio of Korea Protestants has been greater than that of churches. This implies that, during the process of quantitative growth, many Korean Protestants had concentrated into some individual congregations in metro-Seoul area. During the 1970s and 1980s those large numbers of churches became a group of mega-churches. In February 1993, *Christian World* reported that there were five Korean Protestant churches within the ten largest churches, and twenty three churches belonged to fifty largest churches in the world: Yoido Full Gospel Church is the

largest one. South Korea had the third highest percentage of Christians in East Asia or Southeast Asia, following the Philippines and East Timor.

Korean Protestantism, however, could not enjoy its palmy days. After the mid-1980s, it had grown slowly, and in the 1990s Protestantism in Korea stopped its growth. The Protestantism in Korea is heavily dominated by four denominations: Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and Pentecostals. These major denominations were not the exception of the stagnation. During the 1980s and 1990s, Korean Protestantism had fully mobilized its whole capacity, such as, human power, financial resources, and media, for church growth. Even though the material resources mobilized by Korean Protestantism for evangelism and mission had overwhelmed other competitive religions, mainly Catholicism and Buddhism, the growth of Korean Protestantism couldn't meet its expectation. It was 1990s when "the discourse of crisis" was raised both inside and outside of Korean Protestantism.

Then what made Korean Protestantism decline or stagnation? Usually, factors contributing to the growth of Korean Protestantism have been presented in two aspects: outside and inside factors of church. The former are socio-economic, political, and religious context, and the latter are all kinds of movements and programs within the Korean Protestantism for church growth. The declination and/or stagnation of Korean Protestantism would not be fully explained with outside factors of the church, because the other Korean religions had experienced the growth or stagnation differently under the same socio-economic and political situation during the same period. If the outside factors are not decisive, then the authentic factors of Protestant's decline/stagnation had been laid in the inside of Protestantism. From the early 1990s, there have been growing criticisms on the Korean Protestantism, especially its credibility and morality, for Protestants' unethical behaviors, aggressive attitudes toward non-Protestants, secularization, commercialization, growth-oriented ministry, and so on. Korea Protestantism faces harsh criticism that it has lost its spirituality, morality, commitment, and the awareness of community. This negative evaluation and the mistrust of Korean Protestantism are empirically confirmed by various polls which were carried out by the Korean National Association of Christian Pastors, Gallup Korea and the Christian Ethics Movement.<sup>10</sup> The issue of credibility is the key factor which could explain the root of the declination in Korean Protestantism.<sup>11</sup>

## Communism and Conservatism

### *The Refugee Protestants from North Korea*

Now we turn into our concern to the detailed contexts and its contents of Korean Protestantism in accordance with two stages of its history. Anti-communism and conservatism are the most distinctive features of Korean Protestantism. Of course, since Korean War, anti-communism has been a key dominant ideology in Korea, but the tendency of anti-communism in Korean Protestantism has been much more tense and stronger than other areas or groups in Korean society. It is generally said that the conservative attitude in Korean Protestantism was introduced by the early Western missionaries, especially by the missionaries from the US.<sup>12</sup> The fusion of religious conservatism and ideological anti-communism had happened and reinforced in the context of modern history in Korea, especially after the liberation from Japanese occupation. Regarding the anti-communism and conservatism of Korean Protestants, two factors need to be considered: Protestant refugees from the Northwestern part of Korea, and the Korean War.

After the World War II, the allied occupied and divided Korea into two parts in 1945: the American-occupied South and the Soviet-occupied North. After the occupation forces pulled out, in 1948 two governments were established both in South and North. In Seoul, Rhee Syngman, an American-educated Methodist, became the first president of the Republic of Korea under sponsorship of the United Nations. In Pyeongyang, Kim Il Sung, a Soviet-trained military officer, took charge of the communist Democratic People's Republic of Korea. By 1948, Protestants in North Korea had been shattered and major churches and the Christian institutions of Pyeongyang had been experienced great difficulties and persecution. The communist government had been opposed to the Christianity and its links to 'imperialism.' Leading Christians in North Korea had been arrested and some had been missing. The communist ruling in North Korea led to a mass exodus of Protestants to South Korea. This mass exodus has drawn the radical shift of the Protestant demography and landscape in Korea.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the Korean Protestant churches in the Northwestern part of Korea had grown rapidly and the area became a heart of Korean Protestantism.<sup>13</sup> Before this massive exodus to South, more than half of total Korean Protestants had stayed in the northern half of the



Korea. Especially Pyeongyang, the center of Northwestern part of Korea, had been called the Jerusalem of Korea. The Presbyterian Seminary, Pyeongyang Theological Seminary, was opened in Pyeongyang in 1901. The first meeting of the All-National Presbytery was held in Pyeongyang in 1907. Among the first seven Korean ordained pastors all but a missionary to Jeju Island, were placed in the North-western part in the same year. Also the inaugural meeting of the General Assembly was held in Pyeongyang in 1921. The number of Presbyterians in Northwestern area was about 40 percent of Korean Presbyterians in 1910.<sup>14</sup>

When the Protestants from the Northwestern part of Korea came to South Korea, they accounted for about one-third of Protestant in South Korea. Due to their experience of communism in North Korea, they were already military anti-communists, and became a major background and a vanguard of right wings after Liberation period in South Korea. The Korean War exacerbated this tendency and hardened forever the enmity of Christians for the communist regime in North Korea. Many Christians in areas occupied by communist troops were often killed and other Christians were captured and taken away forcibly to North Korea during the Korean War.<sup>15</sup>

After the massive Protestant refugees arrived in Seoul,<sup>16</sup> they were filled with the passion for establishing their churches. There had been about 2,000 newly established Protestant churches in South Korea, about 90 percent of which were organized by the refugee Protestants from North Korea during the ten years after the Korean War. Some churches, founded by refugee ministers with other Protestants from North Korea, had become megachurches. The representative megachurches established by refugee ministers are Younknak Church, Chungnyeong Presbyterian Church, Somang Church, and Gwangrim Methodist Church. Those newly established churches became the core of conservative rightwing movement and anti-communism in South Korea. Moreover, this group of refugee ministers has formulated and influenced on the conservative tendency in Korean Protestantism during the second half of twentieth century in Korea.

### *The Formation of Conservative Anti-Communism in Korean Protestantism*

Those Protestant churches and their memberships from North Korea had acquired and monopolized the religious hegemony and power in South Korea

with the support, protection and cooperation of United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIC, here after the US military government). The US military government and the Korean rightwing conservative Protestants from North Korea engaged to each other. The US military government preferred them, because they were the pro-American Christian elites who studied in the US and had the experiences of anti-communist struggles. They were provided a lot of privilege from the US military government and from the following Rhee Syngman's government.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, the returning missionaries from the USA were paternalistic at times and they were important to Protestant churches as supporters and protectors. The Korean War further increased the dependence the church on foreign assistance. Under the strong patronage of the American Protestant missionaries some of whom had served in the US military government in Seoul, the Protestant church, especially Presbyterian churches could easily enjoy an exclusive privilege. They obtained real estate that had been abandoned by the Japanese for building church and were disposed of confiscated Japanese property for establishing Protestants institution.

After its occupation, the US military government mobilized extreme rightists, especially North Korean refugees. The rightwing extremists interrogated, violated, and killed ordinary people under the pretext of a "Red Hund." Among the most notorious rightist groups, which took the lead in campaigns against communist, was the Northwest Youth Association (*Seobuk Chyungnyunheo*), named for the area where most of its members hailed from. The association was formed in November 1946 and dissolved in December 1948.<sup>18</sup> Its membership totaled about 300,000. It is noteworthy that the core members of the Northwest Youth Association were belongs to Younknak church.

Younknak Church is one of the representative Protestant churches in Korea. It was the model of the first type of Korean megachurch, of which major members were conservative refugees from North Korea, and has been the heart of anti-communism after its foundation. It started by Han Kyung-chik in 1945 with 27 refugees, including his old church members from North Korea.<sup>19</sup> They became the core group of the Younknak congregation. In 1946 Han got the permission of the US military government to use the confiscated property of the Shinto sect of Tenrikyo for building his church. The growth of the church membership was about 10 percent per year, and despite the continual establishment of subsidiary

“daughter” congregations in metro-Seoul area. In 1965, Youngnak Church became the first megachurch in Korea with its 10,000 members and finally 60,000 members. Han Kyung-chik, an alumnus of Princeton Theological Seminary, had been supported by the Presbyterian Church of USA. Han’s leadership within the Korean Protestantism had lasted more than three decades.

Youngnak Church and Han Kyung-chik is a typical of Korean conservative Protestantism in several ways. Han’s theology is conservative, stressing the will and power of God, the sinful state of human, the salvation of individuals through grace and redemption through Christ (i.e., being “born again”), and the communion of believers. His sermons focused on the Bible and on the Christian life as a spiritual state. The major concern of churches was on caring individual members and on involving them in network of fellowship and mutual support within the church, rather than on involving socio-political issues outside of the church.

The refugee Protestants from North Korea has been the most conservative group, theologically and politically, in Korea. As they acquired a religious and political power after Liberation and the Korean War period, their influence on Korean society has been stronger and stronger. The pro-government conservative ministers organized the Presidential National Prayer Breakfast in 1968 for the military dictator, Park Junghee. During 1970s and 1980s, a leading refugee ministers organized mega-scale interdenominational crusades, which made a great contribution of the growth of Protestantism in Korea, with the wide cooperation and strong support of the military government. Anti-communism had been one of the key agenda of those mega-scale crusades. Among the mega-scale crusades were: the Billy Graham Crusade in 1973; the Explo Crusade in 1974; The National Crusade 1977; and the Mission Centenary Crusade in 1984. As the membership of conservative churches had increased, the conservative Protestants had become the majority of Korean Protestantism.

As an overwhelming majority, the conservative Protestants had criticized the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) which had led the Christian democratization movement during the military dictator’s regime. When NCCCK adopted the “Korean Churches’ Statement on Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula” (the so-called 88 Statement) in 1988<sup>20</sup>, the refugee minister group, including Han Kyung-chik, organized the Christian Council of Korea (CCK) in 1989, which became the largest conservative church organization and the center

of anti-communism until 2010s. CCK had its primary concern on evangelization and on criticizing the human rights and democratization movement of the NCKK.

Theological and ideological conservatism in Korean Protestantism has a strong relationship with anti-communism. Conservatism and anti-communism had amalgamated within the special historical trajectory, that is, Liberation from Japanese occupation, the division of Korea, and the Korean War. The fusion of religion and ideology had been intensified when the conservative refugee Protestants from North Korea had a religious power and hegemony in Korea Protestantism. Anti-communism and conservatism in Korean Protestantism are twinborn in the historical context of modern Korea.

## Capitalism and Consumerism

### *Urban Migrators from Rural Area*

Capitalism and Consumerism could be other twin characteristics of Korean Protestantism. After taking power through a military coup d'état in 1961, Park Junghee's military government regime powerfully drove an industrialization policy. This policy changed the industrial structure, and resulted in decreasing the rural and agricultural population and increasing the urban population. While the urban population accounted for 28 percent of the total population in 1960s, it increased to 74.4 percent in 1990, more than doubling.<sup>21</sup> This massive migration in turn caused problems and brought about many negative effects. The gap between the rich and the poor became more noticeable and social anarchy ensued. It also resulted in creating large slum areas around cities. Moreover traditional extended family structure had been dissolved and destroyed. Many migrators from rural areas felt rootless and longed for intimate communal support.

Korean Protestant churches could have gradually speeded up its growth with this shifting socio-economic context. The process of the industrialization provided a great opportunity for the growth of Protestant churches, because it was accompanied by the rapid and massive migration from rural to urban area. Korean Protestant churches promoted evangelistic activities and church planting

in urban areas, and new suburbs mushroomed around the metro-Seoul area. The migrators from rural area were the large numbers of potential congregants for local churches. The Protestant churches provided a sense of community for urban migrators uprooted from rural hometowns.

Two notable phenomena could be observed at the core of the rapid growth of Korean Protestantism in the period between the 1960s and the 1980s, "the period of developmental dictatorship." The one is the Pentecostal-type of worship and preaching, popularized by Cho Yonggi, which had a great vogue within Korean Protestantism. The other notable result of church growth in Korea is the emergence of many megachurches. In early 21th century, among the fifty largest churches in the world, twenty three of them were in Korea. There were fifteen mega-churches, each of which has more than ten thousands adult congregational members. Denominationally, the world's largest Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches are all found in Korea.<sup>22</sup> Most megachurches in Korea had shared the Pentecostal-charismatic tendency in worship and preaching. The growth of church up to the megachurch size has become the pursuing goal of ministry that most Korean medium or small-sized churches have been looking for.

Those megachurches became a bearer and a subject of capitalism and consumerism, embodying the business-oriented structure and operation, and proclaiming the material success and consuming the blessing, so called, the gospel of prosperity. The Yoido Full Gospel Church is a representative of the second type of Korean megachurch. However, it is not just a typical model of the second type, but rather a leading engine of capitalistic and materialistic Protestant church in Korea.<sup>23</sup> The Yoido Full Gospel Church started in a slum in Seoul with 5 members in 1958. Its membership grew to 600 in 1961; 3,000 in 1964; 18,000 in 1973; 100,000 in 1979; 200,000 in 1980; 500,000 in 1985; 700,000 in 1992, and 755,000 in 2007.<sup>24</sup> The growth had been exponential ever since, and it became a largest congregation in the world. What is the worth of notice is that the growth rate accelerated after the church moved into Yoido in 1973, where government development plan started in 1967. With the massive apartment complexes nearby, the Yoido Full Gospel Church became a church for middle-class.

The founding pastor Cho Yonggi appealed to Korean with the promise of spiritual salvation, physical healing, material blessings and prosperity in their life here and now. The church slogan is from the second verse of the third epistle of

John: "Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in health; I know that it is well with your soul." This leads to the "triple-meter faith" in riches of the spirit, of the body, and in possessions. Much of the praying focuses on daily problems, and daily problems invariably involve money. Indeed, Cho's message is one that stresses God's material blessings in the present life. His message addressed exactly what the urban populace desired during the process of economic development. Cho's preaching, promising God's blessings in material terms, was often criticized that he offered a cheap faith and grace. Even though Cho's message was entangled in the controversy over heresy, his materialized gospel offers irresistible attractions for the emerging middle-class Korean. With the remarkable growth of the Yoido Full gospel Church, many conservative pastors began to take the church's worship service and its method of ministry as a model and accepted Pentecostal theology irrespective of the theological tradition of their own denomination. Finally Cho and his church have become a paragon in Korean Protestantism.

### *The Gospel of Prosperity in Korean Capitalistic Church-ism*

Those newly emerged megachurches shares some common characteristics: the location of the church in the midst of apartment complexes, an individual church system in its structure, and the gospel of prosperity in its message. First of all, the second type of megachurch had emerged in those new urban resident areas. Most emerging megachurches in the second stage were established in or moved into newly constructed resident areas and urban towns. The residence of the new town was usually consisted of several apartment complexes, which were a new potential market for Korean Protestantism. Being located amidst or near a few apartment complexes, the churches easily attracted and absorbed the residents of apartment complexes, who were move from rural areas or an old resident area in Seoul.

Most megachurches of the second type, such as The Yoido Full Gospel Church, Somang Church, Myungsung Church, Gwangrim Methodist Church and so on, were founded within the apartment complexes newly planned resident areas. Even some of the first type of megachurches, of which refugees from North Korea were the majority, i.e., Chunghyeon Church, moved its church to newly

planned apartment complexes. However, some first type megachurches, such as Youngnak Church and Seamunan Church, which did not move to a new resident area, had stopped its growth, as the church members moved to new resident areas. With its stagnation or declination of its membership, the first type of megachurch has continuously lost its influence on the Korean Protestantism and Korean society. The emerging megachurches within apartment complexes have replaced the status of first type of megachurch, and finally became a symbol of the Korean Protestantism with Minjung churches.<sup>25</sup>

Another feature of Korean Protestant church could be described as so-called an individual church system. Contrary to an 'empire-church system', and a 'state-church system', in an individual church system, each congregation exercises the administrative rights in the process of personnel management, financial affairs, the formation of organization, and so on. In Korean Protestant church, especially in most megachurches, this individual church system has closely related with a charismatic leadership of church founder, and the Nevius method for economic self-sufficiency. Korean megachurches are resulted from the amalgamation of a selective affinity among those three factors.

Most megachurches accompany a strong leader orientation in each congregation whose loyalty to the pastor usually exceeds loyalty to the organized denomination. Most Korean Protestant churches are, even they are denominational churches, are actually congregational rather than denominational, focused on local congregational concerns rather than on denomination-wide projects, or issues of concern to society as whole. At the heart of an individual church, the primary concern is on its membership and its budget.

It is said that this kind of the autonomy of individual church in Korea is partly the result of conscious missionary policies, especially the Nevius method. The Nevius method is a program to foster self-propagation, self-government and self-support.<sup>26</sup> Of course, there are some arguments on the role of the Nevius method in the growth of Korean Protestantism, the Nevius method is credited for one of the main factors in spreading an individual church tendency throughout Korea. Ahn indicates this aspect as follows:

The tendency of the Nevius Method to equate economic self-sufficiency with ecclesiastical autonomy, or ecclesiastical success, paved the way to a kind of plutocracy of the Korean church. On the one hand, church leadership, particularly

eldership, gradually became equated with the status of affluence and influence. On the other hand, in many cases, the church satisfied itself with the achievement of economic independence, showing centripetal tendency, which was disinterested in the neighboring society.<sup>27</sup>

Ahn also adds that early missionaries from the United States had the capitalism-oriented attitudes, based on the Ryu's argument.<sup>28</sup> He considers that the early version of the gospel of prosperity had already appeared in the early years of Korean Christianity. These arguments connote that Korean Protestantism already faced with the characteristic of capitalism in the pre-Liberation years.

This individual church system inspires an egoistic local church-ism and leads the competition among Protestant churches. They tried to build church building as large and grand as possible to compete with newly built neighborhoods. They also developed bureaucratic system to earn better efficiency, and used the best technology to control the spirituality of the people, such as closed-circuit television service, Internet broadcasting station, satellite service and so on. Several megachurches expanded their territories by establishing daughter churches, charitable organizations, hospitals, educational institutions, newspapers, radio stations, cable channel broadcasting systems, both within and outside Korea. This kind of multi-tentacle approach is considered as the duplication of the business models of *chaebol* which is family-run corporate and super-national conglomerates in Korea. The prosperity and dynamism of megachurches are regard as special gifts to their congregations, and achieved by the ability of charismatic founding pastors. Under the individual church system, many megachurch pastors had practiced or will carry out heredity like a church as a private property. The megachurch pastor is not a pastor of a congregation but rather a CEO of business enterprise.

Finally, the Korean Protestantism has been addicted by the gospel of prosperity. During the process of industrialization, the military government pursued the economic agenda at the expense of the political goal. Even Korean Protestantism could not exempt from the tsunami of capitalism. Rather than rejecting capitalism, Korean Protestant churches aggressively accepted its spirit and system. The majority of the church had been in line with the government's policy of economic growth, focusing on church growth. With the remarkable economic growth, the status of capitalism became more rock-solid.



After finishing the period of industrialization, Korean Protestantism consolidated its characteristic as a middle-class church. As a capitalized middle-class church, there were some favorite commodities in Korean Protestantism: The studies of church growth, positive thinking and the theology of success. The studies of church growth, conducted by Donald McGavran at the Fuller Theological Seminary were developed further by Peter Wagner. Also Robert Schuller's and Joel Osteen's positive thinking had been introduced and consumed with Korean Protestant pastors. The church became a trendy religious institution, and consumerism stole into the church, most notably in megachurches.

Megachurches, addicted with the message of health and wealth, are capitalistic entities covered with religious costumes. The gospel of prosperity was polished up into the gospel of blessed affluence. Each megachurch sells the gospel of prosperity and its own church as a brand. The size of church is understood as an evidence of success and God's grace. Church members consume the convenience and comfort from a megachurch with its brand. In the religious market, "religious institutions became consumer commodities."<sup>29</sup> As the Korean economy has been absorbed into global capitalism, the Korean Protestant churches become a bearer of capitalistic consumerism.

## Conclusion

We have some characteristics of Korean Protestantism with three main sections. In section two, the growth of Korean Protestantism with a brief description of religious landscape in Korea. Even though Korean Protestantism is one of the youngest churches in the history of the Christianity, it has grown rapidly during the last 130 years, accompanied with growth of its population percentage, the emergence of megachurches, and its growing influence on Korean society. Considering Korean society is a religious pluralistic society, the growth of Korean Protestantism is remarkable. Especially the 1970s and 1980s had provided the fertile ground for megachurch cultivation. However, it has been stagnant from the 1990s. Until the 1990s, the evaluation on Korean Protestantism has been considerably positive. That is, Korean Protestantism has grown within amicable surroundings in Korean society. When Korean Protestantism, however, has become the most powerful religious group in Korea, it has misused its

power, money, and influence within the Korean society where three-fourth are non-Christians. Those inappropriate behaviors resulted in the loss of its social credibility, with the impression of ‘an impolite Protestantism.’”

Session three and four had dealt with the characteristics of Korean Protestantism with for key terms: Communism and Conservatism, and Capitalism and consumerism. Communism and Capitalism have functioned as external factors in the growing process of Korean Protestantism. Conservatism and Consumerism are adapted to designate internal contents of Korean Protestantism as two consonant counterparts to communism and capitalism respectively. Both two pairs of ‘Communism and Conservatism’, and ‘Capitalism and Consumerism’ are related to two stages of Korean Protestantism. Each stage has its own type of an emerging megachurch: Youngnak Church and the Yoido Full Gospel Church are the representatives of two types of megachurch. The former was established, after Liberation period, by refugee Protestants from North Korea. The first type of megachurch has a very conservative tendency both theologically and politically with an aggressive anti-communism. The latter type of megachurch has emerged during the period of industrialization. The new migrators from rural areas become the majority of the new megachurch members. This second type of megachurch became a bearer and subject of Americanized capitalism and consumerism, proclaiming the material success and consuming the blessing, so called, the gospel of prosperity.

