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**Diverse Theological Approaches to a Divided Land:  
A Critical Assessment of Liberal and Conservative South  
Korean Protestant Thinking on the Problem of a Divided  
Korea**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy,**

**School of Divinity,**

**The University of Edinburgh**

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## **Declaration**

I declare that, I, Hoon Song, have composed this thesis, that it is entirely my own work, and that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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## **Notes on Romanisation and Translation**

Korean words are romanised according to the principles of the National Institute of the Korean Language; Korean names that are widely acknowledged in historical studies, such as Rhee Syng-Man and Park Chung-hee, are exceptions to this. Regarding the presentation of Korean names, surnames precede given names in the main text, while this is reversed in the citations in footnotes.

Titles of Korean materials translated into English and all of the Korean texts translated into English are my translation unless otherwise noted.

## Abbreviations

<b>CCA</b>	Christian Conference of Asia
<b>CCIA</b>	Commissions of the Churches on International Affairs
<b>CCK</b>	Christian Council of Korea ( <i>Hankuk kidokgyo chong yeonhaphoi</i> )
<b>DPRK</b>	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)
<b>EKD</b>	<i>Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland</i>
<b>KCF</b>	Korean Christian Federation
<b>NCCCUSA</b>	National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA
<b>NCKK</b>	National Council of Churches in Korea ( <i>Hankuk kyohoi Hyeopuihoi</i> )
<b>PCK</b>	Presbyterian Church of Korea ( <i>Tonghap</i> )
<b>PCK</b>	Presbyterian Church in Korea ( <i>Hapdong</i> )
<b>PCRK</b>	Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea ( <i>Kijang</i> )
<b>ROK</b>	Republic of Korea (South Korea)
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
<b>UMC</b>	United Methodist Church
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>USSR</b>	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
<b>WARC</b>	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
<b>WCC</b>	World Council of Churches

## Glossary of Korean Terms

Korean	Pronunciation	Meaning
빨갱이	<i>Bbal-gaeng-i</i>	a disparaging term that refers to communists as well as those who are ‘suspected’ of collaborating with North Korean communists
반공	<i>Bangong</i>	anti-communism
인민	<i>Inmin</i>	the mass or commoners; mostly used in North Korea
재야	<i>Jaeya</i>	literally means ‘staying in the wilderness’ but refers to the groups of social activists against authoritarian governments in South Korea
종북	<i>Jongbuk</i>	working for North Korean communists and following North Korean ideology
조선	<i>Joseon</i>	the name of the dynasty (1392-1910) that existed before modern Korea
주체	<i>Juche</i>	being independent and determinative
기독교	<i>Kidokgyo</i>	Christianity
국민	<i>Kukmin</i>	people of a state
민족	<i>Minjok</i>	nation
민주	<i>Minju</i>	democracy
민중	<i>Minjung</i>	the mass or commoners
평화	<i>Pyeong-hwa</i>	peace
승공	<i>Seung-gong</i>	defeating North Korean communism
시민	<i>Simin</i>	citizen
통일	<i>Tongil</i>	unification

## Abstract

The main argument of this thesis is that neither ethnic-centred Christian nationalism, *minjung* discourse, nor an evangelism-focused approach toward the unification of Korea of South Korean Protestant churches has provided a theologically effective basis for the reconciliation and unification of the two Koreas among the South Korean populace who have been deeply influenced by anti-communism and anti-North Korean sentiment constructed through the modern history of Korea. Therefore, a critical assessment of, and a serious engagement with their manipulated memory and sentiment toward North Korea are essential for seeking justice, reconciliation and unification of Korea in accordance with the ethical imperatives of Christian tradition.

Starting with the general history of political turmoil in South Korea after the division of Korea, and the emergence of nationalist discourses as well as the development of *Minjung* theology by South Korean liberal Christians, chapters 2 and 4 describe the unification discourses of the liberal camp of South Korean protestant churches which strove for the unification of Korea from a nationalist and *minjung* perspective. Chapters 3 and 5 examine the unification discourse of more conservative churches consisting of the majority of South Korean protestants who searched for national evangelisation which would make the North Korean communist regime collapse and eventually bring about the unification of Korea. Those chapters 2 to 5 show how the unification movement of the liberal camp of South Korean churches resulted in fractions and debates on anti-communism and the social responsibility of churches of South Korea, while that of conservative churches strengthened anti-communism among the South Korean populace as well as churches and impeded Christian discourse for peace and reconciliation of Korea.

Following a historical and critical assessment of the unification discourse of the South Korean Protestant churches, chapter 7 explores how a Christian theology of memory and reconciliation could contribute to continuance of Christians' longing for reconciliation and the unification of Korea according to the changing scope of the

social and political realms of South Korea in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The thesis concludes with an argument that South Korean Christians could contribute to reshaping discourses of reconciliation and unification of Korea by searching for just, truthful, and communal memory, which has been neglected by previous theological approaches toward the problems of a divided Korea.

## Introduction

Since the division of Korea, South Koreans have dreamt of its unification no matter the method for the unification. However, the unification discourse has always raised implicit and explicit questions about the subjectivity of who will bring about the unification of Korea: the government, nation (*minjok*), *minjung*, or citizens? The subjectivity of unification discourses in South Korea has, in turn, been related to the ideologies of the two Koreas, as well as the attitude of the South Korean populace toward North Koreans, which has been seriously influenced by their selective or distorted remembrance of North Korea since the division of the Korean peninsula. South Korean Christians have not been immune from these phenomena in progressing in their engagement with the unification of Korea. There have been two main unification movements among South Korean Protestants: a socio-political approach, and an evangelical approach. The former was developed from *Minjung* theology and a nationalist agenda, which embraces the North Korean communists in order to create one single nation-state in the Korean peninsula, resulting in socio-political engagement. In contrast, the evangelical approach arose from a spiritual opposition to communism and the desire to Christianise the North and the South in order to provide a common spiritual and moral basis on which North Koreans could change the Northern regime from within; its goal was for the South to peacefully absorb the North, and for South Koreans to promote missions to and humanitarian works for North Koreans. However, as South Korean churches entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century and faced the challenge of the nuclear and missile tests of North Korea the unification discourse was gradually eroded by different discourses, such as the proposed peaceful coexistence of the two Koreas.

### **1. Anti-communism in South Korea and the Churches' Engagement in the Unification Movement**

The unification of South and North Korea has long been a major goal of many Koreans, as is attested by the popular song that runs, "The unification is our hope, even in my dreams, unification is my hope." However, there was a time when

even to speak about unification was considered treacherous in South Korea. Immediately after the Korean War, there was little thought of unifying the divided nation peacefully because of the hatred instilled by the war, and anti-communism was rife in South Korea. According to a guideline for teachers published in 1975, one purpose of public education was to inform students of the cruelty of communists and instil in them an ethos of anti-communism.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, many politicians were arrested and purged for insisting that the South Korean government should engage in an effort to peacefully unify Korea. Anti-communism became a national ideology and any voices promoting unification were oppressed by the government. Various Christian religious bodies also collaborated with governmental anti-communist policies. The Catholic Church proclaimed that anti-communism was a national ideology and it embraced an anti-communist agenda.<sup>2</sup> Many pastors of the conservative Protestant churches preached that communists were manifestations of the anti-Christ as described in the Book of Revelation.<sup>3</sup> They also preached that North Korean communists were damned by God and the country should disappear from the face of the Earth. Hence, speaking about the peaceful unification of North and South Korea immediately after the Korean War meant risking imprisonment and death.

Alongside the economic progress of South Korea in the 1970s, however, which had the potential to strengthen people's desire for democracy in South Korea, the authoritarian government tried to draw people's attention to unification through a dialogue with the North on the subject. As a result, in July 1972 the Northern and Southern governments agreed to the 7.4 Joint Communiqué:<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education, *Source Book for Ideology (Anti-Communism) Education in General Elementary School, Middle School, and High School, Teachers' Guide* vol. 1, 1975. Cited in Jung-Seok Seo, *Korean Nationalism Betrayed and Distorted*. (Seoul: Sungkyunkwan University Press, 2004), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea, "Letters of Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea", *Kyung-Hyang Jabji*, no. 1076 (1957), pp. 13-14.

<sup>3</sup> Han Kyung-Chik, born in North Korea, fled to the South seeking religious freedom. He preached, "This ideology [communism] is like the Dragon of Revelations. Who will conquer this dragon? Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." Kyung-Chik Han, "Christianity and Communism", in *Kyung-Chik Han Collection*, ed. Eun-Seop Kim (Seoul: Kyung-Chik Han Foundation, 1947), p. 437.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Unification of ROK, *The 30 Years' History of the Ministry of Unification*, ed. Ministry of Unification (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, 1999), p. 49.

First, we achieve the unification without any interference of foreign powers. Second, we achieve the unification peacefully without any efforts of militarism. Third, we promote unification with a nationalist agenda overcoming ideological, social, and political differences.