With an introductory description of changing demography of Korean religions and Protestantism, we have looked over some contexts and contents of Korean Protestantism with two pairs of four terms: communism and conservatism, and capitalism and consumerism. This paper, however, could not cover various aspects of Korean Protestantism, such as historical, structural, cultural, and theological aspect. Still it needs many researches in relation to the issues dealt with in sections of this paper from other perspective, approaches, or framework. Especially critical analysis on the theological discourses in both types of megachurches would be a quite meaningful work.

After the second half of twentieth century, Korean Protestantism had grown with the refugees from North Korea after Liberation period and migrators from rural area during industrialization period. Considering the unfriendly attitude to Korean Protestantism within current Korean context, the future of Korean Protestantism is not so optimistic, unless Korean Protestant churches radically

pursue a radical transformation. The first step for being an authentic Protestantism would depend on overcoming conservatism and anti-communism, and on being beyond from capitalism and consumerism.

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- 8 This table is revised to depict the growth of Korean Protestants from the table 13-1 in *A History of Christianity in Korea Since 1945*, 98. As mentioned in the footnote 2 in p.98, it is difficulty to acquire the reliable statics of Korean religion and also they are not available prior to the 1960s, due to the tumultuous and quickly evolving post-war situation as well as to the fact that may individual churches and denominations exaggerated their membership numbers. Sources other than that of the National Statistical Office are as follows: \**Hanguk Jonggyo Sahoe Yeonguso* [Korean Institute for Religion and Society], *Hanguk Jonggyo Yeongam* [The Yearbook of Korean Religions](1993); +*Hanguk Gidokgyo Gyoheo Heybeuihoe* [Korean National Council of Churches], *Gidokgyo Yeongam* [The Yearbook of Christianity: 1970]; \*\*Ministry of Culture and Communication, *Jonggyo Beobinmit Danche Hyeonhwang* [The Present State of Religious Corporations and Groups](1980).
- 9 *Ibid.*, 97. The number of churches increased from 3,114 in 1950, to 5,011 in 1960, to 12,866 in 1970, to 21,243 in 1980, to 35,819 in 1990. *Hanguk Jonggyo Sahoe Yeonguso* [The Institute of Korean Religions and Society], *Hanguk Jonggyo Yeongam* [The Yearbook of Korean Religion] (Seoul: The Institute of Korean Religions and Society, 1993). See footnote 1 in p. 97.
- 10 According to the survey of "Survey of Social Credibility for South Korean Churches," conducted

by the Christian Ethics Movement (CEM) in 2017, only 20.2 percent of the respondents say they trust Protestant churches. 51.2 percent said that Protestant churches are not trustworthy, while 28.6 percent say they were ambivalent. Among Korean religions, Catholicism appears to be the most credible, with 32.9 percent, followed by Buddhism with 22.1 percent, and Protestantism with 18.9 percent. The statistical data can be acquired from CEM website (<http://cemk.org>). Retrieved October 29th 2017.

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- 12 For the early Protestant missionaries in Korea, see Dae Young Ryu, *Chogi Miguk Seongyosa Yeongu 1884-1910: Seongyosadeului Jungsancheungjeog Seonggyeogeul Jungsimeuro* [Early American Missionaries in Korea 1884-1910: Understanding Missionaries from Their Middle-Class Background] (Seoul: The Institute of Korean Church History, 2001).
- 13 Kyo-Seong Ahn describes, the rapid and disproportionate church growth in the Northwestern part of Korea, can be explained from the perspective of class. He considers Gwang-Rin Yi's view on this issue is highly persuasive. Yi argues that the lopsided growth of the Korean Church in the Northwestern part of Korea was brought by self-initiative of the middle class, particularly merchants. Ahn also conceives Yi's theory can also explain the correlation between unbalanced church growth and the success of self-support. Kyo-Seong Ahn, "The identity of the Korean Church and its Relationship with the Poor," *Korea Presbyterian Journal of Theology*, Vol. 429(2011), 124-125, footnote 9.
- 14 The total number of Presbyterians was 39,394 Baptized members and 140, 472 Adherents in 1910, *The Fourth Minutes of the Presbytery of the Korean Church* (Seoul: N.P., 1910), 31. The more details statics of the Presbyterian churches in Korea, see the Table 12 in Sung-Deuk Oak, *The Making of Korean Christianity*, 331.
- 15 For the historical background between conservative Christian refugees and communists, see Timothy S. Lee, *Born Again: Evangelicalism in Korea*, (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2010), "evangelicals versus Communists" 60-83. There are some import works on the relationship between Christianity and Communism in Korea. The more detailed examination on the issue of Korean Protestantism and anti-communism confer, Incheol Kang, *Hanguk Gidokgyohoewa Gukgasiminsahoe 1945-1960* [Korean Christian Churches and State-Civil Society 1945-1960] (Seoul: The Institute of Korean Religions and Society, 1996); *Hanguk Gaesinkyowa Bangongjueui* [Korean Protestantism and Anti-Communism] (Seoul: Jungshim, 2006); Jungran Yoon, *Hangukjeonjaenggwa Gidokgyo* [The Korean War and Protestantism] (Seoul Hanul, 2015).
- 16 The whole figures of Korean refugees to South Korea are at best estimates, especially with respect to Protestants. According to Incheol Kang, the number of all Koreans who migrated southward between 1945 and 1953 is estimated at between 1,014,000 and 1,386,000, about 10.7 to 14.7 percent of the average population (9,440,000) in North Korea between 1946 and 1949. In 1945 the number of northern Protestants was around 200,000 about 2.1 percent of the population. Of them, Kang estimates that 70,000 to 80,000 might have moved to the South Korea, constituting 35 to 40 percent of the Protestant population in North Korea and 6 to 7 percent of all northerners who migrated to South Korea. See, Incheol Kang, *Hanguk Gidokgyohoewa Gukgasiminsahoe 1945-1960* [Korean Christian Churches and State-Civil Society].

- 17 For the detailed description of the above process, see Kang's and Yoon's works.
- 18 For the more information about the Northwest Youth Association, confer Bong-jin Kim, "Paramilitary Politics under the USAMGIK and the Establishment of the Republic of Korea" *Korea Journal*, Summer 2003, 289-322.
- 19 For the background and development of Younngak Church, confer Han Kyung-chik, *My Gratitude: Kyung-Chik Han's Oral Autobiography* (Seoul: KyungChik Han Foundation, 2017). It was originally published in Korean in 2010.
- 20 It was a first and historical statement with important reflection on the issue of reunification of Korea from a nongovernmental area. Until then the reunification issue had been monopolized by the military government which did not allowed to discuss the issue in civilian level.
- 21 The Society of the History of Christianity in Korea (ed.) *A History of Christianity in Korea since 1945*, 103 and see footnote 7 in p. 103.
- 22 As for the definition of megachurch, there are some difference criterions among scholars. For an instance, in the United States, sometimes a congregation which has more than 2,000 adult church members is considered as a megachurch. In Korea, a megachurch is defined as a single congregation whose adult Sunday attendance is 10,000 and more. In this paper the megachurch refers more than 10,000 memberships in a local congregation.
- 23 For a brief information of the Yoido Full Gospel Church, see Young-hoon Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea: Its Historical and Theological Development*, (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2009), 93-110.
- 24 Church Growth International, *Church Growth Manual 7* (Seoul: Church Growth International, 1995), 145. Quoted from Young-hoon Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea: Its Historical and Theological Development*, 97.
- 25 During the process of industrialization, Minjung churches have emerged. Even though Minjung churches have not influenced numerical growth in Korean Protestantism, they have worked for victims and the marginalized and suggested the direction for the reformation of Protestant churches. For Minjung theology, see Madang Journal Editors, *Justice and Minjung: Theological Reflections in the Age of Global Empire*, (Seoul: Dong Yeon Press, 2013), Session II. 1. Minjung Theology, 311-422.
- 26 The Nevius method, named for John L. Nevius, the Presbyterian China missionary who devised it. See Charles Allen Clark, *The Korean Church and the Nevius Methods*, New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1930.
- 27 Kyo-Seong Ahn, "The identity of the Korean Church and its Relationship with the Poor" 125.
- 28 For this capitalism-oriented attitudes of missionaries and critics on it, see Ahn, "The identity of the Korean Church and its Relationship with the Poor" 125-126, footnote 12 and 13. Dae Young Ryu, *Chogi Migug Seongyosa Yeongu 1884-1910: Seongyosadeului Jungsancheungjeog Seonggyeogeul Jungsimeuro* [Early American Missionaries in Korea 1884-1910: Understanding Missionaries from Their Middle-Class Background]. See also Fred H. Harrington, *God, Mammon, and the Japanese: Dr. Horace N. Allen and Korean American Relations, 1844-1905* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1944; 1966), 106-107.
- 29 Yong-Gi, Hong, "Encounter with Modernity: The McDonaldization and Charismatization of Korean Mega-churches," *International Review of Mission* Vol. 92 (2003): 242ff. Quoted from, Byung Joon Chung, "A Reflection on the Growth and Decline of Korean Protestant Church", 329, footnote 6.

# A Social-Ethical Perception of the Theology of the Servant Church

## A SOCIAL-ETHICAL PERCEPTION OF THE THEOLOGY OF THE SERVANT CHURCH

Between 1948 and 1989, a particular theology achieved a monopoly in the Reformed Church of Hungary: the so-called, theology of the servant church. This paper presents the servant church theology with special attention to the rhetoric used in its social-ethical positions concerning issues such as the ethics of property, work, and peace. Attention is focused here because this theology, by separating *dogmata agendi* from *dogmata credendi*, was based on social-ethical principles, focusing on only one issue, namely the role of the church in the new society, that is, the legitimizing of the church in the socialist order.

### *Two Basic Hermeneutic Principles*

Two characteristic features can be observed about the theology of the servant church. One is its repeated Christological arguments, and the other is its particular social-ethical focusing. The ethical literature of the examined period applied two basic hermeneutic principles in composing its practical statements and theses.

These principles were consistently applied by the leading theologians of the time (especially professor bishop Tibor Bartha<sup>1</sup> and professor bishop Elemér Kocsis<sup>2</sup>).

### *The Servant Christ*

The first principle is in connection with the person and work of redemption of Jesus Christ. *Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the sovereign revealer of the Father, though being Lord serves according to the divine law of God.* Among others it is on the basis of Mark 10:45 and Philippians 2:5 that this thesis asserts that Christ's rule is *service* for the sake of humankind suffering in the captivity of sin and death. Jesus Christ draws the Church, His Body, into this service (1 Corinthians 12). This universal work of redemption of Christ is the service of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18ff). Its ultimate goal is that humankind will gain its 'peace', its 'shalom', that is, its complete balance, salvation, and its material, intellectual, physical, spiritual and moral order ordained and worked by God, Creator and Redeemer. That is how God's glory, that is, his love and righteousness will fully be realized.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Great Commandment*

The other theoretical basis of the ethical positions is the *topical interpretation of Christ's commandment of love.*<sup>4</sup> The great commandment of love (Matthew 22:37-40; Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18) is the only particular commandment in the Scripture valid for all times. Every other instruction is to be understood and can be interpreted in the spirit of this commandment. Taking God's covenant with humankind and the covenant of his people with one another as the basis, the content of love is faithfulness/loyalty and righteousness. Thus the content of love and the form of its act is not arbitrarily determined by the individual but, horizontally, by the need of the neighbor. The person living according to the commandment of love is open to the problems of humanity in each epoch. Such a person knows that it is not people who exist for the law and for moral norms, but it is always the law that should serve people, for the preservation and development of life in the given historical and social circumstances. There are no eternal norms; there is only one eternal commandment, that is, love which



is realized in deeds working for the justice of the weak, the humiliated and the exploited. It was also said: if the church submits to the most inner laws of the Gospel, it must go from a capitalist society to a socialist society.<sup>5</sup>

## Perceptions

According to the “theology of the servant church,” Christ’s commandment of love given for humanity was the departure for the following conclusions and perceptions of the church:

### *Church and Social Orders*

“Christ’s church is not bound to any one social order. The Christian church must fulfill her function in all societies and situations.”<sup>6</sup> It was common to quote professor Hromadka’s words:<sup>7</sup>

It must be stated clearly that the Gospel and the Living church of Jesus Christ are not dependent upon any external order, that they rise majestically above the ruins of the old civilization and social order and give Mankind the courage and all the freedom and love of a new socio-political experiment, to make a new beginning.<sup>8</sup>

In other words, there is no social order that is adequate once for all for Christ’s church and for her social-ethical norms. There is no social order in history to which the church should ultimately bind herself. The only such order is the kingdom of God, which kingdom lies outside historical possibilities.<sup>9</sup> This perception applies to the fact that the church is not bound by any obsolete and inhuman social order. What is more, the church can fulfill the great commandment of neighborly love only if she, given her prophetic role, proclaims judgment on these social orders.<sup>10</sup>

*Servant Christ – Servant Church*

The analogy of the servant Christ is the servant church – this applies to ethics as well. Serving means openhearted willingness to help. The servant church is willing to remain outside the structures of power and thus serve the welfare of the community and the individual, the nation and the world. To act according to the analogy of love means that the church and her members seek and recognize God's actual will and are willing to help the particular person in his or her particular historical and social need. In order to give this help it is necessary to reconsider the old system of ethical norms and the old morality.<sup>11</sup>

*Dialogue*

The new ethical grounding was developed in a struggle against the obsolete social-ethical norms of the old feudal, capitalist and bourgeois order; and in a dialogue with the ideas and moral norms of the new, more just socialist order. The point of orientation was the comparison of secular humanism and Christian humanism:

Marxist humanism is first of all a political social praxis. (...) The way of humanizing is creating a world worthy of people, creating a classless society, and revolutionary praxis by means of class struggle. (...) The ground for Christian humanism is nothing else than God's act, His love for humans – or as Karl Barth has written: God's humanity. – The way of humanizing men, according to Christian conviction, cannot be anything else than putting on the real new man, that is, Jesus Christ. (...) The humanity of a Christian living from 'God's humanism' is his responsible co-existence with others. No one can be 'humane' by himself, isolated from others. Humanism is a common issue. (...) On the basis of structural likeness and the differences in content, the common question of Christian and Marxist humanism is: What can we do together for the human – for the sake of a complete real 'humanum'?<sup>12</sup>

The theological definition of this 'complete real humanum' was missing. Of course, this can be understood. As soon as it had been defined from a theological point of view, the church should have acquired a critical position.

The 'academic' dialogue in Hungary between Marxists and Christians started formally in 1981 in Debrecen. Dialogue with the ideas and moral norms of the new social order did not rise from the conviction that such a dialogue was desirable, but rather from necessity. Both sides were aware of the fact that they could accomplish their goals only by taking the other side seriously. The purpose of the dialogue was to improve the already existing co-operation between Christians and Marxists. The Marxist side expected the Christians to acknowledge the fact that the church also should contribute to building socialism. This was a condition to the dialogue. On behalf of Protestantism, numerous church leaders were willing to co-operate in this matter. The representatives of the new order realized that there were certain areas they could not manage on their own. Dialogue came to their aid. The dialogue was carried out by rigorous restrictions. Only those were allowed to participate whom society considered 'able and reliable'. Only the so-called "progressive" Christians could take part. To be a progressive Christian and to be reliable in the eyes of society meant not to question the ultimate goals of Marxism, that is, its totalitarian demands, nor its everyday practice as far as methods and means were concerned. The government in return kept its word regarding its attitude of "who is not against us is with us." The church received some allowances but was not allowed to have a word about the direction in which the country was heading.<sup>13</sup> As far as the Marxist side was concerned, the sole purpose of any dialogue between Christians and non-Christians could only be that of first weakening and finally abolishing religion. Creating a sophisticated dialogue proved to be more effective than any other vulgar expressions of anti-religion attacks. This is reflected in the writing of a popular Marxist philosopher of the era:

The objective development of socialism, in itself, without systematic ideological influence, would be able to eliminate religious faith only at a very slow pace. The ideological criticism of religion, however, can only become really effective in the course of joint activities; discussions with believers, without practical cooperation, remain a voice in the wilderness, just as the basis of joint activities which attempt to strengthen the ideological influence of socialism, become fragile without discussion.<sup>14</sup>

Dialogue was "a means of persuasion and not a collective goal" as the West had tended to think of it.<sup>15</sup>

On behalf of the Catholic Church there was an official critical position published in Hungary about the character of the dialogue. This critique said that the role played by the church in society did not receive sufficient acknowledgement. Such critique said: we cannot speak of a dialogue as long as the state interferes in the life of the church by administrative means, as long as the Christians are treated as second class citizens, as long as there is no free teaching of religion at schools, and as long as the power of the party, which is nothing else than hunger for power, is seen as in the service of the nation.<sup>16</sup>

### *Ethical Norms*

Historical changes and economic conditions bear great significance on the formation of ethical norms. The question and the dilemma of the relation of the historic situation and the ethical principles speak about the fact that eternal commandments cannot be understood independently of their situations.<sup>17</sup>

This perception included that the former so-called individual ethics did not correspond to God's current will and the needs of humankind. The importance of physical needs and human rights to them are essential aspects for ethics. It is vain to appeal to the conscience of the individual if he or she is a captive of social and economic circumstances and prejudice. "Love and justice should be sought in the social structures so that the individual be freed for proper and timely ethical deeds."<sup>18</sup> Conversion to God should go hand in hand with conversion to the neighbor - was the popular slogan of the servant church theology.<sup>19</sup>

### *Struggle Against Ethical Resignation*

Finally, the servant church theology recognized the necessity of the struggle against ethical resignation, against ethical dejection. Ethical resignation, applying to the sinful nature of humankind, does not see a possibility for changing the old social conditions and the bad habits. It considers the struggle for a just society, peace and a just world order to be nonsense. Calvin's teaching on common grace received a great emphasis in this perception. Other elements of the Christian doctrine which emphasize the goodness of the creation came to the surface as well. It was also popular to make warnings against the one-sided or otherworldly

interpretation of eschatology just as to call attention to the ethical contents of the message of God's kingdom, that is, the importance of the "penultimate."<sup>20</sup>

According to Kocsis' argument, since the Christian church had failed to fill in the time between Christ's coming and the realization of God's kingdom with social-ethical content, it was necessary for secular ethics to enter this vacuum.<sup>21</sup>

## Particular Social-Ethical Decisions and Their Social Projections

### *The Moral Superiority of the Socialist Order*

The theology of the servant church considered its first and most important decision to acknowledge the authority of the socialist revolution. The church leadership getting to power in 1948 saw three alternatives: i) to maintain the notion of a bourgeois society and start a culture-war against the ideas of the models of the socialist society; ii) to be quiet and withdraw to inner immigration; iii) to confess one's error as a church and then take sides with the new socialist vision of society. The leadership of the Reformed Church of Hungary chose the third way. Repentance and conversion proclaimed were a part of this "self-examination." The 1967 Synodical Teaching had a chapter on "The Place of Our Church in Today's Hungarian Society". According to that section one of the greatest sins of the church was that she had become a victim of relying on the state power during the 25 years of armistice between the two world wars. As a result of that, the church did not have a prophetic word that was strong, clear, courageous and consistent enough when the Hungarian government committed itself to a racist and anti-religious foreign power. At the same time she ignored the miserable millions of exploited agricultural and industrial workers.<sup>22</sup> The Synod Teaching also declared the saving circumstances and binding fact of God's judgmental and merciful shaping of history:

In the dark events of World War II, and in the national and social collapse that followed, God's just judgment reached our church for her disobedience, unfaithfulness and her turning away from the Word. According to human

standards she should have deserved a more severe punishment. God's judgment was merciful. Therefore there was a rejoicing sigh of relief filling our church after liberation. We must thank our God's mercy that we survived! It was this grateful rejoicing which the rebuilding spiritual and physical strength of our church flowed from after World War II.<sup>23</sup>

The old social order, due to the social injustice prevailing in it, fell under God's just judgment. Therefore social changes were not only necessary but were legitimate as well – declared the official position. As a second step of this process the church acknowledged the socialist society and its moral superiority over other social systems.<sup>24</sup>

A third position followed from the acknowledgement of the moral superiority of the socialist society. The Reformed Church of Hungary supported all the socialist revolutionary endeavors occurring worldwide and especially in the developing countries. The leadership of the Church declared that only these revolutionary changes were able to solve the burning questions of humankind, such as, putting an end to hunger, misery and cultural backwardness, creating lasting peace and stopping the destruction of ecology.<sup>25</sup> We can comment that this was nothing else than ridiculing the Gospel, justifying revolutionary theologies and supporting the endeavors of the Soviet Union's foreign policy.

### *Ethics of Property*

The next social-ethical position was taken regarding the question of the ethics of *property*. The official church position radically broke with the "medieval notion of the sacredness of private property" that had a great influence on Reformed ethics until then. The position arose from the 'perception' that earthly goods, including land as well, are gifts of God. God gives all the earth and everything that humankind grows and produces from it to the community most of all, so that justly distributing the produced goods, each member of the community could live worthily from it.<sup>26</sup> Poor attempts were made to justify collectivization on biblical grounds. When the Reformed Church of Hungary acknowledged the Constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic, she acknowledged the collectivization of industry and capital as well as the socialization of agriculture at

the same time. They argued from Romans 13:4 that it was legitimate of the State, for the “wellbeing” of its citizens, to take possession of and control all essential means of production which form the most important basis for the people’s life.<sup>27</sup>

“The church gave help by her particular means so that this necessary social change would be realized with as little convulsion as possible.”<sup>28</sup> One such particular means was preaching. There were special articles devoted to the topic of how to preach in churches living within collectivized (governmentally centralized) economic structures. What was different in these sermons compared to previous times? The means of production and the results of production in the co-operatives belong to the community. The formation of moral awareness appropriate for this is hindered by the sinful and false notion of “mine.” The socialist way of life, thus the notion of collective property of the socialist agriculture, does not mean that “it is someone else’s and not mine” – but it means that it belongs to all of us, to the whole nation. This does not danger what is mine, because the community includes what is mine as well – to the degree of my share in the work done. “What is mine gets to me not by alienation but by distribution. (...) One of the decisive moral moments of the formation of the socialist awareness is the recognition of the fact that ‘mine’ is assured in the collective.” It was the church, who in contrast with Scripture, invented and preached the idea of the sacredness of private property. Therefore she owes special responsibility in this area to preach the Gospel. “We do not preach the sacredness of collective property, but its usefulness for the whole nation – and that in it the property of the individual is also assured.”<sup>29</sup> We can comment on this, that to use such arguments violates the balance of the Word of God, which does not side totally with either communism or capitalism. It is true that the church has often found it difficult to call for economic justice in both capitalist and socialist societies, but the above critique by the socialists was one-sided, indeed.