After signing the Communiqué, the North Korean government enacted the Socialist Constitution, which acknowledged the Labourers' Party as the ruling power and the rulership of the Kim dynasty.<sup>5</sup> Since the agreement, the South Korean government has promoted the unification movement, but it has discouraged any involvement from non-governmental organisations. Although this is significant for being the first official agreement between the two Korean governments since the Korean War, the constitutional amendments undertaken by the two Koreas following the agreement have diluted the effectiveness and meaning of the Joint Communiqué. In 1972, the South Korean parliament passed an amendment to the *Yusin* Constitution, allowing for the life-long dictatorship of President Park Chung-hee. Many South Koreans consequently began to consider the agreement no more than a political gesture to hide a governmental purpose of facilitating dictatorship in South Korea. The constitution thus sparked the South Korean people's interest in the unification movement and a number of non-governmental organisations began to find their own ways to promote the unification of Korea. The Kwangju Democratisation Uprising in 1980 in particular was a popular uprising for democratisation and the unification of Korea.<sup>6</sup>

In the tide of the unification movement that followed the Kwangju Democratisation Uprising, South Korean Protestants took the initiative and from 1981 they began to meet North Korean Christians in Switzerland, Germany and Austria. The crucial stimulus giving momentum to Christians' involvement in the unification movement was the 88 Declaration of Korean Churches for the Promotion of the Peace and Unification of Korea, led by the National Council of Churches of Korea in 1988. In the declaration, the participating churches indicated that the

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<sup>5</sup> Man-Yeol Lee, *A Study in the History of Korean Churches: Korean Christianity and National Unification Movement*, Research Collections (Seoul: The Institute of the History of Christianity in Korea, 2001), p. 368.

<sup>6</sup> Man-Ghil Kang, *Historiography of the Age of Unification* (Seoul: Cheongsa, 1990), p. 45.

unification movement was based on *Minjung* theology<sup>7</sup> and a nationalist agenda. It was also stated that the unification movement should involve political and social agendas.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, during the 1980s the unification movement promoted by the South Korean Protestant churches became a political and social movement and a nationalist agenda and *Minjung* theology inspired South Korean Protestant churches to become involved in the movement.

Among South Korean churches there were various different voices and approaches to the unification of Korea depending on their theological and political positions. The spectrum of Korean Protestant churches was so wide that it is difficult to define the characteristics of each denomination. Regarding the definitions of the 'liberal' and 'conservative' Korean Christian churches, Lee Deok-Joo, a professor of church history at Methodist Theological University, has argued that the terms generally referred to the theological differences between the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (*Kijang*) and other major Presbyterian denominations, based on the fact that *Kijang* was the first denomination to leave the Presbyterian Church because of theological differences. This division of the Presbyterian churches occurred in 1953 when the General Assembly of the Korean Presbyterian Church decided to punish Kim Jae-Joon, a pastor and professor of the Korean Theological Seminary. He was charged for questioning the inerrancy of Scripture and the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. He and his supporters protested the decision and organised their own denomination, *Kijang*, under the banner of 'freedom' and

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<sup>7</sup> Influenced by the liberation theology of Latin America, *Minjung* theology is a contextualised theology of South Korea constructed under the military dictatorship after the Korean War, which sought a theological system based on the liberation offered by *minjung*. '*Minjung*' generally means 'common people', but in this context it specifically refers "to people who are politically oppressed, economically deprived and exploited." Sam Kyung Park, "Towards an Ethics of Korean Reunification" (PhD, Drew University, 2009), p. 67. For *minjung* thinkers, then, the freedom and wellbeing of *minjung* in the Korean context are best served by the democratisation and unification of Korea, because this would generally reduce the manipulative influence of unjust powers, such as dictators, and reduce the risk of war. *Minjung* theologians also believe that the unification of Korea would directly reveal God's concern and compassion for the ten million Koreans whose families have been dispersed between the North and the South since the Korean War.

<sup>8</sup> For instance, the declaration requests that the South Korean and American governments withdraw US troops from South Korea and it asserts that the division of Korea was instigated by the imperialism of the Soviet Union and the United States. National Council of Churches in Korea, "The Declaration of Korean Churches for the Promotion of the Peace and Unification of Korea": [http://www.kncc.or.kr/sub03/sub00.php?ptype=view&code=old\\_pds&idx=9087](http://www.kncc.or.kr/sub03/sub00.php?ptype=view&code=old_pds&idx=9087) (accessed November 8, 2014).

‘tolerance’. Henceforth, *Kijang* represented the liberal churches in South Korea and it actively participated in the global ecumenical movement and human rights movements in South Korea. They also contributed to the emergence of *Minjung* theology in the 1980s.<sup>9</sup> However, through the rapid growth of the South Korean economy and the expanding number of South Korean churches and the Christian population, the theological boundaries between denominations became increasingly blurred. Instead, the criterion for the definition of ‘liberal’ or ‘conservative’ came to be applicable to their political positions, especially with regard to the attitude toward North Korea and unification. The liberal South Korean churches emphasise social context and negotiations with North Koreans, while the conservatives refuse to change according to the social and political context, instead trying to preserve their beliefs and principles, such as anti-communist attitudes toward North Korea.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, some generalities can be outlined regarding the unification of Korea: the more conservative denominations emphasise Christian missions to North Korea and evangelism rather than social and political involvement, while the more liberal churches tend to pursue social and political methods to promote the unification movement.