In the Marxist view the end of private property would bring along the emancipation of women, actual monogamy. When that is realized there will be no need for the commandments forbidding adultery and stealing.<sup>30</sup> It was thought that just as people would learn not to steal the property or the wages earned by others, so people would learn not to covet the wife or husband of another, or to desire the honor or anything else due to another. Here we find an interesting irony: the key to fulfilling the command of God is not based on personal conversion but on a different economic paradigm for society. This brings us to the old questions of whether we need to change individuals, or change social structures. While the

Bible talks about both, those who think that people will be better when social-economic structures are better, unfortunately are paying attention to only one part of the problem of personal conversion and the improvement of society.

The social-ethics of the servant church theology was right when it asserted that everything belongs to God. However it went wrong when it started to speak against private property on the basis of Scripture instead of emphasizing that humans are only caretakers, cultivators and stewards of God's creation.

### *Work Ethics*

Teaching on new working morals was an organic consequence of the social-ethical decision made in connection with the ethics of property. In this teaching, work done for the sake of the neighbor was raised to the level of worship. The declaration of this was in sharp contrast with the double morality of the Middle Ages which put the so-called contemplative lifestyle above work. This new social-ethical perception emphasized that decent work as divine ordinance and as life forming force applied not only to private property but made sense in the property of the community as well. What is more, work as an effort for the sake of the community can be redeemed from the harmful effects of societies built on egoism throughout history.<sup>31</sup>

If work is God's commandment to all human beings, a social-ethical truth should follow from that. That social order is most appropriate for the order of creation which makes work available for everyone and which makes it impossible that some make use of others' work while they themselves do not work.<sup>32</sup> In contrast with capitalism it is the socialist social order that represents this "better truth":<sup>33</sup>

- i) Socialism ends the exploitation of humans by humans. By this it puts an end to the notion of work and worker being merchandise, and restores the dignity of both work and worker. Work in this society is a 'matter of fairness' – a workless life is impossible.
- ii) By means of a centrally planned economy unemployment is overcome, the dark clouds of misery and uncertainty no longer hang over the heads of the people.
- iii) It is neither the capital nor the profit, but the human being is the main value. The main goal is a content and rejoicing life for the human being rather than continual accumulation of wealth.



- iv) The community forming force of work is effective and it strengthens the responsibility felt for the community instead of the egoism of the individual.

The Synod Teaching had the following words on work:

The ethics of work has gained new content in our society. The new work ethics in its practical consequences does not oppose the requirements of Reformed morality. What is more, there is essential conformity in how both value and estimate function. [...] A Christian by a well accomplished work not only serves his own bread and the wellbeing of the community but serves the glory of God as well. Working fairly gives us an opportunity for Christian witness and is an occasion of doing good where the church is most effective in contributing to social development.<sup>34</sup>

In the meantime the so-called 'inner unemployment' gradually increased. Working morals became more and more corrupt. "We go on working slowly and we go on getting paid slowly." – was the mentality. Wages were not an issue in ethical discussions. As a matter of fact it paid a lot more to be a propagandist, a party or a trade union functionary, or simply an informer, than work diligently. Hundreds of thousands made their living from weekend 'black' jobs. That is, they took on extra unregistered work in order to subsidize their meager earnings.

### *Peace Theology*

Analyzing the Reformed theological thinking of the era it can be asserted that the question of peace enjoyed a primary place in its social-ethical orientation. A study group of the church worked out what they called the 'pattern for an ethos of the ecumenical peace ministry'. "Encountering the new society happened in such a tense international situation that was burdened by the cold war and the danger accompanying the appearance of atom and hydrogen bombs." The theological precedence of the ecumenical ministry of the church was the recognition of "the universal validity of Christ's kingdom and redemption":

For grace does not end where the church ends. As the Fall somehow applies to the whole of the cosmos, in the same way salvation somehow bears the fruits of righteousness for the universe and the whole of humankind. It is from this theological perception that the practical insight arises, that is, the cultivation of the ecumenical relations of churches is connected with the service of peace which is the greatest issue of today's generation. That is why our Church welcomed and supported by all means the Christian peace movement which was manifested in the form of the Christian Peace Conference in the ecumenical life.<sup>35</sup>

It was June, 1958 when the Christian Peace Conference (CPC) was founded in Prague, mainly with the contribution of representatives of Eastern European countries, including the Reformed Church of Hungary as well. From the following year countries like Great Britain, the Netherlands, the United States and the German Federal Republic also had representatives in the movement. More and more churches welcomed the initiative of the Prague meeting. In 1961 the first All-Christian Peace Assembly was held in Prague. Within the theme '...and peace on earth' disarmament had the primary place in the discussions. There were particular suggestions made concerning the immediate halt of nuclear testing and the production of weapons of mass destruction, establishing nuclear free zones, etc. The Czech theologian, Professor Josef L. Hromadka was elected the first president of the CPC. The following All-Christian Peace Assembly was organized in 1964. A great number of African representatives participated at the conference, and as a consequence such themes played an important role as the gap between North and South endangering world peace, and the consequences of colonialism and imperialism for justice and human dignity. The third All-Christian Peace Assembly was held in 1968 in Prague. The Assembly declared that the realization of peace did not exclude the necessity of the national liberation struggles. The 'status quo' in Asia, Africa or in Latin America is unacceptable. There are economic powers backing up political, military and administrative forces. These powers should be put under international control. The Assembly encouraged the churches not to isolate themselves from the necessity of the revolutionary processes, but to challenge Christians to take part in the struggles for liberation.<sup>36</sup>

The "Prague Spring" in 1968, just as the "Budapest Fall" in 1956 ended with Soviet military intervention. Hromadka wrote a letter to the Soviet ambassador in Prague in which he called the Soviet intervention the greatest tragedy of

his life and the tragic error of the Soviet Government. Both Hromadka and the general secretary of the CPC resigned. Several members withdrew from further co-operation with the CPC. In 1971, at the fourth All-Christian Peace Assembly the movement went through some reorganization. The following questions became current: the consolidation of European security; the ending of the US aggression in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos; the overcoming of the tension in the Middle East; the struggle against racism in the Republic of South Africa and in Rhodesia; questions concerning the development in third-world countries. The Assembly exhorted the Christians of the world to participate in anti-imperialist solidarity. One of the bishops of the Reformed Church of Hungary, Károly Tóth, a rather moderate theologian, became the general secretary of the CPC from that year. The following Assembly elected him president. A meeting in 1982 sharply judged NATO for the decision to deploy nuclear missiles in Western Europe. Western imperialism proved to be the greatest enemy of world peace in the eyes of the CPC. The following year, in May, there was a consultation on disarmament in Budapest.<sup>37</sup> President Tóth wrote the following on that occasion:

Frequently, ideological differences are misused as an apologetic pretence for the continued escalation of conflicts. One of the central questions which must be asked by the churches and by Christian theology is that concerning the possibility of overcoming the ideological barriers in order to cooperate on concrete steps towards disarmament. At this point, we would also have to deal with the problem of enemy profiles, and the use of ideological positions or anti-positions in order to justify the arms race would have to be questioned. Therefore, the aspiration towards disarmament should cause Christian theology to modify the importance of ideologies, and in those cases where ideologies are useful, it should state distinctly and clearly which real needs are expressed through them.<sup>38</sup>

This ideological and political impartiality received more and more emphasis at the following All-Christian Peace Assembly in 1985. These events and themes could have made it possible to indeed use ideological impartiality as a means to critique and reform the dominant direction of society, but for a great part it became obvious that the movement was committed to the 'East'.

Károly Tóth and Stephan Tunncliffe of the European Nuclear Disarmament Movement were responsible for a Budapest seminar under the title "Towards a

Theology of Peace" in 1984. The seminar had a second meeting in 1987, again in Budapest.<sup>39</sup>

Just as the servant church theology of the Reformed Church of Hungary was never fully developed, the same is true of the theology of peace as a part of its social-ethics. It did not constitute a complete system, only its basics were laid down by means of various expressions of its ideas. Let us take a look at some of these. In 1972 the Hungarian Committee contributed to the New Delhi Assembly with the following:<sup>40</sup>

- i) In our age, world peace has become the basic condition to the survival of humankind. This obliges Christian theology to draw conclusions from the Biblical message, which conclusions are different from those of the former generation. The relation of Christian faith to political and social structures should be defined differently than in the last centuries.
- ii) Peace activity and the theology of peace should influence the self assertion of the churches. The renewal of churches is closely bound to their peace activities.
- iii) As for the ecumenical significance of the CPC, we should keep in sight the historically significant fact that today's ecumenical movement received a decisive impulse from those church people who had already pursued Christian peace activities before World War I and II. – Many references were especially made to Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The Weltbund für die Freundschaftsarbeit der Kirchen movement, which was associated with his name, was considered the ecumenical precursor of the CPC.<sup>41</sup> – We can comment that this reference was rather one-sided since it did not mention Bonhoeffer's fight against totalitarian systems, nor his martyrdom by such a system.

The Christological grounding for the Christian peace activity lay in the presupposition that we not only can learn from Christ that we are able to carry out such activity, but that we are obliged to do so. Humankind redeemed by Christ, not only Christians, but all human beings receive the ability from God for peace, and it is up to them whether they want to practice this ability or not. They do not even have to know that it was God who prepared this peace for them.

God has other means beside the Christian churches to spread his will for peace among men. This other means is undoubtedly a reference to the countries of the socialist camp. In the theology of peace a Christ-like image of the human being is realized. In other words, it establishes such a Christian anthropology which believes in humanity's ability to achieve world peace.<sup>42</sup>

The representatives of the Reformed Church of Hungary composed the following theological considerations for the 1972 Helsinki meeting:<sup>43</sup>

- i) The lives and witness of the Christian churches stand or fall on their "revolutionarily new obedience" to Jesus Christ. CPC is the place, the sign and worker of this new theological thinking. Christian theology, under the influence of strange philosophies, narrowed down the content of the divine message of salvation to the individual. It forgot about the fact that human sinfulness, just as salvation, has social contexts. Sin cannot be reduced to the area of the individual life, since it is such an objective reality that has social forms of expressions, what is more, social structures. From this it follows that the message of salvation of the Gospel must have social impacts.
- ii) It is necessary to create a so-called instrumental ecclesiology. Not the question of Christian unity is of priority, but the question of how to create the means of our common service in the world.
- iii) What are the means of theological service for the Christian peace activity in the community of Christians?
  - a) The Christian community should claim that the peace of God and the peace of the world cannot be separated from each other. The Cross of Christ expressed this the most particularly.
  - b) Christians and Christian churches cannot take a waiting standpoint in connection with the realistic threats endangering humankind.
  - c) Awakening and maintaining hope in people, even in the most desperate and most hopeless situations, is one of the most important peace activities of Christianity.

Although these theological considerations sounded rather appealing they still meant to serve the Marxist concept. To create the means of common service was

an illusion: common service can be done only on common grounds.

Of course, applying the hermeneutic principle of neighborly love could not be left out from the ethics of peace. The great commandment declares that we can find God in our brothers and through our brothers. Faith is a dialogue between man and God. In this dialogue God asks the question with the emphasis on responsibility: "Where is your brother?" (Genesis 4:9) As there is co-operation between socialists and Christians (e.g. in the anti-imperialist struggle), it should be obvious that in socialism the issue is not to fight against religion and to establish atheism. The task of socialism is to take care of humankind. In the same way the issue in Christianity is the salvation and peace of humankind. Socialism is judgment and hope at the same time. It is judgment on the church that had failed to carry out essential tasks; it is hope because the realization of socialism reminds the church of her actual tasks. From here it is only one step to justify co-operation: "Christians and Christian churches should be willing to co-operate by means of their whole strength with socialists for peace. By this they should show that criticism for the sake of justice and the salvation of humankind are important for both sides."<sup>44</sup>

While themes like racism in South Africa and in North America, economic problems and social conditions in Latin America dominated peace discussions, not a single sign of concern was expressed on behalf of the meeting of ecumenical church leaders about the Hungarian and the Russian troops marching into Prague in 1968. Just as the social problems and injustices of one's own country were not issues for peace theology.

These examples may illustrate well that as far as the social-ethics of the servant church theology of the Reformed Church of Hungary was concerned, from a Marxist view it could be stated that it was "in harmony with Marxist ethics, except, of course, the basic premises and the normative theses of Christian ethics." The difference did "not lie in ideology but in the world view."<sup>45</sup>

## Evaluation

The theology of the servant church gave preference to two areas especially, namely social-ethics and anthropology. The church government believed that despite the opposite starting points in regard to religion and a life-view, it was possible to cooperate with atheistic socialism in the area of ethics.

### *Hermeneutic Principles*

The theology of the servant church saw cooperation with socialism as nothing else than "sharing in the saving act of Christ." This religious rhetoric was used within the church to try to make everyone join this cooperation. From a theological point of view this idea seems to suggest that Christ's work of salvation is not complete yet, and needs to be continued by humans. Also, Christ's work is almost completely narrowed down to a social-ethical dimension which is clearly not what the Bible teaches. Thus the theology of the servant church is a selective theology.<sup>46</sup> Without noticing it, the use of religious rhetoric only was a veneer on a largely humanist-secular approach to society. Rather than coming with the Word of God and speaking to the situation, this theology mainly came from the situation and tried to make the Bible and the church cooperate with a ready-made program.

In the theology of the servant church the Great Commandment was even more emphatic than the servant-hood of Christ. However, when the theologians of the servant church set the parable of the good Samaritan as a paradigm and the Great Commandment as a hermeneutic principle, they forgot that Scripture always speaks about the double commandment of love. The love of one's neighbor cannot be possible without the love of God and paying heed to the Gospel. The love of God is not less important than the love of one's neighbor, since „the acceptance of the great and first commandment is the reason, the definer and the sustaining spirit of one's love for the neighbor."<sup>47</sup> If the former gets cold, the latter also loses its strength. The church serves the world to the extent she serves her Lord who is at the same time the saving Lord of the world. The universality of this demand is obscured in the theology of the servant church, since it emphasizes that love for God can only be expected from the believers and

not from the world. With this it virtually denies the missionary task of the church and narrows down the social call of the church to the area of humanitarian help giving.<sup>48</sup>

### *Social Ethics*

The social ethics of the theology of the servant church sought answers to important questions of property, work, patriotism, family, peace, etc. However, it pronounced only generalities about social problems and their solutions, or it only repeated what others had already said before. In its social-ethical “perceptions” it borrowed its perspectives from Marxist ethics. It repeated under a religious disguise what Marxist ethics had said. It saw social actions as the way in which, and the means by which, God’s kingdom is realized in our world. It sacralized humanitarian actions and made them the focus of faith. It shared in Marxism’s belief in progress and taught that redemption worked through profane history by introducing permanent developments in a positive direction; and that there is a solution for the problems of human existence, - for all “the burning questions of humanity”, provided there is willingness to solve them and there is unconditional commitment in social issues. With this it fell into the mistake of viewing, or at least appearing to view, all the problems of human existence solely as being that of a social character.<sup>49</sup>

We can say that social-ethical questions and answers – along with other theses of the theology of the servant church – obviously carried false goals in this unfinished system, in this “random theology.” The false goals came because it pretended to be both good theology and good socialism. It was a “random theology,” because it borrowed randomly from the Bible and theological terminology, while it systematically was following the demands of the authorities.

### *Anthropology*

Beside social ethics, anthropology played a distinguished role in this “theology”. This also shows similarities with the Marxist view of the human being. This optimistic view made the human being the center of things. It declared in a loud



voice: the human being is the main value. The happiness of people was the point of connection between this theology and Marxism. In the name of cooperating in human happiness and social progress the theology of the servant church became silent about the real dimension of original sin. Instead it taught the ability of humans to achieve peace and harmony. Then 'shalom' does not come from God, from his promises in relation to our obedience, but 'shalom' then is a human achievement. With this it weakened the preaching of the Gospel, and as a matter of fact it reduced preaching to socialist humanism. Sermons said in biblical words what Marxist anthropology had to say about the human being.

In emphasizing reconciliation to the neighbor the Marxist view is reflected again: the human being is a 'social entity', a complex of social relationships. The human being is neither more, nor other than the sum of his or her relationships. These relationships are of course exclusively limited to social relationships, to the roles in the economic process of production. The human being is determined by these social relationships. He or she is worth as much as his or her relationships are worth. A person becomes himself or herself by creating these social relationships. The more these relationships improve the more the individual improves. The question remains open: who improves the improvers of these social relationships? The Marxist view of the human being limits the human being to his or her social roles. Thus the human being is not more than a social whole. This defines his or her value. The human being is a living robot. Thinking is just a product of the brain just as urine is of the kidneys. This does not mean that the individuals are without value but that their value never exceeds their value for the collective. To correspond to a social role is to correspond to one's social significance, that is, one's importance for the collective, the whole. The anthropology of the theology of the servant church failed to proclaim that the human being is more than a social role, more than a functionary. The Christian faith grants one a relationship, a relationship with God, which cannot be alienated and which goes beyond any other relationships and gives such an identity that is independent from all social and political significance.<sup>50</sup> The mystery of the body of Christ was completely lost in the teaching of this theology: The parts that we think are less honorable are treated with special honor. (1 Corinthians 12:23)

*Dialogue*

The main problem was not that the church tried to create a good relationship with the state. The church and Christians cannot back out of society. Christians and non-Christians live together in the world, thus their responsibility is common. But Christians should act as Christians outside the church as well: they should do their best to influence culture and society in a Christian way. This attitude, which is sometimes difficult for the world to understand, is not the same as despising culture, but follows from the biblical obedience in the cultural sphere as well. In the theology of the servant church the biblical teaching that the church is for the world (for its salvation) was distorted in the direction that the church should sacrifice, that is, should liquidate herself, for the sake of the world.

Of course Christian and Marxist ethics can have common questions, but their analogies can only be formal. Christian ethics views things from the perspective of the kingdom of God, while Marxist ethics makes the human being the measure of everything.<sup>51</sup> However, a church which repeats like a parrot what has already been said by others, and becomes the mouthpiece of the prevailing political and social decisions and does what other authorities and institutions do, essentially breaks herself in two. If churchgoers see and hear the same in church as in the world, they will turn away from the church. People come to church for something else, what is more, for Somebody Else.<sup>52</sup>

In connection with the social-ethical issues it must also be noted that even the attribute "servant" is contradictory, since the Reformed Church of Hungary was involved in less social services between 1948 and 1989 than its predecessor. The old church, labeled as the 'dominating' by the socialists, had wide-ranging religious instruction, well organized Sunday-school activities and youth work. It granted opportunities for the activities of students' associations, adult education, diaconial institutions, foreign missions and published approximately thirty different church papers. Congregations survived during the socialist decades partly due to the fruit of these pastoral ministries of the past that continued on in the lives of the people.

In contrast to this the so-called "servant" church closed its eyes before the practical challenges of the social-ethical questions. It is impossible that it was due to the blindness of ignorance. All the injustices of collectivization: the nationalization of schools, firms, factories, shops, lands and even larger private

houses, the violent and cruel liquidation of certain social classes. It is contradictory and more than sad to use phrases like “the content of love is seeking service, faithfulness/loyalty and righteousness” in the middle of the terror practiced by the Party. The socialist regime with its so-called “high moral values” applied a consistent, brutal and violent atheistic attitude which was present from one’s cradle to one’s grave, from the early years of kindergarten to promotion at work or career possibilities later in life (see Gyula Illyés, *One Sentence on Tyranny*<sup>53</sup>).

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# The March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement and Christianity in the Context of Peace

## Introduction

The Korean Church, which hosted the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), proposed to put into practice the gospel of peace for the sake of the coming peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. Given that the fate of Korea is deeply influenced by the surrounding great powers, however, the current political situations in East Asia – in particular, Japan’s transformation into a country with projective military capacity – are intensifying international conflicts and tensions surrounding the Peninsula. Even up until recently, moreover, South and North Korea have been in military confrontation and ideology competition with each other, while the threats of war are still in the air due to the North’s development of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons. One of the Korean Church’s tasks in this situation is to dissolve the conflict and confrontation between South and North Korea, to realize the reconciliation of the divided nation, and to contribute to the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. The gospel of God’s kingdom fulfilled in Jesus Christ is the gospel of peace. The Korean Church, however, has thus far failed to practice the gospel of peace, of which many Korean Christians today reflects self-critically and repents.

With this regard, in this paper I study the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement , also known as Samil Movement. It was the Korean national movement of independence from Japan’s colonial occupation and also a movement for the peace of the world. To be more specific, I will investigate the idea of peace as contained in the March

1st Declaration of Independence and ask whether and how it corresponds to the Christian idea of peace. Also, I will make clear that it was Christian leaders who took the initiative in the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement – at least in Seoul. Through a historical research on the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement in 1919, finally, I will explore how the Korean Church may contribute to the peaceful reunification of the divided Korea.

## The March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement in 1919

### *Outline*

The March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement in 1919 continued for two months – both at home and abroad. In the process declarations of independence were released at several places,<sup>1</sup> including the Independence Declaration by ‘Joseon cheongnyeong doglibdan daepyo’ (Joseon Young Adults’ Representatives for Independence) consisting of eleven Korean students in Tokyo, Japan, on February 2, the Korean Declaration of Independence in Gillim, Manchuria in February, the Declaration of Independence by thirty-three national representatives in Seoul on March 1, the Announcement of Independence Declaration in Yongjeong, Gando (Jiandao), on March 13, the Joseon Declaration of Independence in Vladivostok, Russia, on March 17, and the Declaration in Hunchun, Manchuria around that time.

While Korean participants in the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement led peaceful demonstrations from the beginning to the end, the Japanese imperialism repressed the ‘Manse’ [Korean word for ‘Hurray’] demonstration with military forces.<sup>2</sup> Out of about 510,000 participants in the demonstrations of the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement, according to a statistics, 19,054 were arrested and indicted.<sup>3</sup> Pointing to the Korean Church as maneuvering behind the Independence Movement, the Japanese imperialism ordered police and military forces to destroy chapels and arrest congregation members. The loss by fire of Jeamri Chapel near Suwon is the most notorious case. In connection with the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement, 17 chapels were destroyed and 2,190 Christians were arrested by June 30, 1919.<sup>4</sup>



*The March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement in Seoul, Led by Christian Leaders*

The March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement in Seoul originated from a gathering at the house of Park Seung-Bong (135 Gyedong Bukchon), who was an elder of Andong Church (Anguk-dong, Seoul), in early January of 1919.<sup>5</sup> After Korea (Joseon) and the United States signed a diplomatic treaty in 1882, elder Park was sent to the US in 1885 and worked as the first Korean envoy for the following four years. This career of his suggests how learned he might have been about international affairs. Concerning the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement, elder Park consulted Lee Sang-Jae, who also had an extensive knowledge of international affairs due to his own career as a diplomat in the US for several years. In the middle of January several leaders from Christianity, Cheondoism [a Korean indigenous religion founded in southern Korea by Choi Je-Woo in 1859], and Buddhism assembled to organize the independent movement.

They assigned historian Choi Nam-Seon to write the first draft of the Declaration of Independence, which was then reviewed and revised by Christian leaders, including Lee Seung-Hun, Park Seung-Bong, and Lee Sang-Jae. On March 1, the movement in Seoul began with the 'Manse' demonstration of people who gathered at the Pagoda Park.

## The Idea of Peace in the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement's Declaration of Independence

*Hope for the Rebuilding of the World*

Behind the development of the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement in 1919 there was an awareness of the global changes which began during the First World War. The March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement's Declaration of Independence reveals some knowledge of the Russian Revolution, a few small nations' independence, and American President Edward Wilson's proposal of the principle of self-determination of peoples. With this awareness the declaration argued that amidst these global changes this was the right time to "rebuild the world" wherein the Korean people would regain their lost national sovereignty.

By “the age of power” the declaration meant the current period in which imperialism dominated the global world according to the law of the jungle. Imperialism refers to a policy of extending a country’s power through domination, which was led primarily by the Western great powers that had succeeded in industrialization from mid-1880s to late-1910s. Imperial powers repressed colonized people by political and military means and exploited them economically,<sup>6</sup> while appealing to the combination of blind nationalism and social Darwinism.<sup>7</sup> In the age of imperialism dominated by social Darwinism’s logic of power, it was an international common sense that the stronger prey upon the weaker. Thus, great nations invaded and colonized small nations. During this period there were fierce competitions among Western imperial nations for colonies (natural resources or market). At first the United Kingdom claimed the dominant place, which was later challenged by France and Germany. In the process the tension of international conflicts increased and, at last, burst out in the First World War in 1914. At the very center of the war, according to German Lutheran pastor Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt, was the international “competition for interests.” Blumhardt warned against the domination of “Mammon” working behind the war.<sup>8</sup>

The First World War was unprecedented in history in terms of the arms and war supplies employed in it. It continued for four years and four months. During that period about 0.8 billion people were involved in the stormy war, about 70 million soldiers were committed, and there were about 30 million casualties. The entire Europe was devastated by the enormous firepower released in the war. In 1917 the war ended owing to several decisive events, including the US’s participation in the war in March and the Russian Revolution in October. The Russian Revolution declared the principle of self-determination of peoples, which then had a great impact on colonized peoples of small nations. While the principle was targeted primarily at those small nations in Europe and Central Asia which had been under the domination of Tsarist Russia, it also influenced colonized people in Asia and Africa so that they began to hope for their own independence. The declaration of the principle of self-determination of peoples in the Russian Revolution preceded Edward Wilson’s declaration of the same principle on January 8, 1918.

When Germany was almost defeated in the war, there was also a revolution in the country. On November 3, 1918, sailors broke out in revolt in Kiel. Then,

the revolution spread throughout the country, in whose major cities workers' and soldiers' councils were constituted. On November 9, the Spartacist League of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and a group of revolutionary labors occupied Berlin and usurped the old regime. Korean poet Han Yong-Woon, one of the thirty-three representatives of the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement, understood this German Revolution as influenced by the Russian Revolution. Han made this point in his "An Essay on Joseon's Independence," which he wrote in prison just after the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement.<sup>9</sup>

The transformation of the world, which began during the First World War, was reflected by independence declarations. In particular, it is argued, the German Revolution following the Russian Revolution influenced the Tokyo Declaration of Independence in February 1919.<sup>10</sup> The new era initiated by the German Revolution awakened colonized people to envision the future of self-determination. Self-determination of peoples, however, presupposed restoration of national sovereignty and independence in colonized nations. Also, Wilson's declaration of the principle of self-determination of peoples was simply reflecting the desire of colonized peoples, but was not meant to bring it to an actual implementation.<sup>11</sup>

### *Peoples' Self-Determination Based upon the Just and Humane Way*

The Declaration of Independence, in correspondence to the global change for the rebuilding of the world, announced the Korean people's self-determination before the world. At the same time, the principle of peoples' self-determination was helpful to overcome the logic of social Darwinism which supported the idea of ability cultivation. During the era of the Korean Empire (1897-1910) Korean intellectuals, called Yurims, accepted Social Darwinism, according to whose progressive and developmental view of history weaker and inferior nations are dismissed while stronger and superior nations flourish. For instance, Yu Gil-Jun learned social Darwinism from Edward Morse while studying at the Denver Academy, Massachusetts in the US. Morse applied Charles Darwin's theory of evolution to the social evolution of humanity. Yang Gye-Cho's Eumbingsilmunjab also introduced social Darwinism to Korean intellectuals.

Awakened to the power of great nations by the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, Korean intellectuals began to embrace social Darwinism. While witnessing the world powers' competition for as well as Japan's invasion into Korea, they were convinced that the only way of Korea's survival in this context was to enlighten the Korean people for the advancement of the Korean society. Meanwhile, prior to the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty social Darwinism supported the idea of cultivating the Korean people's ability and strengthening the national power; however, after the treaty, ironically, it was used to justify Japan's invasion of Korea. For both the Korean Empire's deterioration or collapse and Japan's development and invasion of Korea were justified and taken for granted by social Darwinism. As a consequent, social Darwinism turned out to be the logic of imperialism. It could not pose any criticism or alternative to Japan's occupation of Korea. After the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty in 1910, Korean intellectuals convinced by social Darwinism found themselves at a loss without knowing how to develop the logic of restoring the lost national sovereignty.<sup>12</sup>

It is in this historical context that both the Russian and German Revolution embarked on rebuilding the world for the liberation of colonized peoples under the principle of self-determination of peoples, according to which each nation on the Earth has its own right of self-determination. The principle of peoples' self-determination helped Korean intellectuals to overcome social Darwinism. Based upon the principle they elaborated the idea that the Korean independence belongs to the natural right of the Korean nation. In this vein, Yurim Lee Won-Young, the leader of the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement at Yeon (Andong, Gyeongbuk), stood before the court and said, "Every nation of the world should walk along its own way of justice and humaneness. This belongs to its natural rights. It is natural for me as a member of 10,000,000 Korean people to make efforts for national independence."<sup>13</sup> Participants in the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement regarded the way of justice and humaneness as the presupposition of Korea's sovereign independence. The self-determination of the Korean nation, furthermore, was recognized as the major premise for the peace in East Asia which will save not only Japan but also the entire Asia.

*“Peace in East Asia” and “Peace in the World”*

The conviction that the Korean nation’s self-determination, or independence, might contribute to the peace in East Asia and even to the peace of the world originated from the idea of three-in-harmony (Samhwa) in the era of the Korean Empire. The idea of three-in-harmony referred to the harmony of Korea, China, and Japan in East Asia, which was grounded upon people’s harmony (Inhwa). Kim Ok-Gyun and Choi Ik-Hyeon advocated this idea respectively.<sup>14</sup> During the period of the Korean Empire when Western imperialism was threatening Asia, the idea of three-in-harmony asked for the attention and caution of the three countries in North East Asia regarding Western powers’ advance to Asia. Its main argument was that the three nations should join together to defend against the Western powers.

Through the Sino-Japanese War (1894), the Russo-Japanese War (1904), and the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty (1910), however, Japan emerged as a great empire and then took the advantage of the Western imperialism. In the process the idea of peace in East Asia through the Korea-China-Japan solidarity was broken down.<sup>15</sup> When it was not a great power yet, Japan also argued for the idea of peace in East Asia through solidarity of the three North East Asian nations. Once it became a great power, however, Japan distorted the idea of peace in East Asia in such a way to justify its supremacy over East Asia and its policy of imperialistic expansion. When it embarked upon the Russo-Japanese War, Japan announced that the war aimed to “preserve the independence of Korea and the peace in Far East Asia.”<sup>16</sup> Six years later, however, Japan’s occupation of Korea through the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty confirmed that the announcement was simply a lie and deceit.

Meanwhile, the peace in East Asia through solidarity of the three North East Asian nations, as originally sought by Korea,<sup>17</sup> presupposed the relationship of “tripodal peace” among Korea, China, and Japan. The relationship of tripodal peace means that given the three legs of a tripod the loss of any leg of it would break the balance and finally destroy the tripod itself. Hence, all the legs should be intact in order for the tripod to preserve its integrity. This is an analogy for the desirable relationship among the three countries. This analogy refers to the coexistence of Korea, China, and Japan with mutual respect and equal authority, and also to the peace sustained by the balance of power and solidarity among

them. In the Korean Empire the idea of tripodal peace was developed for the sake of the peace and survival of small nations.<sup>18</sup> It sought the survival of Korea amidst the advancing Western and Japanese imperialism. During the period from the Russo-Japanese War through Japan's occupation of Korea Korean intellectuals pursued the peace in East Asia with this idea of tripodal peace. The idea was supported by the Confucian critique of state violence and imperialism.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, Japan destroyed the idea of tripodal peace by giving rise to the Sino-Japanese War (1894). Ten years later Japan joined the line of western imperialistic nations, and around 1910, the year of the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty, jumped on the world order of social Darwinism in which the law of the jungle was taken for granted. In the process Japan advocated the peace in East Asia, and yet was hiding weapons under the slogan of peace. With this idea of military peace Japan pursued the expansion of its own power and relied upon its military forces. The peace of Japan was sustained by repressing the weak, controlling colonized people with military forces, and thereby silencing the society. It disguised the imperialistic domination with the slogan of peace.

Seven years after the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty, meanwhile, the world passed through another significant change. As mentioned above, the First World War broke out. The war and two revolutions in Russia and Germany replaced the old world order by a new world order. Leaders of the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement were keenly aware of this global change and described the signs of the time by saying "The era of power passed away; the new era of righteousness has come." In this vein they argued for peoples' self-determination by further developing the earlier ideas of three-in-harmony and tripodal peace in the Korean Empire.

Korea's understanding of national self-determination for the sake of peace in East Asia as articulated in the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement contradicted Japan's understanding of peace in East Asia in terms of military peace. The colonized Korea declared its right of self-determination, whereas the imperialistic Japan argued for the idea that the stronger prey on the weaker. Japan's forceful repression brought the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement to an end. The peace in East Asia advocated by Japanese imperialism was one of military peace. Korea's pursuit of peace in East Asia in terms of tripodal peace was frustrated by the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty in 1910, and even the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement could not achieve the original goal. In May 1920, one year after the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement failed to bring national independence but ended up an incomplete "Manse" demonstration, the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement's idea of peace

in East Asia came to the fore once again. At that time Korean newspaper Donga-ilbo published an essay entitled “Kernel of Peace in East Asia,”<sup>20</sup> in which peace in East Asia referred to peace in the relationship among three nations (Korea, China, Japan), and to the peace and development of all three nations (rather than of Japan alone). This newspaper insisted that the short cut to peace in East Asia is solidarity of the three nations with equal status and genuine freedom.

## The Idea of Peace in the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement and the Christian Idea of Peace

### *The Christian Idea of Peace as Witnessed by the Scriptures*

Thus far I reviewed the idea of peace in the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement’s Declaration of Independence. I now turn to the idea of peace from the Christian perspective. According to biblical witnesses, peace is not something that humans can achieve for themselves, but a gift from God (“grace and peace,” Rom. 1:7). The peace that the birth of Jesus brought to the world corresponded to the glory of the heavenly God (Luke 2:14), and the reconciliation through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ brought it to a completion and also to a new beginning. The resurrected Christ gave his disciples “my peace,” which is “not like” the peace of the world (John 14:27). The peace of Christ is not like the peace of the Roman Empire (Pax Romana) which represses and silences people with its military force.

Since it is a gift from God when viewed from the Christian perspective, peace is given only when we obey God’s will and thereby God is with us. In the Old Testament we read that prophet Isaiah urged King Ahas (735 BCE) to trust the God of Immanuel – that is, God’s being with us would bring peace by overcoming the threat of war. When the king refused to follow the advice, he became a victim of the war (Isa. 8:7). This event demonstrates that the presence of God is the precondition of peace.<sup>21</sup> The peace that the presence of God brings to the earth is given to people who are faithful to the divine covenant in the form of justice, blessing, and salvation. The fruit of human righteousness is peace (Isa. 32:17). The Hebrew word for peace, shalom,<sup>22</sup> also means righteousness (mishor, Mal.2:6), faithfulness (emunah, 2 Sam. 20:19), and truth (emet, Esth. 9:30). In other

words, true peace comes to the place where humans live “righteously, faithfully, and trustfully” in the covenant with God (Isa. 59:8; Ezra 8:16).<sup>23</sup> It is the peace accompanying God’s blessings – such as health, safety, joy, and happiness – as well as God’s salvation.

*Peace in Isaiah 11 and Peace in East Asia in the Declaration of Independence*

Isaiah 11:6-9 portrays a peaceful world where righteousness and faithfulness prevails (cf. Isa. 65:25):<sup>24</sup>

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper’s nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

In other words,<sup>25</sup> when the Creator God comes as the Lord of all creatures, the food chain marked by the stronger’s preying upon the weaker will be dissolved and carnivores will be satisfied with vegetables alone. On the day the world will be totally transformed. In the current ‘dangerous’ world the wolf devours the lamb, the leopard hunts for the goat, and the lion chases the yearling; in the coming ‘safe’ world, however, brutal carnivores and weak herbivores will live together. The lion’s physical condition will change so that it can eat vegetables. Peace in this passage refers to the transformation of the dangerous world into the safe world. The peace between the young child and the viper implies that the divine curse on the viper as well as the enmity between the viper’s and the woman’s offspring (Gen. 3:14-15) will disappear. This peace becomes reality when the first sin of the first man Adam is washed away. (Adam’s sin was his arrogance to become like God, or trespassing his boundary.) Then all creatures, strong beasts or weak cattle, will enjoy freedom and live peacefully in equal relationship with each other. The peace will be realized in God’s holy mountain; and the coming



world of peace will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, which will ensure that God's justice be established throughout the world.

The peaceful world of Isaiah 11 presupposes change in humans' way of life. Up until now humans have sought their own development at the sacrifice of other creatures and pursued their own prosperity by conquering neighboring nations. In addition, they believed that they could not survive, develop, and prosper without treading on and killing other living creatures. Ever since the rise of modernism developments in science and technology have been used as the means of conquest, whereby great empires colonized and exploited small nations. Such a desire for domination still exists, though in different forms. This way of life is self-centered and life-destroying. With this regard the biblical passage quoted above asks for repentance and transformation. It invites us to seek the peaceful world in which all humans and all other creatures enjoy freedom and equality on the foundation of justice.

This biblical idea of peace is consonant with the idea of peace in East Asia as proposed in the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement's Declaration of Independence. If we would apply Isaiah's prophecy to the international affairs around 1910, it may be interpreted as proclaiming God's judgment on the colonization of small nations by imperialistic powers and demanding the latter's repentance. This is exactly what the Declaration of Independence meant. Also, the vision of peace in East Asia based on the ideas of three-in-harmony and tripodal peace corresponds to the peaceful world in which "the wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together" – that is, great nations and small nations co-exist peacefully. Hence, "the era of power" in which the stronger prey upon the weaker should have passed away and "the era of righteousness" in which justice and humaneness prevail should have come; the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement should have made Korea an independent nation of self-determination, and the three nations in North East Asia should have been united with equal status and respective freedom.

To our regret, however, the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement's dream of peace in East Asia did not come true. For the following several decades Korea had suffered from the colonial rule by the Japanese imperialism. In fact, the peace proclaimed in Isaiah is the eschatological peace in the imminent future, rather than one that is to be realized today. Because such peace is a gift from God, the Korean nation hurried in waiting for the gift – until August 15, 1945, the day of national liberation.

## Conclusion

For the first two months in the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement in Seoul, the movement was led by Christian leaders including Lee Sang-Jae, Park Seung-Bong, and Lee Seung-Hun. They assigned Choi Nam-Seon to write the first draft of the Declaration of Independence, and then reviewed and revised it.

These Christian leaders who participated in the writing of the Declaration of Independence were well versed in international affairs. Also, they had the idea of peace which was well-known among Korean intellectuals of the late 19th century. It was the idea of three-in-harmony for peace in East Asia and the idea of tripodal peace for peace among Korea, China, and Japan. Thus far I have shown that this idea of peace resonates with the biblical idea of peace – especially one that is found in Isaiah 11.

The idea of peace in the Declaration of Independence assumed an awareness of the contemporary global change. Small nations suffering from the colonial rule by great powers were awakened by the Russian and German Revolutions and embarked on their respective independence movements. In this vein Korea too organized the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement for the purpose of contributing to national independence and to the peace of the world. Its vision of the rebuilding of the world referred to the end of the imperialistic world in which the stronger prey on the weaker and the emergence of the peaceful world based on justice and humaneness through self-determination of peoples. It was nothing but the peace in East Asia grounded upon the ideas of three-in-harmony and tripodal peace.

The March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement in Korea in 1919, however, failed to bring about national independence, and could not change anything in the international affairs. Again, this confirms that genuine peace is not something that humans can bring for themselves, but something to be given from God.

In 2015 the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula and the peaceful order of the global world are more urgently in need than ever before. Hence, while awaiting the eschatological peace coming from heaven, we eagerly long for the “just peace” in which all nations and countries are united in solidarity with equality and freedom.

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# István Török's and Ahn Byung Mu's Reformed Responses to the Challenges Posed by Totalitarian and Dictatorial Regimes in Hungary and South Korea

Reformed Theology lives in a very pluralistic context yet the people adhering to the Calvinist tradition may encounter similar issues (various forms of oppression, marginalisation, persecution) despite living on different continents (Europe and Asia). This paper intends to study in a historical perspective how selected theologians like István Török and Ahn Byung-Mu dealt with and reacted to the challenges of left or right wing totalitarian or dictatorial governments in Hungary and Korea in the past. My intention at this stage of research is to bring the two theologies into dialogue with one another. I seek to offer a narrative and critical reflection on the theologies developed in differing contexts (and enunciate selected stories from their lives, analyse theologies they addressed, or developed and examine how their personal life journey interconnected with the theology they pursued in the public square as well as within the church. First, I deal with Török's theological reflections on the "Theology of the Narrow Road",

which gained currency as an infamous Hungarian theology named Theology of Service, a strange combination of Marxism and biblical faith. Hungary was a former communist country where one might have expected the emergence of a liberation theology but in fact it developed a less well-known theology “a theology of service”. It did so voluntarily articulating a kind of theology moulding it into an ‘ecclesiastically worded ideology’, which became a yoke, and represented the of true theological subjugation to atheist ideology. Secondly, I shall address the issue of how Ahn Byung-mu arrived at another kind of indigenous or political theology, minjung theology. The paper also throws light on how little he talked about the corruptibility of human nature, the core issue of original sin. I raise for debate whether the lack of or lesser emphasis on the key theological faith-statement (doctrine), that is the reality of original sin, is responsible in both cases for the development of a kind of theology that either completely left the borders of theology (Hungarian case) and became an ideology or took on a form of theology (Korean case) where the core issue of biblical anthropology stands on weak ground. The first case is a great example of a critique of how church leaders abused power in a totalitarian system by creating a theology which is not biblical, but fitted their goal of self justification. The Korean case is a fine example that you do not necessarily need Marxism in order to stand against injustice and fight for the liberation of your own people. Both theologians suffered under totalitarian or dictatorial regimes and lost their jobs because they dared to stand for what they believed to be right.

## István Török’s Critical Public Theology in the Age of Totalitarianism. What does the Red Star have to do with the Cross?

István Török, a professor of systematic theology was born in 1904 in Hungary. He earned his Master of Divinity at Debrecen in by 1927, and pursued further studies for two years in Germany. In Münster he came under the influence of Karl Barth. Having returned from abroad, he received the chair of systematic theology at Pápa and later moved to Debrecen where he taught from 1945. After the end of WW II., he raised a critical voice against the church leaders who collaborated with

the atheist Communist party. Owing to his participation in the revolution of 1956, he was dismissed from the Reformed Theological University of Debrecen, and his teaching was suspended for a year. Finally, a decade later he was forcibly removed from his chair by Bishop Tibor Bartha in 1968.<sup>1</sup> He was succeeded by one of his former students, named Elemér Kocsis who also became a bishop during the harsh days of Communism. Török was an independent scholar, who like his master Karl Barth, took a stance against totalitarian ideology, in his case Communism. The focus of the first part of my paper is a critical reflection on one of his articles entitled "The Theology of Service and the Narrow Road" written in 1980 when Communism still seemed to be a powerful and everlasting ideology.<sup>2</sup> At that time, Török articulated his thoughts on how the officials of contemporary Hungarian Reformed church leaders corrupted the gospel, and drew attention to the fact that the throne and the altar made a false alliance. Török offered a sharp and bold criticism of how cunningly the leaders; theologians and bishops of the Hungarian Reformed community distorted the biblical message and developed a theology of service as it became known.

The aforementioned article was written at a time, in the 1980s, when any kind of criticism was brutally suppressed by the totalitarian Communist regime in Hungary which presented itself as a country where freedom of speech was respected. In fact, it violated many aspects of human rights. What sad is that Christian leaders, in particular Calvinist, lent support to this non-biblical, atheist often maniac regime that sought to uproot any form of Christian belief altogether.<sup>3</sup> Taking this into consideration, it is fair to say that the responsibility of collaborators is far more than weighty.

Török began his critique with a succinct observation regarding the name and nature of the kind of 'theology' articulated by Hungarian theologians who, in his view, served the Communist party more than Christ. The theology coined by Hungarian theologian, and later bishop Albert Bereckzy was named: theology of service (in Hungarian: 'a szolgálat teológiája'). At the beginning of his critical reflection Török wrote: "We have aligned ourselves to the theologies which use possessive forms of expression such as theology OF liberation, theology of black people, that is for example theology of black people, theology of death of God and alike and now we have also added to this list our own theology of service."<sup>4</sup> As we shall see Török, as a professor of systematic theology warned his readers and raised a critical voice about how the church, and its theology

should not enter the public sphere. He drew attention to where the limits (and opportunities) of public theology are in a given political situation. To make his point understandable for his readers, in his essay he recalled a story from 1957 when he had asked one of his fellow ministers who embraced Marxism without any critical voice “where the boundary of the service of the church is. Then the other person replied immediately without any hesitation: ‘Our service has no limit or boundaries’.”<sup>5</sup>

Török pointed out that the aim of his question was directed towards whether what those in the church called service was really service in its true biblical sense. (To grasp Török’s point, it is vital to bear in mind that this story took place during Communism, only a year after the brutal suppression of the 1956 revolution. The arrogant and self-assured response of the church official did not leave any space for any further questioning. Török observed: “I felt that the grossly general statement of the ideologist church leader came rather from an ideological conviction than from an endeavour inspired by true theological inquiry”.<sup>6</sup> By reciting this story, Török set the context and tone of his own theological enquiry and at the same time, the Hungarian systematic theologian concluded his reflection on their short encounter: “The person I had asked was a high ranking church official who confessed to being the chief ideologist of the Reformed Church with a humourless (I would add grim) determination.”<sup>7</sup>

The answer reminded him of another historical situation when the church faced another form of totalitarianism. The theologians articulating the six theses of the Barmen Confession written in 1934 set the boundary of the church by delineating and separating themselves from the majority of Christians who had subscribed to the totalitarian regime of Hitler.<sup>8</sup> Török continued his reflections and compared his situation of Communist totalitarianism to that of the Nazi regime: “I am aware of the fact that one cannot say they were exactly the same therefore, there is no place for drawing an equal sign between them, because the situation of the German (Lutheran) church was different from ours. However, in 1957 the consequences of cult of personality (of Communist leaders) were a living experience and reminded me of the fact that in Barmen not only an ad hoc statement was made in a given historical situation but a line was drawn, a boundary was set with universally valid authority.”<sup>9</sup>

It was Albert Berczky who ‘prophetically’ developed the term Theology of Service around the turmoil of War War II.<sup>10</sup> Shortly after the communists



gained control of the entire country he was appointed as bishop with the strong support of the totalitarian Communist party. Bereczky was initially an Evangelical Reformed Christian. "He was really aware of the fact that the church does not fight for a small piece of land that she possesses in the world but for the mission of Christ which he kept repeating as a slogan".<sup>11</sup> By omitting the history of the development of the term theology of service,<sup>12</sup> it is sufficient here to state that Bereczky's followers arrived at the conclusion as Török articulated it: "we have changed from a ruling/reigning church to a serving church".<sup>13</sup> He noticed that Bereczky's successors had simplified this form of 'theology' and sought to instill this 'ideology' into the theological discourse of the church and the public square.<sup>14</sup> It tried to do so by lending it a polemical edge which, of course, pleased the Communist party since it directly criticised the Reformed Church as part of the old establishment which had also owned lands and properties, and had resources before the World War II, while masses of people<sup>15</sup> lived in incredible poverty.<sup>16</sup> Acknowledging that there is an element of truth in Bereczky's and his followers' claim, Török stated that we need to draw certain correctives to such a statement.

Before we attend to Török's observation, I must say it was a smart and cunning shift in the argumentation by Bereczky as it looked like a really appealing justification for the long awaited change in the church to go back to its original roots, the gospel where Christ called his followers to serve. Bereczky's leftist political orientation, his social sensitivity and revivalist eschatological pietas all together explain why he was critical with the 'old regime and sympathetic toward to the idea of socialism. The political, social and economic position of the former feudal-capitalist Church which existed up to 1948 as a physical body, a visible entity often mirrored the spiritual mirror of what Christ intended for the church, his *ecclesiola* to be. This view, not surprisingly knowing Bereczky's political orientation and revivalist stance coincided with the aims and expectations of the communists who fanatically sought to establish a "New Kingdom" on earth. Similarly, revivalist Christians sought to renew not only the church but also the society. However, in their hasty endeavour, they did not see the risk of falling into the trap of marrying two entirely different views of the world, a theist, evangelical-pietist form of understanding the gospel and an atheist desire to establish the 'eschatological basilea'.

Claiming that the position of the church changed from a ruling to a serving church by the rise to power of communists, Bereczky alluded to the fact that the Christian churches were part of the social and cultural old establishment, that is the feudal-capitalism which had continued to exist in the Central European region. That political and social system survived even after the collapse of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy lasting till the end of World War II. It is a very sad moment in Hungarian national history that it was not the Small Holders Party which democratically won the elections under the leadership of Rev. Zoltán Tildy, a Reformed minister but communism that forced the Hungarians to start carrying out the profound restructuring of a society which was not tenable.<sup>17</sup> Permit me to make another crucial remark. I was fascinated and saddened by how the Kingdom of God theological perception of staunch believers in Reformed evangelicalism embraced the paradise like country envisioned by eschatological Marxism that developed into a totalitarian Communism which persecuted their own church. It seems contradictory, a bit schizophrenic perhaps. Yet, it seems from a phenomenological point of view that the religious traits of both concepts of the ideal place of humanity either that of religion proper (Christianity) or quasi-religion (Marxism) provide a framework which allowed for some of the fervent, often prophetic voices to shift and slowly drift from a theist worldview to an atheist one.<sup>18</sup> The unsolvable and perplexing question is whether they were aware of the fact that by doing so they profoundly departed from the tenets of the Christian faith. Here comes a serious question: what does the Red Star have to do with the Cross paraphrasing Tertullian's famous sentence what does Athen have to do with Jerusalem?

Before returning to Török's three excellent observations about Bereczky's and his followers' false and distorted theology, let me emphasise that Török was able to perceive his church self-critically.<sup>19</sup> He agreed with Bereczky's observation to a certain degree. Nonetheless, he made three corrective observations which hit the core of the question as to how church and state should and could relate to each other in a given historical context, namely totalitarianism. Furthermore, he addressed the pressing evergreen question that most notably is this: where the boundary between the two kingdoms lies. God's kingdom on earth and that of any political power as it is embodied in the state. Moreover, in his reflection, as we shall see, Török drew attention to the pressing issue of where the boundaries of proper theology are.

The first observation about Bereczky's theological-political slogan which is clearly a kind of defence, is really thought provoking. According to Török's critique of Bereczky's observation the bishop offered a distorted interpretation of history. In fact it was Bereczky, a former revivalist who aided the Communist regime in uprooting all mission activities of the church. No wonder that Török sharply criticised him and reminded the bishop that "we should not forget that the "ruling church of yesterday"<sup>20</sup> had a far more diverse service than the church which is serving today.<sup>21</sup> Amongst many things it had a well-established Sunday School network, youth work, various forms of student associations, Volkshule (Folk High School), charity institutes for diaconal work, foreign mission societies, thirty ecclesiastical periodicals dealing with various activities, a non-monopolised press etc. We may confess that we live on the fruits of the pastoral works of former times that had been dismissed".<sup>22</sup>

This observation calls for some comments and requires some explanation for those not familiar with the history of the Reformed Church of Hungary. Török was bold to criticise openly the 'Christian theology of Bereczky' which was deeply permeated by Marxist ideology. He dared to mention the exclusive hegemony of a press that did not allow for any other opinion except the one censored by the Communist party. Needless to say, he was also right that the Communist totalitarian regime sought not only to weaken all voluntary societies of the national churches but also wished even more, it sought to eradicate all of them. Since the aforementioned Christian societies functioned as associations organised by religious civilians of the state sharing a worldview, - in this case namely Calvinism -, the very existence of such networks was perceived as a potential danger to the regime where opposition could easily form itself into organised structures. There was the fear that such 'reactionary' people may attempt to overthrow the Communists who were backed by the Soviet Army. Therefore, the totalitarian nature of Communism evoked a brutal inner force from its believers to intimidate the church and anybody who was influential in its structure. The historical responsibility of the otherwise revivalist, and evangelical Bereczky lies in the fact that he had effectively and readily helped the communists to eradicate all voluntary organisations of the Reformed Church of Hungary. In fact he was made the presiding bishop of the Reformed Church of Hungary to fulfill this task. Moreover, it is a historical fact that he was the first leader of a national Christian church in Hungary which signed the forced agreement between the Reformed

Church of Hungary and the newly emerging Communist state. It was suicidal. It resulted in the confiscation of all the properties of the church and undermined the spiritual life of congregations.<sup>23</sup>

Here it is vital to make another point so as to paint the theological and mission context within the Reformed Church of Hungary. Török referred to voluntary organisations that were the fruit of neo-orthodoxy and the revivalist groups of the nineteenth century Hungarian Reformed faith, or Kuyperian confessionalism of the early twentieth century transplanted from Scotland, Germany and the Netherlands respectively. It is also vital to note that most of such initiatives firmly rested on the traditional tenets of trinitarian biblical faith and not liberal, or modernist theology. It was the traditional Christian message which stirred a revival in the church and managed to reach out to the public square, and various social layers of society. It is crucial to underline that the new orthodoxy and confessionalism had worked hand in hand since 1870s before revivalism of any sort emerged on a national scale that may be comparable in many ways to the spread of Western Christianity in Korea. The pinnacle of the confrontation between orthodox and liberal theologies was in 1875 when the Declaration of Faith was made by the confessors of new orthodoxy in Debrecen which preceded the Barmen confession by more than a century. Although, the Debrecen Confessio came into being not because of the issue about the relation of church and state, it provided a biblical, Reformed response to the excesses of liberal theology exhibiting a different kind of totalitarian claim.

What is similar in the stances of Debrecen Declaration of Faith, Barmen Confession or Török's reflections is the attempt to seek and try to draw a clear boundary of the realm of theology on which later generations could stand. In other words, all of these confessions struggled with the question of from what point a proper theology begins to mould into an ideology, a worldview which is essentially different in nature and substance from the core of the Christian gospel. Suffice it to say that Török's stance drew from two wells: the traditional Hungarian new orthodoxy which lingered on in various forms from the late 1880s till the aftermath of WW I and the fresh impetus of Karl Barth's theology. The clear insistence on to the word of God provided the faith-based expression of conviction about the need to set the realms of the church and the state clearly and Török tried to remind the church in a period when he and his church were persecuted not to give in to the enormous pressure arriving from a Communist

totalitarian regime often through the theologians and church leaders like Bereczky. He endeavoured to unmask the false theology that served not Christ, the head of the Church but the Communist totalitarian regime.

This was a bold action from Török, and it cost him his career. Fortunately his life was spared, yet he was held under house arrest for long decades from the late sixties. What is remarkable about him is the sober word, and solemnity by which he accepted his persecution and he never allowed for any form of revenge which was often an overreaction of the persecuted of yesterday rising to power right after the breakdown of Communism.<sup>24</sup> He lived into his late nineties and he offered many sober theological reflections to establish the process of reconciliation which unfortunately have not been followed.

Török's second observation was articulated as follows: "it is rather problematic to shift the responsibility to the 'church of yesterday' (alluding to the RCH before World War II) because traits of the ruling church were not embodied in the Reformed but the Roman Catholic Church."<sup>25</sup> According to Török who criticised Bereczky's successor the theologian and later presiding bishop of RCH Tibor Bartha, it could be stated that the characteristic of Hungarian Roman Catholicism between the two world wars was restaurative (backwards looking). He added to this that the Roman Catholic church intended to protect and strengthen her actual social positions and endeavoured to maintain her power to the detriment of the Protestant denominations.<sup>26</sup> The response of the Protestants to such a challenge was, at the most, a vague imitation of the Roman Catholic endeavours which desired to maintain power. However, even this introduced foreign, not proper elements into the mission and service of the Reformed Church of Hungary (between the two wars): it blended into our ministry an inclination (aptitude) to rule, and in so doing, it corrupted the efficiency of our service."<sup>27</sup>

Let me comment on Török's second observation. It must be stated that there were geographical areas where the Reformed Church of Hungary was in fact more powerful than the Roman Catholics. This was true in certain areas of the rich and fertile area called the Great Plain (Nagy Alföld). Here the RCH was also a powerful landowner which suppressed the agricultural masses. One often wonders why it was in this geographical area that revivalism took place within the RCH, and secondly why it was from such churches that new Protestant congregations were formed. Was it only spiritual issues that interested the peasants, the masses, or behind the spiritual hunger was there also a social tension which contributed

indirectly to the restructuring of local societies that created new areas of power along religious lines. In other words, one must study revivalism before the Wars not only with traditional positivist theological approaches but also using sociology or religion, phenomenology and even psychology of religion to analyse the social, spiritual and intellectual realities of those times. Needless to say, the lands of the RCH on a national scale were, of course, almost insignificant as compared to the vast properties of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet, I would underline that the national Reformed church and her local congregations did also have possessions such as land and buildings. In local communities the property of the Reformed Church, legally owned by the current congregation but *ode facto* by the local minister was rented out to the peasants. Jenő Szigeti and László Kósa's studies offer some preliminary insights into these issues.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the Reformed clergy were also landowners standing in the top layer of local society in rural communities. I would argue that in certain regions they were more powerful than their Catholic counterparts. Why is it then that new Protestant churches came into being such as Baptist, Adventist, Nazarenes and alike? Perhaps scholars should also study socio-economic aspect of revivals, and social layers as well as the interactions between various layers of society where a minister did not really read the Bible with a peasant in his home. There was no equality in life in most areas at all. It was unthinkable that even an evangelical minister would share house worship with a peasant. Distances were vast and supported by social protocols.<sup>29</sup>

Finally Török's third comment was enunciated in his essay: "We should not suppress when speaking about our current situation, that quite a lot has stayed with us regarding the ruling inclinations brought from the past. However, we cannot realise it in this new situation expect within the church, for instance, the unparalleled extension of the power (tether) of the bishop in our history which has exceeded from time to time the lawful order, and exhibited an exercise of power disregarding even human rights".<sup>30</sup> He saw it as a 'odd contradiction' that in our country – taking over an alien political and non-democratic model – the centralised power was extended to the detriment of the rights of congregations and pastors precisely during the time of the 'serving' church.<sup>31</sup> These words exhibited a powerful biblical criticism of a totalitarian church regime that really collaborated with the atheist power. Török called for reflection and challenged the ideology of 'theology of service' that sought to flatter and please the

Communist party. He asked "whether we are right to state that in comparison with the church of yesterday we are the serving church".<sup>32</sup> The professor of Systematic Theology also observed "all such attempts to monopolise are taken out by the fact that the serving church is not quite a capability but rather it is a task. In fact, it is the vocation (function) of the all-time church."<sup>33</sup>

Finally, it is worth taking Török's warning into consideration even today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century when the Church and State are attempting to forge a new alliance along the lines of patriotism and cultural identity. It is vital to distinguish between service for Christ and a servile attendance to the needs and demands of the state. The wrong anthropology of 'Marxist Christianity' distorted the message of the gospel. Secondly, Török clearly underlined that it is really vital to delineate what Christian faith is and what an ideology (he meant Marxism). It is vital to state in what sense the two are different, because church leaders tend to speak wrongly of an 'ideological difference' between Christianity and Communism with the Christian faith being entirely different to an ideology. "It is not a notion, or idea, but an acceptance of the Revelation of a Living God, a participation in a new life-renewing process that the Lord of the history of the world has begun and is leading towards a happy ending".<sup>34</sup> Török is right to claim that if one sees faith as a kind of ideology then one has not known that or has already given it up. In sum, on the one hand it is misleading to emphasize that both Christianity and Marxism aim towards the well-being of men and women. On the other hand it is a potential danger, a evil to silence the reality of original sin and suppress it under the banner of 'common aim', that is creating a blissful and pleasurable humanity.

Living in a democracy in Hungary, Török's modest and humble but bold observations are still valid in 2015. Although, we do live in a democracy, but the correct, self-critical voices are lacking in the Reformed faith in Hungary which would pose the same question today: where the boundary of the service of the church is. To what degree can the Church work or collaborate with a State which openly propagates nationalistic aims and its Christian or non-Christian leaders see themselves as a true defenders of Christian culture which is not necessarily the same as breaking down evil in the lives of human beings with Christ's salvific message. Is it not a false statement to speak of mission, service of the Reformed church which reaches out to the marginalised, socially deprived and disabled people with the money received from a secular state whose tax payers are vastly secular? Should not our service be financed from our own pockets and by our

local congregations? Do we preach the good news, redemption from sin through the salvific death and atonement of Christ and at the same time give our lives as a service of sacrifice with gratitude to our fellow strangers as the Heidelberg Catechism teaches? Or do we do social work with a Christian garb where the message of Christ's call for the repentance of sin is completely missing?

In the Central European region, Hungary and I believe, the 'national churches' of its neighbouring countries such as Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, Croatia and others also encounter these issues. Irresponsible alliances, marriages of convenience may result in distorted theologies, and the wrong social and historical interpretation of their past as well as the failure to raise a critical and prophetic voice may reduce the gospel, and true theology into a well-disguised ecclesiastical ideology such as "service of the church".

## Ahn Byung-Mu's Christology, its Social and Theological Implications

South Korea experienced right wing military dictatorship while Hungary was under left wing totalitarianism. Korean Christians in the southern part of peninsula were not seen as arch-enemies of materialistic atheism, the chief ideology of the Communist state. Therefore the state did not seek to uproot them from their Christian faith unlike in Hungary. However, if Christians engaged in social actions and dared to criticize the state for its misdeeds, then they did experience persecution. Faith and social action went hand in hand for some Christians who heard God's voice to stand for and by the oppressed, the marginalised and exploited masses. They were not criticising the military regime politically but bravely raised their prophetic voices against social and economic injustice. Ahn Byung-Mu's life and work bears testimony to this.<sup>35</sup>

Ahn Byung-Mu (1922-1996) was born in North Korea and like so many Koreans during the Japanese occupation period, moved with his family to Manchuria. Ahn's father was a scholar of Confucian classics as well as an Oriental herbal medicine doctor and taught Ahn the Confucian classics at a very young age. Ahn moved to a nearby town and lived with relatives in order to continue his schooling and it was there that he first encountered Christians and started attending church. When Ahn was in the sixth grade his mother and he and his brother left his father due to his



heavy drinking and his having a concubine. He continued his education in Christian schools and eventually moved to Seoul where he studied sociology at Seoul National University. Following his graduation he went to Germany to study theology where he remained for ten years before receiving his doctorate in New Testament from Heidelberg University in 1966. While in Germany he was influenced by the thought of Bultmann and became concerned with the question of the historical Jesus.

Upon his return to Korea Ahn joined the theology faculty of Hanshin University until he was forced to resign in 1975 because of his participation in the democratic movement. A turning point in his life came with the suicide of a young factory worker and union organizer in 1970. Ahn "interpreted the death as a self-transcending action."<sup>36</sup> From that time on he sought to develop a new way of doing theology and he became one of the founders of the minjung theology movement. In 1976 he was put in prison and was later released because he suffered from heart problems. Following Park Chung-Hee's assassination in 1979 he was reinstated to his professorship at Hanshin University only to be forced to resign six months later by the Chun Doo-Hwan government. In later years he founded a research center, Korea theological Study Institute and Mission Education Center that focused on theology, culture, and society and was active in the theological world until his death.<sup>37</sup>

Ahn Byung-Mu was one of the leading theologians of twentieth century Korea. He studied in Germany between 1965-1974 for nine years under the supervision of Günther Bornkamm at Heidelberg University. He was influenced by Bultmann.<sup>38</sup> Daniel J. Adams in his book entitled "Korean theology in historical perspective" wrote: "Minjung theology is a conscious attempt to carry out the theological task from the Korean cultural and historical perspective. It took the indigenous theology debate into the social context of Korea during the period of the military regimes and Korea's rapid industrialization. Because of this, minjung theology is known, not as a form of indigenous theology, but rather, a form of contextual theology. Whereas indigenous theology sought to make Christian theology relevant to the cultural environment of Korea, contextual theology moved a step further and sought to develop a Christian theology making use of the resources found within the Korean context. Minjung theology is truly a Korean theology."<sup>39</sup> Küster emphasises that minjung is a political theology interpreted into a Korean context and Ahn gave a unique biblical foundation to the emerging minjung theology.<sup>40</sup> It is obvious for us to see that the conceptualisation of what

minjung theology is articulated differently. However, Ahn's contribution calls for attention for a number of reasons.

Before investigating his theology which stood against the dictatorship in Korea during the 1970s and 1980s, we try to understand to whom he addresses his theology. It was the people, the marginalised, exploited factory workers, or peasants in agricultural communities whom he cared for. "The key to understanding minjung theology is found in the meaning of the term minjung in which min refers to 'people' and jung refers to 'the masses.'" This is a Korean word for which there is no precise or exact translation but minjung is usually loosely translated as "the people," "the masses," or "the masses of people." The significance of this term during the period of Korea's military regimes and rapid industrialization is that the masses of people were oppressed politically and exploited economically. Official government economic policy during these years was built upon producing goods which could be exported abroad at competitive prices. This meant that workers were paid low wages, employees worked long hours often under dangerous conditions, all forms of union activity and collective bargaining were forbidden, and there was no way for the masses of people to participate in the political process.<sup>41</sup>

As a member of the student Christian movement Ahn went into factories and to the countryside where he lived and worked with the workers and farmers. Therefore he obtained first-hand information about the lives of people and was not pursuing theology from an armchair as many Western theologians did.<sup>42</sup> Adams pointed out that South Korea "was, quite literally, controlled by three groups of people — politicians, the military, and business leaders. Members of these three groups intermarried and after retiring from one group took positions in the other two groups. Thus a military general would become a politician, and after retiring from government service, take a position on the board of directors of a business group. While it is true that this alliance was initially responsible for Korea's economic growth, it is also true that the minjung —the masses of people —were completely denied any role in deciding their own fate. Korea in those days was a very different country than it is today. Minjung theology had its origins through various Christian organizations that were engaged in ministries with the workers."<sup>43</sup>

After returning from Germany, Ahn developed a theology that moved beyond Bultmann's existentialism. His deep belief was that "in the suffering of

the minjung we encountered the suffering of Christ".<sup>44</sup> There were several stories that had impacted his life. He encountered the han of the minjung, Kwon Jin-kwan has articulated excellently that "Han is an accumulated feeling of long – time sufferings" and retold the story of Kim Jin Sook.<sup>45</sup> There are a lot of deeply moving stories of factory workers who were exploited by the ruling classes. Ahn emphasised the lay element in the church and decided to minister to the family members of political prisoners and victims of the military dictatorship.<sup>46</sup> His theology shows a special Christological interpretation that may be perplexing for conventional theologians. Ahn suggested that Christ died with the people rather than for the people.<sup>47</sup>

During the summer of 1980 some eighty-seven professors were dismissed from their university teaching positions.<sup>48</sup> Included among those dismissed were the minjung theologians Ahn Byung-Mu professor of New Testament at Hankuk Theological Seminary (now Hanshin University), Suh Nam-Dong professor of systematic theology at Yonsei University, Suh Kwang-Sun dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Ewha Women's University, and Kim Yong-Bock a lecturer in theology at Ewha Women's University and later a professor at the Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary. Some in this group were imprisoned on multiple occasions and at least one suffered severe torture at the hands of his interrogators. During the period of their dismissal all were forbidden to engage in any form of employment or to receive contributions from abroad. They supported their families as best they could through engaging in translation and writing projects. Friends, family members, and sympathetic foreign visitors helped whenever possible, but the professors soon learned what it was like to be a member of the minjung. They became powerless, their economic resources were limited, and they were targeted by those in power as 'trouble makers.'

One unintended result of this forced period of inactivity was that these theologians had time to write and organize their reflections into a coherent theological movement. Although public meetings were banned, minjung theologians found ways together for discussions secretly and to share information. During these years there was a great outpouring of minjung theology in journals, books, and unpublished manuscripts that were privately circulated. One of the most comprehensive collections of essays on minjung theology – and still one of the best introductions available on the subject – was a book entitled *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, published in 1981. Originally edited by

Kim Yong-Bock the book was immediately banned in Korea. It was later reissued for international distribution with a Preface by James F. I. Cone but without Kim being listed as the editor, no doubt to afford him at least minimal protection from the authorities.<sup>49</sup> The outpouring of minjung theological literature during the late 1970s and early to mid-1980s was immense although most of it has never appeared in English translation.<sup>50</sup>

As the minjung theologians reflected upon the socio-political situation in Korean society at the time, they felt the need to develop a theology that was deeply rooted in the Korean historical, cultural, and religious context. At least seven roots or sources of minjung theology can be identified. These are (1) human experience, (2) revitalization movements, (3) cultural renewal movements, (4) revelation, (5) scripture, (6) dialectical thought, and (7) unique events in the historical process. Each of these was in some way relevant to the experience of the masses of people. Although most of the minjung theologians wrote on all of the above topics as they were interrelated in the culture, each also wrote with a specific topic as a subject of one or more essays.”<sup>51</sup>

Three theologians stand out in terms of a minjung perspective on biblical studies. Ahn Byung-Mu is a first generation minjung theologian and one of the founders of the movement. Moon Hee- Suk, while not a minjung theologian per se, did write on the topic and supported the minjung movement. Yim Tae-Soo, a second generation minjung theologian, has been an advocate of minjung theology for many years and continues to teach and publish minjung theology. All three have made it clear that Scripture is of vital importance to minjung theologians and serves as one of the major roots or sources of minjung theology.

Ahn's theology is centered upon the person of Jesus. He criticized the existentialist approach of Bultmann's school. In his opinion his picture of Jesus led to a dead end. Küster pointed out that Ahn had “castigated the convergence of radical criticism and the Lutheran doctrine of justification – which becomes apparent in Bultmann's theology – for conservatism. Bultmann simply replaced Luther's ‘gospel’ with ‘kerygma’ thereby suspending the question of the historical Jesus.”<sup>52</sup> In contrast to liberal theology's Jesus-research in the nineteenth century, Ahn is interested in the “historical” Jesus, in the sense that he is present in our history time and again. Thus, he criticizes Bultmann's kerygmatic theology, but agrees with him as far as his hermeneutic attitude is concerned that a pure historical reconstruction of Jesus does not make sense. “And he was also correct

in thinking: Why do we ask for the historical Jesus? [...] A Jewish young man, what does it mean if we could reconstruct precisely who he was?"<sup>53</sup>

As he wrote in 1992, "The quest for Jesus was my life long task. It was not just my religious belief but a task that cannot be separated from my life itself. An interpreter is not an observer, but a participant."<sup>54</sup> In Adams' interpretation Ahn's theology is an interplay between Christology and the *minjung*.<sup>55</sup> When Ahn began to study the life of Jesus within the context of his involvement with the social struggles of the *minjung* of Korea, he discovered that the objective historical-critical method of the West was inadequate. Küster rightly pointed out the following: "In contrast to Bultmann's attempt, Ahn wanted to "differentiate fundamentally between the eschatological kerygma of the institutionalized Church and the Jesus-event of *minjung* theology."<sup>56</sup> With such a theological interpretation was challenged Bultmann's dictum that the gospels are the expanded kerygma. Rather, Ahn underlined that "in the beginning there was the event, not the Kerygma".<sup>57</sup> In the same article Ahn explicated it further claiming that the kerygma "was primarily concerned with the meaning and not with the description of the Jesus-event".<sup>58</sup>

As he stated to a group of German theologians who were interested in *minjung* theology: "Value judgments always play a part; objectivity is not the goal....For us, value judgments are always implied."<sup>59</sup> Once freed from the western conception of objective truth to which all theology had to be held accountable, Ahn felt ready to embark on a different theological path. In his study of the Gospels Ahn noted that Mark used a different word for the people than did the other Gospel writers. Mark used the term *ochlos* some thirty-six different times. The word means 'people' or 'the masses.' Küster wrote: "He postulates a radical change of positions—whoever wishes to be first, shall become the servant of all others. The Gospel of Mark is a scripture with a hierarchy-critical tendency, which displays a short period of Jesus' human life before he was put on trial as the "biography of the exemplary suffering righteous one."<sup>18</sup> He proclaims the kingdom of God to the *ochlos*, whose magnificence is experienced by these people in the short period of his public actions in his unconditional commitment to them. The Jesus-movement appears as a counter community (Mark 10:42-45), which is characterized by inner solidarity and a willingness to endure conflicts with its surroundings. Ahn postulates an analogy between the relationship of Jesus with the Markan *ochlos* and the presence of Jesus Christ among the Korean

min-jung. The ochlos is a group of reference, which shows God's "option for" the minjung."<sup>60</sup>

Ahn favours to speak of the ochlos as the crowds which followed Jesus. In the gospels they were a specific people, people from the peripheries of society such as the sinners, the tax collectors, and the sick. They were situated not only on the margins but also regarded by the majority as the outcasts of society. Nonetheless these were the people for whom Jesus had compassion, whom Jesus likened to his family, and whom Jesus taught. Küster states rightly "They were, in Ahn's view, the minjung of Jesus' day.

Ahn also observed that the life and ministry of Jesus was carried out in reference to the ochlos. To put it differently, Jesus was who he was in part because of his constant interrelationship with the ochlos. This made Ahn ask the question anew concerning the so-called historical Jesus with which he was indoctrinated by German theology. He became far more interested in such issues as who Jesus really was in his interrelationship with the crowds of people who pressed up against him, who came to him for deliverance and healing, and who listened to his teachings.

For Ahn the answer to these questions was found in the suffering of Jesus and his identification with the suffering of the ochlos. He contemplated deeply what true Christology was in his own context. This was expressed as described below: "In fact Jesus suffered in the same condition as "us." He tasted the same suffering "we" are undergoing. This understanding made his followers feel that his suffering and death were "for us." Therefore, in the darkness where no deity was intervening, the people understood the meaning of his suffering and death. That is, he suffered "for our sake." This understanding enabled them to overcome their despair."<sup>61</sup>

The unifying element between the ochlos and Jesus was the experience of suffering and "this understanding made Jesus the messiah and led eventually to Christology."<sup>62</sup> Ahn, as a minjung theologian, linked the ochlos of Jesus' day and the minjung of his day. However, the pressing question still was at hand regarding the true nature of Christology. According to Adams' interpretation was pondered whether the suffering of Jesus with the minjung of his day was a one-time event never to be repeated? The breakthrough for Ahn came in his meeting with the mother of a student who burned himself to death as part of a protest demonstration. It is remarkable as .... drew attention to the fact that

in minjung theology the concept of 'event' occupied a very crucial place.<sup>63</sup> She told him, "One thing I get from every meeting is that wherever young students are, I feel the spirit of my lost son. I see Jin among them. I have met my lost son and my Lord Jesus during demonstrations, on campuses, and especially at the last memorial ceremony of the April 19th student revolution."<sup>64</sup> Following this encounter Ahn wrote, "After decades of biblical study, I could not find the historical Jesus; however, the mother of a sufferer made everything clear."<sup>65</sup>

Adams observed that Ahn made a dramatic shift in his Christological thinking from the doctrine of the 'once for all' Christ event to the idea of 'here and always' Christ event.<sup>66</sup> In his critique of Bultmann Ahn stated: "In the beginning there was the event, not the kerygma."<sup>67</sup> Here there is a parallel to the development of a theology which is a theology of "possessive', a theology of something. If one remembers István Török's warning, it is discernible just like Hungarian theologians e.g. Bereczky tried to please the Communist state which had a false anthropology, Ahn also made a compromise at the expense of the core of Christology. Neither the Hungarian nor the Korean liberal theologians realised that an improper theological anthropology which does not take original sin, that is, the corruptibility of human nature seriously, creates a new ideology which should not be called as theology. It is in fact a 'replacement theology' that substitutes itself for true and biblical theology (most notable replacing a correct Christology and anthropology). Then the ideology (in the Hungarian case the Marxism, in the Korean case the social sensitivity (whether one stands on the political right or left wing) was traded in, of course with good intentions though probably unconsciously, and tarnished the true meaning of the gospel. True Christology resides in the realisation of the wickedness of human nature, and cries for spiritual salvation which immediately and imminently begins to shine, and throw light on social structures, challenges atheism, capitalism, and self-deification of Korean dictators or totalitarian Hungarian Communist party leaders.

Needless to say, it is admirable to see Christians fight for social justice but it cannot replace the struggle of each individual with evil every day within him or herself, and surrendering oneself to Christ's saving act to become a new being in Christ. According to Adams Ahn discovered in the suffering of the minjung, that Christ is suffering once again on our behalf. However, he concluded that the incarnation is not a one time event. Jesus' life, death and resurrection are

the events in which God revealed himself to the world. For Ahn the theological concept of event manifests the historicity, the concreteness and factual tangibility of Christian faith.<sup>68</sup> Ahn explained what he meant as follows: "The core of the Christ event is his crucifixion and resurrection. However, if it happened once for all, what does it mean for us? If we regard it as having happened once 2,000 years ago, we confine the Jesus event to a limited time (A.D. 30) and to the limited space of Golgotha. Then, what does it mean to us...? We do believe Jesus was the incarnate God. However, if the incarnation happens only once, how are we able to see the incarnated Jesus?"<sup>69</sup> The incarnation of Jesus is repeated time and time again in and through the suffering of the minjung.<sup>70</sup> Ahn's study of the New Testament and his experience with the minjung led him to conclude that Christology and the minjung are intertwined and cannot be separated one from the other. In a sense it is the minjung who made –and who continue to make – Jesus the Messiah.<sup>71</sup> Ahn does not seem to realise that Incarnation with a capital 'I' may refer rightly to Christ's once for all action. This is a really core message of the gospel which must stand firmly, However, he may speak of the incarnate God revealing himself to us, and in a special way/meaning he 'incarnates' himself in us. Nonetheless it would be far better to develop a sophisticated distinction between the Incarnation of Logos, Christ and the act of Christ working in his followers that might be seen as allowing the incarnate God to work within us as fallible human beings. Ahn's Christology has its own strengths but really lacks serious systematic theological reflection. One must move beyond the necessary task of exegesis, and the imperative call to have a prophetic voice in society to measure all things, deeds and motivation of heart on the scales of the Word of God.

## Conclusion

Török lived in a totalitarian Communist state that was controlled by a cruel, godless, and merciless far left wing Marxism whereas Ahn Byung-Mu's social and political context was a right wing dictatorship. They both dared to raise a prophetic voice in society in the 1970s and 1980s. Although living far apart in terms of space the very fact that Christians are called to stand for the truth Jesus proclaimed became manifest in their lives, existence and theology. One



directed his challenge against the leadership of the collaborating church while the other addressed the social injustice of the state, thereby evoking its fury. Both theologians experienced persecution, and are fine examples of Christians who stood for their faith in times of despair, distress and persecution. Their courageous theology and Christian actions must be known to the West. It is notable that Bonhoeffer is well-known, but that second world theologians like Török or Ahn have a much lower level of recognition. However, the difference is that Török did not succumb to any temptation of a 'possessive' form of theology but tried to remain a theologian of the Word like a Barthian scholar, or even Calvin or Augustine. Ahn, although he really sincerely fought against the social, economic and political evil of his time, does not seem to address the core issue of the utter corruptibility of human nature, a universal teaching of Christianity. Therefore he was exposed to the influence of an ideology (be it what later research may identify) creeping into his theology without even noticing it. The social, political and national aspects also call for more research, and I believe that through contemplative discussion, and comparisons, there is much food in the life and theological contribution of both scholars that may allow for some correctives to the narrative and description of Western European theological discourse.

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# War, Nation-State, and Women: A Religious Interpolation

The history of humankind is rife with warfare. During the past 3500 years of human history on record, only 300 years were free of war; during the other 3200 years, humans ceaselessly slayed each other.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, in truth, humankind does not abide in peace, but only temporarily experiences moments of peace in the midst of endless war.

The history of Korea is no exception. From ancient times, Korea has been invaded 975 times by foreign powers. And the history of modern Korea also began with foreign invasion, colonization, brute violence and war. This time, Korea became the victim of modern Japanese imperial wars in Asia and the Pacific. The Korean peninsula served as a battlefield for the Sino-Japanese war (1894) and the Russo-Japanese war (1904). From 1910, Korea suffered under Japanese colonial rule for 36 years.

In this paper, however, I will not talk about the war itself, but the people who were dragged into war, i.e., the victims of war, particularly women victims. We have talked enough about the war from men's perspectives and soldiers' point of view; and yet, we have not paid much attention to war's 'womanly face.'<sup>2</sup> Healing begins with listening – listening to the stories of those many women whose body was raped, whose dignity was destroyed, and whose heart was broken. I'd like to share with you their stories in this paper – the stories of "Halmonis" (grandmas) who became Japanese military sexual slavery, i.e., 'comfort women.' Let me introduce to you the story of Jeong Seo-Woon Halmoni, who was forcefully taken away from her hometown to a Japanese 'comfort station.' She died in 2004 and this special video clip was produced with actual voice of her.<sup>3</sup>

The so called 'comfort women' system was the planned, organized, systemic human trafficking and sexual enslavement of hundreds of thousands of young women all over Asia – primarily from 11 Japanese colonies – by the Japanese Imperial Army from 1932 to 1945.<sup>4</sup> The 'comfort women' system was the industrial-scale factory farming of rape; the wholesale, organized, rationalized procurement, imprisonment, torture, brutalization, sexual enslavement, and terrorization of women on a scale unseen in modern history.

After the war, this history of barbarity was whitewashed out of the record as policy, politics, and prejudice conspired to facilitate amnesia. Comfort women who had survived the torture, beatings, mutilations and daily rapes – up to 50 times a day – were often shot or frugged to conceal evidence of war crimes by retreating Japanese soldiers. Another 40% were estimated to have committed suicide during their enslavement. In all, historians estimate that only one out of four women enslaved would survive, a death rate higher than that of frontline combat soldiers or African slaves during the middle passage at the height of transatlantic slave trade. This makes the 'comfort women' issue one of the largest, unacknowledged atrocities of the twentieth century.

While it is unclear how many women were actually kidnapped, conscripted, tricked, and sold into sexual slavery – because most records were destroyed by administrators afraid of retribution – numbers generally range into the hundreds of thousands. What is irrefutable, however, is that the comfort women system was systematically organized, planned, and administered by the Japanese government. Women had to be issued passports and visas issued by military authorities to travel to far off colonies; comfort women were transported by military ships and convoys; the 'comfort stations' were usually managed and run by the military (or subcontracted to the military), often inside or adjacent to military bases; and army medics 'inspected' the women, and also used them for human experimentation: How many times can a woman be raped? How can STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) be transmitted or prevented?

For seventy years, the Japanese government (aided and abetted by the US) denied the existence of the system of comfort women. The small number of women who survived retreated into the shadows, wracked with illness, nightmares, debilitating pain and shame. The majority of them were sterile from the extreme sexual violence, and many carried the secrets of their broken bodies to their graves. Then in 1991, a single Korean woman came out and broke the



silence. Once one poet said: "What would happen if one woman were to tell the truth of her life? The world would split open." Kim Hak-Sun Halmoni was that woman, and when she came out with her story, she split wide open the closed world of Korean-Japanese history: she gave courage to others to share their stories, and slowly, hesitantly, they came out to denounce the Japanese, voices trembling from a half-century's burden of shamed silence and outrage. Here is the story of her 'coming-out.'<sup>5</sup>

The courageous woman, Kim Hak-Sun Halmoni, who first broke the silence and split wide open the closed world of lie and hypocrisy, died in 1997 at the age of 73. In fact, many Halmonis are leaving us one by one even before the resolution of this issue. Many of these Halmonis are artistically gifted and they showed their amazing talent of painting pictures. Kang Duk-Kyung, Kim Bok-Dong, and Kim Soon-Duk Halmonis painted their own experiences, nightmares, and hopes to achieve recognition of the 'comfort women' issue as a war crime, thereby preventing the reoccurrence of such crimes. I'd like you to appreciate their masterpieces.<sup>6</sup>

After all, Korea was liberated from Japanese colonialism in 1945 following the end of the World War II. Two nuclear bombs were dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, thus making Japanese people world's first nuclear victims. However, not many people know the fact that one-tenth of these nuclear victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki were Koreans who were drafted there by force during the Japanese occupation, thus making Korean people world's first nuclear victim as well.<sup>7</sup> This year President Obama made a visit to Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. He said that the memory of Hiroshima must never fade, but did not apologize for the US attack. Does he ever know, however, that a monument was built within a stone's throw in memory of the Korean nuclear victims?

In 1945, Korea was liberated from Japan, but the Korean Peninsula was divided immediately into two by the superpowers of USA and USSR. The division brought the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, but we could feel the agony and conflict of division even before the War. For example, the Jeju April 3 incident was indeed the tragedy of national division. The isolated Jeju was a massive prison of massacre by the government soldiers and ultra-rightists. It was a state terror against people under the cloak of a "Red Hunt." The remains found in Darangshi Cave in early 1992 became the symbol of the Jeju uprising from the moment of

their discovery.<sup>8</sup> The remains were vivid evidence government forces' merciless scorched-earth operation against the victims.

In the 1950-1953 Korean War, the quantity of bombs dropped on Korea exceeded the amount dropped on the entire European region during World War II. The death toll from the disastrous was exceeded six million, including soldiers from the South and the North, the USA, the UN and China; and South North civilians. In addition, the war yielded three million refugees and more than 10 million separated families, whose aged members are now dying of old age, still lonely and missing their loved ones. The past 60 some years under the unstable condition of armistice has been a time of anxiety and fear, as war can break out again at any time. Let me show you a video clip regarding a short reunion of the separated families.<sup>9</sup>

As you have seen, they met for 3 days only after 50 year of separation. After 3 days of reunion, however, they had to be separated again, this time probably, for good. That's why they looked sadder when they had to say good bye after 3 days of their temporary reunion. Can you imagine such a pain, such a bitterness, such an absurd situation? Indeed, the generation of separated families is rapidly passing. Tragically, however, Korea is still divided, and families and communities still separated. Who can comfort them and console their pains?

The Bible says: "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God." (Isaiah 40:1) "Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. But Zion said, 'The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me.' 'Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.'" (Isaiah 49:13-16) "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, 'Your God reigns!' Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God." (Isaiah 52:7-10)

The Korean Armistice of 1953, which called for a peace process and the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Korean peninsula, may have temporarily stopped the hot war in Korea. Six decades later, however, no peace treaty or agreement has replaced the Armistice Agreement. In 1994, as President Clinton then was contemplating a first strike against North Korea over its nuclear program, the US Department of Defense estimated that an outbreak of war on the Korean peninsula would result in 1.5 million casualties within the first 24 hours and 6 million casualties within the first week.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the division is costly. Currently North Korea and South Korea spend \$4 billion and \$34 billion, respectively, on their annual military budgets.<sup>11</sup> Outsized military spending diverts critical resources that should be prioritized for domestic human needs. What is worse, the national division and unresolved Korean War is the major source of tension in Korea and Northeast Asia. It is an excuse for massive military buildup by South and North Korea, as well as Japan and China. The threat of war gives North Korea justification to continue its Military First policy and to develop nuclear weapons for deterrence. South Korea also uses the threat of war to wield its National Security Law to silence political dissidents. Annually, the United States holds massive joint military exercises with South Korea that include simulated nuclear strikes against North Korea. We also impose heavy sanctions on North Korea that harm the people, not the leadership, of that country.

Let me introduce to you another short video clip of a speech by the South Korean representative to UN. When the UN Security Council was voting to impose economic sanctions against North Korea for its human rights issues, Mr. Oh Jun, the South Korean Ambassador to UN, spoke this before the Security Council.<sup>12</sup>

“For South Koreans, people in North Korea are not just anybodies,” said Ambassador Oh Jun. For those outsiders who think rationally and reasonably, North Korea could only be a pain in their neck. However, they are not just “anybodies” but “somebodies” for us South Koreans. Millions of South Koreans still have their families in North. So, when you impose sanctions against them, we feel like that you impose it against on us. You may say that we are “emotional”; yes, but you have to understand that the division of this country is first and foremost very “emotional” issue, for we are human beings who have flesh and soul.

We the Korean churches, as people of faith, have confessed that we are called by the Gospel to seek the peace of Christ rather than that of the world, for as Jesus himself said “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Let not your hearts

be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”(John 14:27) We Korean Christians believe that the division of the Korean Peninsula and its human costs does contradict God’s will for the fullness of life. It is a sin against God and humanity. Therefore we believe that churches are called to transform themselves and to engage in healing and reconciliation of Jesus Christ. We long for peace, for Christ is peace. As the Church, therefore, we should heal the wounds of the people who suffer from war, longing for genuine peace.

As I mentioned, Korea was liberated from Japan in 1945, but we are not fully liberated. Peace and reunification is real liberation for Korean people. This is same to our Halmonis, or grandmas, who were drafted to the ‘comfort women’ system. After the end of the tragic war, only a small number of women who survived came back home with illness, nightmares, debilitating pain and shame. And yet, not all of them finally arrived at home because their journey back home is blocked by the division of this country. Let me lastly introduce to you the story of Gil Won-Ok Halmoni, whose hometown is in Pyongyang, which is the North Korean capital city. She came back to Korea but she has been waiting for another 70 years to fully come back home in Pyongyang. “Mom, I want to come home.” Here is the letter of Gil Won-Ok Halmoni.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, 75 years have passed since she left home. And 70 years have passed since the end of that war. But Halmoni’s road to home is still so far. However, on March 8, 2012, International Women’s Day, Gil Won-Ok Halmoni and Kim Bok-Dong Halmoni made a pledge. They promised to donate their entire legal reparations from the Japanese government once they receive them to ease other wartime sexual violence victims’ pain. This is how the “Butterfly Fund” came to life.<sup>14</sup> The first place that the “Butterfly Fund” has flown to was Democratic Republic of Congo. In Congo, due to its civil wars, many people have died, and many women have become sexual violence victims. The Halmonis have reached out their small hands to them. These butterflies flew vigorously towards sexual violence victims of South Korean army during the Vietnam-U.S. War. Today, survivors are not just staying as victims but actively acting in hope for the recovery of full humanity and dignity. As human rights and women’s rights activists, they are now spreading words that there should not be any more victims like themselves.

Halmonis’ Butterfly Activism reminds us of the new mission statement of CWME of the WCC, *Together Towards Life*, where it says: “Mission has been understood as a movement taking place from the center to the periphery,

and from the privileged to the marginalized of society. Now people at the margins are claiming their key role as agents of mission and affirming mission as transformation. This reversal of roles in the envisioning of mission has strong biblical foundations because God chose the poor, the foolish, and the powerless (1 Cor. 1:18-31) to further God's mission of justice and peace so that life may flourish. If there is a shift of the mission concept from "mission to the margins" to "mission from the margins," what then is the distinctive contribution of the people from the margins? And why are their experiences and visions crucial for re-imagining mission and evangelism today?"<sup>15</sup>

Halmonis' hope in action to heal other wartime sexual violence victims' pain is the concrete hope and the very exemplar of the "mission from the margins." The Words of God strongly affirms this: "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard." (Isaiah 58:6-8)

I'd like to conclude my presentation by quoting a moving statement by the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan: "At the battlefields where human dignities were ignored, torn apart and shattered, and couldn't even choose their own death, we must remember the Halmonis' lives. We can't fully understand their deep sorrow. Even one millionth of pain they had suffered. How agonizing it would've been for them to come out and share their stories. But, we can hold their hands that the Halmonis have reached out to us. Their dearest wish to have a sincere apology, their request to join the Butterflies, we can fly with them. When the seeds of peace that the Halmonis have sowed sprout into hopes, Halmonis' dignities and honors will be finally recovered. Then war and suffering of women in war, one day will be a story of the past."<sup>16</sup>

## References

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- 2 With regard to war's "womanly face," refer to Svetlana Alexievich's 2015 Nobel Prize winning book *The Unwomanly Face of War*.
- 3 Readers can watch this video clip at the home page of the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slave by Japan (<http://www.womenandwar.net/contents/main/main.asp>).
- 4 All the following statistics, resources, and historical evidence are from the English home page of the War & Women's Human Rights Museum ([http://www.womenandwar.net/contents/general/general.asp?page\\_str\\_menu=240201](http://www.womenandwar.net/contents/general/general.asp?page_str_menu=240201)).
- 5 The author is exploring the possibility of creating a webpage to upload this video clip.
- 6 Readers can appreciate the survivors' artworks at the home page of War & Women Human Rights Museum ([http://www.womenandwar.net/contents/board/gallery/galleryList.asp?page\\_str\\_menu=240302](http://www.womenandwar.net/contents/board/gallery/galleryList.asp?page_str_menu=240302)).
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# Emperor Constantine I and the Principles of Property Restoration in the Edict of Milan

Once Constantine the Great had won his famous battle against Maxentius at the Bridge of Milvia (Pons Milvius) in 312, thus becoming the Augustus of the Western Roman Empire, the tetrarchy once established by Diocletian came to an end. Moreover, in agreement with Licinius, the eastern Augustus and his later rival, Constantine issued the Edict of Milan (*Edictum Mediolanense*), which officially terminated the institutionalised persecution of Christians throughout the empire. It is mostly due to this act that Constantine became labelled as ‘the Great’.

The gesture of the new western Augustus towards Christendom has been interpreted in a widely varying fashion throughout European historiography. The analyses are indeed diverse and range from praising the piety of the Emperor to blaming him for having corrupted Christianity through secular power. These assessments were nonetheless influenced by the analysts’ personal attitude towards the entire problem. Within the limits of the present paper we can neither venture to provide even a partial assessment of the so-called Constantinian shift,<sup>1</sup> nor to analyse its effects in any significant detail. Nonetheless, as the historical record testifies, the son of Constantius Chlorus, who had been proclaimed Caesar in Britain by the legions at the recommendation of his dying father,<sup>2</sup> was in possession of enough previous experiences in order to approach the Christian community with honesty and openness – albeit not without interest. The non-negligible aspect, of course, is that the emperor who becomes a Christian still

remains an emperor, since the idea of the bond between the altar and the throne had accompanied the history of human society from the very beginning. The constant endeavour of all-time empires to ensure a common religion or a replacement for it (that is, an ideology or quasi-religion) for their subjects is more or less a historical commonplace. To identify only two modern imperial ideologies substituting religious convictions it is enough to mention the Soviet Communism and the so-called 'American dream'.

In keeping an equal distance from all extremist interpretations of the Constantinian shift we need to observe that the goal of Constantine the Great was neither a totally selfless support of the Christian Church, nor her ultimate corruption. Since both his life and actions as an emperor amply demonstrated that even a Christian emperor will not cease to be an emperor, it becomes evident that the new ruler was seeking primarily for a new unifying force to reorganise and strengthen an empire, which had been weakened by Diocletian's persecution of Christians and by the ensuing struggles for power. This force, or, to exaggerate a little, this yeast he thought to have found in the Christian community, which, despite having been persecuted rhapsodically and outlawed on a continuous basis, became stronger and stronger, and by the time of Constantine became such a complex factor within the empire that it could not be disregarded even merely from the viewpoint of Realpolitik. This aspect obviously played an important role in the decision which ultimately led to the proclamation of the *Edict of Milan*.

Although both the favourable and unfavourable political decisions may cause difficult temptations for the Church, the all-time rulers and political leaders should not be unilaterally blamed for these temptations. As Jesus clearly taught, 'give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God' (Mark 12: 17). This can also mean that if Caesar demands something from you, which belongs only to God, then you have a decision to make. The Christian confessors of the first three centuries also had to make their choices, but they did not blame the emperors for the situation.<sup>3</sup>

When the Christian Church accepted the emperor's offer of peace at the beginning of the fourth century, she did not commit a fatal mistake. Nonetheless, the Christians had to acknowledge the fact that such a development were to cause certain side-effects. Ecumenical councils would be convened by secular rulers (albeit following an ecclesiastical request); the gatherings were to be attended or even presided over by the emperors or their delegates;<sup>4</sup> furthermore,



the emperors may well attempt to influence conciliar decisions to serve imperial interests. The all-time leaders of the Christian Church should watch over the undefiled preservation of the Good News and the purity of the visible church with the meekness of doves and the wisdom of serpents (Matthew 10: 16) throughout this tough game. To my mind the very numbering of the ecumenical councils bears a significant message. Traditionally, we label the Nicene Council held in 325 under Constantine as 'the first ecumenical council'; yet in fact, we should refer to the gathering of the apostles described in Acts 15 as being the very first and indeed ecumenical council (that is, representing the entire inhabited world).

The history of Early Christian doctrine provides us with abundant examples of steadfastness in faith, which often resulted in a bold resistance towards secular power.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the sad mementoes of servile compliance were also present. The work of the Holy Spirit within the Church can be observed also in the fact that the ancient Creeds managed to preserve the most important teachings inherited from the apostles despite the resistance or forced agenda of certain emperors.

The fact that a Christian emperor still remains an emperor is demonstrated by the very example of Constantine the Great. He was the one who had to experience a few years after the publication of the *Edict of Milan* that by accepting Christendom into the realm of secular power – a movement he had hoped to be the bonding spiritual force within his empire – he may well have created a bigger trouble for himself, since the whole Christian Church became engulfed in the turmoil of the Arian controversy and was facing one of its strongest internal crises within a decade after the issuing of the *Mediolanense*. And Constantine did not cease to be an emperor: a few years after the Council of Nicea he did not only reduce his support of the term ὁμοούσιος (= *of the same essence*), which he had so eloquently defended in 325, but – in accordance with the unbending rule of numbers – he began to favour the continuously growing Arian faction. He was baptised on his deathbed by the very leader of the Arians, Eusebius of Nicomedia. It was certainly not Constantine's fault that not the Arians carried the day in the fourth century. It was partly due to these ecclesiastical power struggles that the young emperor, Julian the Apostate (361–363) became disillusioned with Christianity and attempted to revive the cult of the ancient gods.

Returning to our central theme we can observe that the *Edict of Milan* in 313 was not entirely without precedent, since Galerius, one of the main persecutors

of Christians, had published in 311, together with Constantine himself and with Licinius a decree of tolerance in Nicomedia, which meant an essential lessening of the burden which had been pressing Christian believers.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the *Edict of Milan* of 313 is not merely a reiteration of the document issued in Nicomedia a couple of years earlier. On the one hand, in the previous document, Galerius, being aware of his imminent death, finally agrees to what Constantine and Licinius had prepared,<sup>7</sup> that is not to disturb the followers of Christian faith, a faith still incomprehensible to him, to leave in peace those whom he considered as 'having relinquished the sect/religion of their forefathers' (*parentum suorum reliquerant sectam*),<sup>8</sup> and to let them rebuild their places of gathering. On the other hand, the *Edict of Milan* provides us with a far more detailed and peculiarly exact formulation, including the legal status of Christians. It is therefore worthwhile taking a brief glance upon the text of the so-called edict of Galerius:

The two texts differ from each other in a few minor points, yet in view of our present goal it is sufficient to provide a common English translation. We have put the most important differences in square brackets:

*The Latin text of Galerius' edict*

Inter cetera quae pro rei publicae semper commodis atque utilitate disponimus, nos quidem volueramus antehac iuxta leges veteres et publicam disciplinam Romanorum cuncta corrigere atque id providere, ut etiam Christiani, qui parentum suorum reliquerant sectam, ad bonas mentes redirent, siquidem quadam ratione tanta eosdem Christianos voluntas invasisset et tanta stultitia occupasset, ut non illa veterum instituta sequerentur, quae forsitan primum parentas eorundem constituerant, sed pro arbitrio suo

*Its Greek translation by Eusebius*

Μεταξὺ τῶν λοιπῶν, ἅπερ ὑπὲρ τοῦ χρησίμου καὶ λυσιτελοῦς τοῖς δημοσίοις διατυπούμεθα, ἡμεῖς μὲν βεβουλήμεθα πρότερον κατὰ τοὺς ἀρχαίους νόμους καὶ τὴν δημοσίαν ἐπιστήμην τὴν τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἅπαντα ἐπανορθώσασθαι καὶ τούτου πρόνοιαν ποιήσασθαι ἵνα καὶ οἱ Χριστιανοί, οἵτινες τῶν γονέων τῶν ἑαυτῶν καταλελοίπασιν τὴν αἴρεσιν, εἰς ἀγαθὴν πρόθεσιν ἐπανεέλθοιεν. ἐπεὶ περ τινὶ λογισμῷ τοσαύτη αὐτοὺς πλεονεξία κατελήφει ὥς μὴ ἔπεσθαι τοῖς ὑπὸ τῶν πάλαι καταδειχθεῖσιν, ἅπερ ἴσως πρότερον καὶ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτῶν ἦσαν καταστήσαντες, ἀλλὰ

atque ut isdem erat libitum, ita sibimet leges facerent quas observarent, et per diversa varios populos congregarent. Denique cum eiusmodi nostra iussio extitisset, ut ad veterum se instituta conferrent, multi periculo subiugati, multi etiam deturbati sunt. Atque cum plurimi in proposito perseverarent ac videremus nec diis eosdem cultum ac religionem debitam exhibere nec Christianorum deum observare, contemplatione mitissimae nostrae clementiae intuentes et consuetudinem sempiternam, qua solemus cunctis hominibus veniam indulgere, promptissimam in his quoque indulgentiam nostram credidimus porrigendam. Ut denuo sint Christiani et conventicula sua componant, ita ut ne quid contra disciplinam agant. [Per] aliam autem epistolam iudicibus significaturi sumus quid debeant observare. Unde iuxta hanc indulgentiam nostram debebunt deum suum orare pro salute nostra et rei publicae ac sua, ut undique versum res publica praestetur incolumis et securi vivere in sedibus suis possint.<sup>9</sup>

κατὰ τὴν αὐτῶν πρόθεσιν καὶ ὡς ἕκαστος ἐβούλετο, οὕτως ἑαυτοῖς καὶ νόμους ποιῆσαι καὶ τούτους παραφυλάσσειν καὶ ἐν διαφόροις διάφορα πλήθη συνάγειν. τοιγαροῦν τοιούτου ὑφ' ἡμῶν προστάγματος παρακολουθήσαντος ὥστε ἐπὶ τὰ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχαίων κατασταθέντα ἑαυτοὺς μεταστήσαιεν, πλεῖστοι μὲν κινδύνῳ ὑποβληθέντες, πλεῖστοι δὲ ταραχθέντες παντοίους θανάτους ὑπέφερον· καὶ ἐπειδὴ τῶν πολλῶν τῇ αὐτῇ ἀπονοίᾳ διαμενόντων ἐφωρῶμεν μήτε τοῖς θεοῖς τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις τὴν ὀφειλομένην θρησκείαν προσάγειν αὐτοὺς μήτε τῶ τῶν Χριστιανῶν προσέχειν, ἀφορῶντες εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν φιλάνθρωπιαν καὶ τὴν διηνεκῆ συνήθειαν δι' ἧς εἰώθαμεν ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις συγγνώμην ἀπονέμειν, προθυμότατα καὶ ἐν τούτῳ τὴν συγχώρησιν τὴν ἡμετέραν ἐπεκτεῖναι δεῖν ἐνομίσαμεν, ἵνα αὐθις ὅσιν Χριστιανοὶ καὶ τοὺς οἴκους ἐν οἷς συνήγοντο συνθῶσιν οὕτως ὥστε μηδὲν ὑπεναντίον τῆς ἐπιστήμης αὐτοὺς πράττειν. δι' ἐτέρας δὲ ἐπιστολῆς τοῖς δικασταῖς δηλώσομεν τί αὐτοὺς παραφυλάξασθαι δεήσει ὅθεν κατὰ ταύτην τὴν συγχώρησιν τὴν ἡμετέραν ὀφείλουσιν τὸν ἑαυτῶν θεὸν ἰκετεύειν περὶ τῆς σωτηρίας τῆς ἡμετέρας καὶ τῶν δημοσίων καὶ τῆς ἑαυτῶν, ἵνα κατὰ πάντα τρόπον καὶ τὰ δημόσια παρασχεθῇ ὑγιῆ καὶ ἀμέριμνοι ζῆν ἐν τῇ ἑαυτῶν ἐστίᾳ δυνηθῶσι.<sup>10</sup>

Amongst our other regulations for the permanent advantage of the commonweal, we have hitherto studied to reduce all things to a conformity with the ancient laws and public discipline of the Romans. It has been our aim in a special manner, that the Christians also, who had abandoned the religion of their forefathers, should return to right opinions. For such wilfulness and folly had, we know not how, taken possession of them, that instead of observing those ancient institutions, which possibly their own forefathers had established, they, through caprice, made laws to themselves, and drew together into different societies many men of widely different persuasions. After the publication of our edict, ordaining the Christians to betake themselves to the observance of the ancient institutions, many of them were subdued through the fear of danger, and moreover many of them were exposed to jeopardy [and endured all kinds of death].<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, because great numbers still persist in their opinions, and because we have perceived that at present they neither pay reverence and due adoration to the gods, nor yet worship their own God, therefore we, from our wonted clemency in bestowing pardon on all, have judged it fit to extend our indulgence to those men, and to permit them again to be Christians [and to reconstruct the places of their assemblies];<sup>12</sup> yet so as that they offend not against good order. By another mandate we purpose to signify unto magistrates how they ought herein to demean themselves.<sup>13</sup> Wherefore it will be the duty of the Christians, in consequence of this our toleration, to pray to their God for our welfare, and for that of the public, and for their own; that the commonweal may continue safe in every quarter, and that they themselves may live securely in their habitations.<sup>14</sup>

This edict of tolerance may indeed be considered as a milestone in the history of the Christian Church, yet we cannot say that the *Edict of Milan* was merely a tautology, which changed nothing essentially in regard to the fate of Christians. To be more exact: the document issued in Nicomedia put merely an end to persecution by not considering Christians as enemies of the state and of humankind anymore; the 'outlawed' status is somewhat changed into a 'tolerated' one, but there is no mention about their individual and collective legal standing – even less about an eventual restoration and/or compensation. These aspects, however, are indispensable for a proper answer to the Christians' disadvantageous situation.

From the viewpoint of our analysis it is also important to observe that the promised mandate or decree informing the magistrates about their *modus operandi*, was never issued. This can only partially be attributed to Galerius' death. Instead of any further speculation we can ascertain that exactly the *Edict of Milan* contains those guidelines, which were to be followed by the magistrates in regard to the ascertainment and adaptation of legal as well as property rights. The very form and style of the edict betrays that it was primarily addressed to the governor of the province in order to inform him not only about the law itself, but also with its explanation and methods of application.

Several sections of the *Edict of Milan* issued in 313 would deserve our attention. At present we shall discuss only the passage below – mostly because of its actuality in a modern, and self-declared open and free European society. We shall provide again a bilingual text, that is, the original Latin version of Lactantius and the contemporary Greek translation of Eusebius:

Et quoniam idem Christiani non [in] ea loca tantum ad quae convenire consuerunt, sed alia etiam habuisse noscuntur ad ius corporis eorum id est ecclesiarum, non hominum singulorum, pertinentia, ea omnia lege quam superius comprehendimus, citra ullam prorsus ambiguitatem vel controversiam isdem Christianis id est corpori et conventiculis eorum reddi iubebis, supra dicta scilicet ratione servata, ut ii qui eadem sine pretio sicut diximus restituant, indemnitate de nostra benivolentia sperent. In quibus omnibus supra dicto corpori Christianorum intercessionem tuam efficacissimam exhibere debebis, ut praeceptum nostrum quantocius compleatur, quo etiam in hoc per clementiam nostram quieti publicae consulatur.<sup>15</sup>

Καὶ ἐπειδὴ οἱ αὐτοὶ Χριστιανοὶ οὐ μόνον ἐκείνους εἰς οὓς συνέρχασθαι ἔθος εἶχον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐτέρους τόπους ἐσχηκέναι γινώσκονται διαφέροντας οὐ πρὸς ἕκαστον αὐτῶν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ δίκαιον τοῦ αὐτῶν σώματος, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τῶν Χριστιανῶν, ταῦτα πάντα ἐπὶ τῷ νόμῳ ὃν προειρήκαμεν, δίχα παντελῶς τινος ἀμφισβητήσεως τοῖς αὐτοῖς Χριστιανοῖς, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τῷ σώματι [αὐτῶν] καὶ τῇ συνόδῳ [ἐκάστῳ] αὐτῶν ἀποκαταστήναι κελεύσεις, τοῦ προειρημένου λογισμοῦ δηλαδὴ φυλαχθέντος, ὅπως αὐτοὶ οἵτινες τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἄνευ τιμῆς, καθὼς προειρήκαμεν, ἀποκαθιστῶσι, τὸ ἀζήμιον τὸ ἑαυτῶν παρὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας καλοκάγαθίας ἐλπίζοιεν. ἐν οἷς πᾶσιν τῷ προειρημένῳ σώματι τῶν Χριστιανῶν τὴν σπουδὴν δυνατώτατα παρασχεῖν ὀφείλεις, ὅπως τὸ ἡμέτερον κέλευσμα

τὴν ταχίστην παραπληρωθῆ, ὅπως καὶ ἐν τούτῳ διὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας χρηστότητος πρόνοια γένηται τῆς κοινῆς καὶ δημοσίας ἡσυχίας.<sup>16</sup>

For the sake of easier understanding we shall provide a common English translation of both texts, offering particular explanations of certain differences during the course of the analysis:

And because it appears that, besides the places appropriated to religious worship, the Christians did possess other places, which belonged not to individuals, but to their society in general, that is, to their churches, we comprehend all such within the regulation aforesaid, and we will that you cause them all to be restored to their society or churches, and that without ambivalence or controversy. The aforementioned statement remains, of course, valid, that those who restore these without a price, as we have declared, may hope to receive indemnification from our benevolence. In furthering all these for the benefit of the Christians, you are to use your utmost diligence, to the end that our orders be speedily obeyed, and our gracious purpose in securing the common and public tranquillity promoted.<sup>17</sup>

The key expressions and phrases are worth noting: the text makes it clear that the places of assembly, which had been used according to the custom (*consuetudo*, ἔθος) of the Christians belong to them. Besides, they are known to have possessed other places, yet not merely as individuals (*non hominum singulorum*, οὐ πρὸς ἕκαστον αὐτῶν), but rather by law (*ad ius*, πρὸς τὸ δίκαιον), that is, as a society or community (*corporis eorum id est ecclesiarum*, τοῦ αὐτῶν σώματος). The Latin text speaks unequivocally about the previously confiscated properties during persecution as the rightful possessions of ‘the churches’, that is, of local Christian communities and congregations.

Thus, the imperial edict acknowledges not only the private, but also the collective or communal property as being entirely legitimate, even in the case when the community was not regarded as having any official standing, even less as being legally constituted in the eyes of the Roman state and law at the time of confiscation. This principle is remarkable in itself already, since still during our

time there are endless debates with regard to the legitimacy of even using the terms of ‘communal rights’ or ‘collective rights’ besides the category of ‘individual rights’. In addition, at present there is no discernible political agreement within e.g. the countries of the EU concerning the question whether the very same laws governing the restoration of confiscated properties of individual persons should be applicable to the confiscated communal possessions of previously disbanded, outlawed and, by consequence, persecuted communities.

Emperor Constantine’s firm adherence to the inviolability of both private and communal properties may well embarrass some of the younger member states of the European Union of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, or even the Union itself, which is very reticent in its reactions, whenever a question concerning the recognition and respect within the EU of the communal rights of national, ethnic and/or religious communities having many centuries old historic traditions is raised. The list of the application of double standards during the past decades (including those on EU level) is so long, that the enumeration of various examples is simply superfluous.

The text of the *Edict of Milan* is far more explicit and concrete than the overcomplicated and ultra-politicised, and consequently disproportionate and unbalanced solutions of our present: Constantine and Licinius make it abundantly clear, that these usurped possessions must be restored to the general society and particular congregations of Christians (*corpori et conventiculis eorum*, τῷ σώματι [αὐτῶν] καὶ τῇ συνόδῳ [ἐκάστῳ] αὐτῶν). This, of course, means that the general rule should be applied fully everywhere and in respect to every community in an unaltered fashion, irrespective, for example, of the number of its local survivors subsequent to the persecution. In short, the mere fact that as a result of the oppression and maltreatment some local communities were decimated, this reduced number of survivors cannot serve by any means as an excuse to promote further injustice by a reduction of compensations during the so-called ‘process of restoration’.

Such a renewed and now ‘legalised’ expropriation or recurrent ransacking often takes the following form: the restitution of properties happens ‘proportionally’ with the actual number of survivors at the time of ‘indemnification’, violating the principle of ‘restitutio in integrum’ (complete restitution), albeit this principle concerning one’s possessions and properties is regarded as being sacrosanct and unchallengeable even in the eyes of the most secularized societies. This ‘compensatory solution’ based on the actual census, concocted with the shrewd

logic of majority power does not only disregard the principle of the inviolability concerning one's property, but implicitly seeks to legitimise retroactively the violent practices of past regimes, which had been primarily responsible for the decrease in number of the community in question. The past two and a half decades in Transylvania (Romania) have furnished us with abundant examples of such solutions and attempts, which nonetheless represent the repeated expropriation and plundering of various autochthonous communities, aiming towards the restoration of a totalitarian system of power.

The manner or mode of restoration described in the *Edict of Milan* should also be appreciated: the repossession (*reddi*, ἀποκαταστήναι) of properties should be accomplished without any objection, ambiguity or controversy (*citra ullam prorsus ambiguitatem vel controversiam*, δίχα παντελῶς τινος ἀμφισβητήσεως), furthermore, in the shortest time possible (*quantocius*, ταχίστην). The Latin expression – „quantocius / quantotius” = „i quanto ocius” – means: as soon as possible, right away. The edict does not only stipulate that the application of the general principle of restoration is mandatory for the magistrates, but at the same time it does not tolerate any delay regarding its implementation. Perhaps it is not too far-fetched if we interpret the term ἀποκατάστασις in the Greek version – a term used by Origen to describe the restoration of the whole creation at the end of time into its original state, befitting its intended purpose by the Creator<sup>18</sup> – as an eloquent lesson for our time.

The restoration (ἀποκατάστασις) should therefore happen at once. Instead, the present rhythm of restorations is anything but fast. Moreover, one can witness a whole series of artificially created controversies surrounding the very legitimacy of a community's claim over its one-time legal possession – horrible dictu: even in cases, where the abusive expropriation was recorded in detail by legal documents of the time, naming unequivocally the entity from which the property was confiscated. Amidst such detestable 'polemics' one even forgets to wonder whether beyond the property's immediate restoration to its previous owner, in what way should the owner be compensated further for the fact that his/her legal possession was being usurped and abused by someone else (including the totalitarian state itself) for a period of several decades? Instead, some of the new Romanian laws on restitution, for example, often defend the interests of usurpers and abusers.<sup>19</sup> And since we talk about compensation, Constantine's above quoted edict provides a clear instruction also in this sense:



The aforementioned statement remains, of course, valid, that those who restore these without a price (*sine pretio*, ἄνευ τιμῆς), as we have declared, may hope to receive indemnification (*indemnitatem*, τὸ ἀζήμιον) from our benevolence.

Who is, then, eligible for compensation? Not the previous legal owner, who has to regain his/her property immediately – irrespective of the quantity and quality of the investment(s) effectuated by the usurper or his/her beneficiaries subsequent to its confiscation! –, but rather the person or entity, who/which restores it to the rightful owner without delay, and whose incurring loss will be compensated by the benevolence (καλοκἀγαθία, *benivolentia*) of the emperor. Consequently, the previous rightful owner deserves compensation in the case when, for example, his/her one-time property was destroyed. The compensation for those restoring these possessions to their rightful owners is not automatic, but they may hope (*sperant*, ἐλπίζοιεν) to receive it from the emperor. All these measures are largely considered as being matters of course within Europe's most secularised states, provided that we speak of confiscated possessions of individual persons. Nonetheless, in the case of communal or collective properties certain objections and 'concerns' regularly appear, just as if the very number of rightful owners could alter in the slightest possible manner the principle of property inviolability. Just for the sake of example: if a confiscated family home is inherited by ten siblings, yet at the time of its restoration only five of them are still alive, they are nonetheless entitled to the whole house, not to half of it or anything less than 100%.

In contrast to the above principles, some of the Romanian laws and legal measures concerning restoration and compensation seek to burden the former owner (for example, the local church congregation) to provide 'compensations' for the usurper. Such practices include measures that after the legal eviction of the intruder from the property, the owner (who has just regained his/her property) and not the state itself (!) is being expected to provide alternate living possibilities for the former occupant. Obviously, there are numerous examples when, after the regime change, the state authorities have sold illegally and rapidly a number of properties, which were certainly due to be restored to their rightful owners, in order for the state – which in this manner became the accessory after the fact of a lot of usurped properties – to escape direct litigation with the previous legal owners.

In assessing the *Edict of Milan* more than seventeen centuries after its promulgation it is our duty to emphasise that Constantine did not make Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire. This was carried out partly by the edict of Theodosius the Great published in 380 in Thessalonica entitled *Cunctos populos*. Constantine 'merely' applied the very principles of Roman property law, this time in the case of the Christians. The final aim of all these measures is that the emperor wishes to secure and promote 'the common and public tranquillity' (*quieti publicae consulatur, γένηται τῆς κοινῆς καὶ δημοσίας ἡσυχίας*). This is in fact the often quoted and praised 'salus rei publicae'. If we were to translate the whole series of Constantine's procedures onto our time and circumstances, then the message of principle of this seventeen centuries old edict would be the following: social tensions can and should be dissolved with the immediate restoration of property relations and with a firmly consistent respect of property rights. To put it in simplest terms: the law should apply to all.

Instead of the application of the above principle, which is both straightforward and morally justified, modern societies tend to provide such advantages for their own privileged groups (e.g. for political classes), which were unheard of even in some ancient despotic systems of government. To quote a biblical example: according to the testimony of Daniel 6, king Darius, the almighty ruler of his vast empire, could not override the very letter of his own decree, which in that particular situation compelled him to throw his favourite, Daniel, into the lions' den. By contrast, modern European politicians (and not only Eastern European politicians), based on the so-called 'parliamentary immunity' may be relieved from under the effect of the very law that they themselves had promoted, although based on moral grounds, as well as on the teaching capability of the example, the law should apply in the same, or even stricter sense to the lawgiver. As a sadly typical example of modern attitude towards the law, we consider it important to quote in Romanian original and in English translation the relevant passage from the *House Rules* of the *Romanian Chamber of Deputies* concerning parliamentary immunity, a legal measure which is still in force in the Romanian Parliament:

§ 194. – (1) În caz de infracțiune flagrantă, deputații pot fi reținuți și supuși percheziției. Situația va fi adusă *de îndată* la cunoștință ministrului justiției. Ministrul justiției îl va informa *neîntârziat* pe președintele Camerei Deputaților asupra reținerii și a percheziției. În cazul în care Camera constată că nu există temei pentru reținere, va dispune *imediat* revocarea acestei măsuri. (2) Dispoziția de revocare a reținerii se execută *de îndată* prin ministrul justiției.<sup>20</sup>

§ 194. – (1) In the case of a flagrant criminal offence the deputies can be detained and subjected to perquisition. The minister of justice shall be informed *at once* about the situation. The minister of justice shall inform the chairman of the Chamber of Deputies about the detainment and perquisition *without delay*. If the Chamber determines that there is no ground for detainment, it enacts *immediately* the revocation of this measure. (2) The enactment to revoke the detainment is executed *at once* by the minister of justice.

One simply cannot ignore the particular care by which the lawgiver sought to insert the expressions ‘at once’, ‘without delay’ and ‘immediately’ into each sentence, thus emphasising the duty of various political players to act as quickly as possible, in order that the MP in question may be exempted from the legal consequences of his/her own actions in the shortest time imaginable. The text, which is still a valid legal measure in force in Romania, is worrying not only from a moral, but also from a juridical viewpoint, since it creates the possibility for an MP to be relieved from under any criminal proceedings which could be taken against him/her even if there is plenty of evidence that proves his/her guilt beyond reasonable doubt: in order to achieve this, only the majority ruling of the *Chamber of Deputies* is needed. Here the text clearly refers to *that* Chamber of Deputies, whose members obviously participated neither in the examination of the circumstances of the MP’s ‘flagrant criminal offence’, nor in the subsequent investigation, nor in the work of gathering and presenting the evidence pertaining to the case. The question here is not whether such a political entity would or would not abuse of this privilege, or how often and in which cases could such an abuse happen. The most troubling fact is that the very letter of the law presents a clear possibility for individuals as well as political formations to carry out such an abuse – any time they are pleased to do it, provided that they can control 50% + 1 of the House votes.

One of the lessons clearly is that the laws are often bad because they do not apply to the lawgivers themselves. Or at least not in the same manner. If these laws were equally applicable to all, our politicians would most likely work much harder on their improvement. The above piece of legislature – presented here as an illustration – does not serve the public good or the *salus rei publicae* in any conceivable manner, but rather exemplifies the legalised immoral arrogance of modern democracy. In this sense it hardly differs from the one-time dictatorship of the proletariat and of its ‘people’s democracy’, which created all those laws and legal measures by which the expropriations, evictions and a whole series of other disfranchisements and outlawry could be carried out. It is the legal enactment of George Orwell’s famous irony in his *Animal Farm*: ‘all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others’.<sup>21</sup>

Apart from all these observations based on Constantine’s restoration principles, we should not provide useful guidelines exclusively for secular authorities, but – as responsible Christians – we ought to sweep in our own back yard. John Wycliffe (1320–1384), who is often remembered as the rising star of the Reformation, in his *Tract on secular authority* (*Tractatus de civili dominio*) written in 1376 presents the following argument: every possession belongs to God; the owner is merely its steward. Further, the wealth has always a particular destination. The very objective of ecclesiastical property and wealth is for it to be used for the glory of God and the benefit of the poor. At the end of this reasoning, Wycliffe concludes that if the servants of the church do not fulfil their duties to use the wealth of the church according to its divinely intended destination, then the secular authority is entitled to confiscate it.<sup>22</sup>

The Communist and other totalitarian regimes obviously did not follow Wycliffe’s pre-Reformation principles when they deprived the Christian churches and communities of their properties. Nevertheless, this seven centuries old warning is truly evangelical and should not be ignored: the Christian churches must analyse immediately and thoroughly whether they serve indeed God’s glory, the welfare of His children, i.e. of the whole humankind with all their existent or regained possessions or not. We are not entitled to formulate prescriptions in this respect, but keeping abreast of the times and remaining observant of their signs we need to emphasise the importance of the secular power’s right of supervision over the profits generated by ecclesiastical properties as well as their usage in the proper sense of the Gospel for commendable and charitable

purposes. This principle remains valid provided that the secular power applies the same standards to all, and resists the ever-recurring temptation to sustain the Orwellian differentiation between 'equals and more equals'.

The Latin and Greek versions of the *Edict of Milan*, the recognition of communal or collective property rights, the manner of its formulation as well as its emphases constitute a useful lesson: this is a veritable *restitutio ad institutionem*, i.e. a restoration not only for the institution (*ad institutum*), but at least in the same measure a teaching for our instruction (*ad institutionem nostram*). Moreover, it is also a correction. A healthy and somewhat balanced state–church relationship of the future may be achieved if on the one hand the contemporary secular power begins to take the Constantinian principles of restitution seriously, and on the other hand, the Christian Church continues to remember John Wycliffe's warning about the destination of ecclesiastical properties: after all, it is the non-negligible duty of the Church to serve God's glory with everything she possesses<sup>23</sup>. *Soli Deo gloria!*

## References

- 1 See e.g. YODER, J.H.: Is There Such a Thing as Being Ready for Another Millennium?, in: Volf, M. – Krieg, C. – Kucharz, T. (ed.): *The Future of Theology: Essays in Honor of Jürgen Moltmann*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1996, 65: 'The most impressive transitory change underlying our common experience, one that some thought was a permanent lunge forward in salvation history, was the so-called Constantinian shift.'
- 2 EUTROPIUS, F.: *Breviarium historiae Romanae*, Baumgarten-Crusius, D. C. G. – Dietsch, H. R. (ed.): Leipzig: Teubner, 1860, X, 1–2. The references to the original texts of ancient writers are given according to the classic division (i.e. book, chapter, section etc. as applicable), and not according to page numbers of modern editions. See also Potter, D.S.: *The Roman Empire at Bay, AD 180–395*, London: Routledge, 2004, 346.
- 3 See for example Ignatius, the martyred bishop of Antioch in 110 AD, who in his *Epistle to the Romans* IV, 1 expressly asked the Christians in Rome not to intervene with the authorities on his behalf: 'I write to the Churches, and impress on them all, that I shall willingly die for God, unless you hinder me. I beseech of you not to show an unseasonable good-will towards me. Suffer me to become food for the wild beasts, through whose instrumentality it will be granted me to attain to God. I am the wheat of God, and let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ.' See Wace, H. – Schaff, P. (ed.): *A Select Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of The Christian Church*, henceforth, NPNF, 14 Volumes, Oxford: James Parker, 1886–1900, vol. I: *The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, p. 75.
- 4 We need to mention that at the Council of Nicea in 325, Constantine himself took the floor, although he was not yet baptised. Nonetheless, even presbyters were forbidden to attend the ecumenical council: this was the exclusive right of bishops.
- 5 A very eloquent example of this kind is the clash between Ambrose of Milan and Emperor Theodosius I. The latter, following a riot in Thessalonica, ordered the massacre of several thousand of its innocent citizens in 390. Ambrose reacted by blocking the emperor's entrance to the church, admitting him in only after 8 months of penance, during the Christmas of 390. See Theodoret of Cyrus: *Ecclesiastical History* V, 17, in: Wace, H. – Schaff P. (ed): *The Ecclesiastical History, Dialogues, and Letters of Theodoret*, NPNF, III, Oxford: James Parker, 1892, 143.
- 6 The Latin text of Galerius' edict of tolerance can be found in Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* (On the Manner in which the Persecutors Died) XXXIV. See in Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum vol. XXVII/2. Its Greek translation is in Eusebius of Caesarea, *Hist. eccl.* VIII, 17 in Eusèbe de Césarée, *Histoire ecclésiastique* 3 Volumes, Sources Chrétiennes 31, 41 and 55, ed. by G. Bardy (Paris: Cerf, 1952–1958).
- 7 Galerius died on 5 May 311, five days after the proclamation of the above decree. The name of Maximinus Daia does not appear at the beginning of the document: he was forced to join afterwards, against his own will.
- 8 As it becomes evident from the context, 'the forefathers' within Galerius' edict are not the members of the Early Christian community of the apostolic age, but rather the Romans before Christendom, who thus are the ancestors of both Christian and non-Christian Roman citizens and subjects.
- 9 Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* XXXIV.
- 10 Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* VIII, 17.

- 11 In the Latin version of Lactantius we have: “many of them were exposed to danger and were hassled”. It is in the Greek version of Eusebius where we find the above addendum concerning the martyrdom of Christians, which indeed corresponds to historical reality, yet – due perhaps to imperial interests – was left out of the Latin text of the edict. For further and very extensive explanatory observations concerning the text and its background see the notes of the translator of Eusebius’ *Church History*, Arthur Cushman McGiffert in NPNF, Second Series, Volume. I, 339–340.
- 12 This is another important difference between the Latin text of Lactantius and the Greek version recorded by Eusebius. The Latin text says that Christians are permitted to be Christians again, and may form their communities (*conventicula*), yet it does not say anything about their places of gathering (churches and other buildings).
- 13 As far as we are aware, no such ruling was ever published, due perhaps to Galerius’ sudden death. See the discussion below.
- 14 Based on the translations by William Fletcher in NPNF VII, p. 315 and Arthur Cushman McGiffert in NPNF, Second Series, vol. I, 339–340 respectively.
- 15 Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* XLVIII, 9–10. (is this incomplete information?)
- 16 Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* X, 5, 11–12. (is this incomplete information?)
- 17 Based on the translations by William Fletcher in NPNF VII, 320 and Arthur Cushman McGiffert in NPNF, Second Series, vol. I, 380 respectively.
- 18 See e.g. ORIGEN: *Commentarium in Evangelium Matthaei* XVII, 19, in: *Origenes Werke*, Volume X/1–2, Leipzig, Teubner, 1935–1937.
- 19 Hereby we invoke only as an example of many, the case of the restitution and re-confiscation of the Székely Mikó College of Sepsiszentgyörgy (Sfantu Gheorghe), which was presented in significant detail and legal precision in Hungarian language by Tamás Marosán in the newspaper *Krónika*. See Marosán Tamás, Nyílt levél Mikó-ügyben (Open letter concerning the Mikó case), *Krónika* 27.09.2013. <http://www.kronika.ro/erdelyi-hirek/marosan-tamas-nyilt-level-miko-ugyben>. Key aspects pertaining to the case are also accessible in English here: [http://www.americanhungarianfederation.org/news\\_rumania\\_SzekelyMiko\\_Vierita.htm](http://www.americanhungarianfederation.org/news_rumania_SzekelyMiko_Vierita.htm) (websites accessed on 3 November 2017). (no guideline on internet sources)
- 20 See *Regulamentul Camerei Deputaților, Capitolul IV (The House Rules of the Chamber of Deputies, Chapter IV)*: <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?id=237>. The text appears also on the page entitled *Organizarea și funcționarea Camerei Deputaților (The Organisation and Functioning of the Chamber of Deputies)*: <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?den=introcd1-h>. Both websites accessed on 2 November 2017.
- 21 ORWELL, G.: *Animal Farm*, New York, Harcourt Brace & Co., 1945.
- 22 See for example WYCLIF, I.: *De civili dominio*, Loserth, J (ed.), London: Wyclif Society, 1885–1903.; Arnold, T.: *Select English Works of John Wyclif*, London, MacMillan, 1871.; Lahey, S.E.: *Philosophy and Politics in the Thought of John Wyclif*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.; Boreczky, E.: *John Wyclif’s Discourse on Dominion in Community*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, Leiden, Brill, 2008.
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