Due to the fact that the unification movement of Korean Protestant churches has generally been presumed to be conducted in the socio-political realm, historical research on the involvement of Korean Protestants in this movement is biased toward more liberal churches that are most prominent and *prima facie* active. The tendency has been to separate the unification movement from Christian missions to North Korea that have attracted the support of conservative denominations, but for conservatives, such missions themselves constitute the only promising route towards eventual unification. They prayed that it was God’s will that North Korean communism would collapse and believed that they had to prepare to rebuild churches in North Korea after the South absorbed the North. After the collapse of the Soviet

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<sup>9</sup> Deok-Joo Lee, “Theological Conflicts and Division of the Korean Presbyterian Church in the Post-Liberal Era”, *Christianity and History in Korea* 44 (2016), pp. 135-138.

<sup>10</sup> “From Conflict toward Reconciliation: Liberals and Conservatives in the History of Korean Churches”, *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 46, no. 1 (2002), pp. 43-44; Jong-Won Lee, “A Study on the Conflict between Liberalism and Conservatism of the Korean Church and its Solution-Focusing on the WCC and Ecumenical Movement”, *Christian Social Ethics* 30 (2014), p. 56.

Union, they preached that the North Korean communist regime would soon end and that South Korean Christians should prepare for unification. However, there has been no sign that the North Korean regime will end in spite of the death of Kim Il-Sung in 1994 and the famine in the mid-1990s, known as ‘the Arduous March’. After this, South Korean mission efforts towards North Korea began to take such forms as humanitarian efforts through various NGOs like World Vision, and caring for North Korean defectors, while the South Korean leadership also began to plan for the future unification of Korea.<sup>11</sup>

This research primarily focuses on two interdenominational organisations that have been particularly influential in the unification movement of Korean Protestant churches: the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK), representing the more liberal Protestant churches, and the Christian Council of Korea (CCK), representing the more conservative Protestant churches. In order to research the theological basis for the unification movement, four major figures of the Korean Protestant churches were selected: two pastors who have been influential in South Korean churches as well as South Korean society, and two theologians who have developed their own theological approaches to the unification of Korea. Han Kyung-Chik (1902-2000) of the Presbyterian Church of Korea was acknowledged as the chief Protestant anti-communist voice and he led national evangelism. He was born in the Northern part of Korea and organised a political party with a vision for a Christianised and democratised Korean nation. Han was nationalist and anti-communist and he became an influential figure in South Korea after his evacuation from the North. He is regarded as an ecumenist who once worked for the NCCCK, but he founded the CCK in 1989 in opposition to the social policy of the NCCCK. Kim Young-Han, born in 1946, is a conservative theologian who emphasises peaceful unification through spiritual transformation and social development and focuses on the human rights issues of North Koreans. Kim’s theological approach to the unification of Korea is the best example of the unification discourse of the conservative South Korean churches that pursue unification through absorbing North Korea. Moon Ik-hwan

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<sup>11</sup> Hee-Mo Yim, “A Study on Changes of Unification Policy and North Korea Mission Policy”, *Mission and Theology* 15 (2005), p. 57.

(1918-1994) was a Presbyterian pastor and theologian and a passionate social activist who worked for the unification and democratisation of Korea. In 1989, he violated a national security law of South Korea and met Kim Il-Sung (1912-1994), the preeminent North Korean leader from 1948, to discuss the unification of Korea. Park Soon-Kyung, born in 1923, a member of Korean Methodist Church and a former professor of Ewha Womans University in Seoul is a liberal theologian and social activist who worked for the NCKK and initiated theological discourse on the unification of Korea, particularly based on the idea of the 'nation'.

The main focus of this study will be the period from 1972 through to 2010. As noted above, 1972 has a significant meaning with regard to the 7.4 Joint Communiqué, but at that time the Korean Protestant churches could not officially engage in the unification movement because the Korean government strictly enforced a principle that only the government could work for unification with the North Korean government. In the 1980s, liberal Protestant churches tried to find a pathway to create a unification movement through international networks such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and they issued the 88 Declaration. In the 1990s, South Korean Protestant churches started to work together on humanitarian projects for North Korea, whose people had suffered from a serious famine. In the first decade of the new millennium, the number of North Korean defectors grew rapidly due to the economic crisis in North Korea.<sup>12</sup> As a result, Protestant churches started to think about the differences between North and South Koreans for the purposes of ministering to the defectors. 2010 was also a significant year in the relationship between the South and the North. On November 23, North Korean artillery struck Yeonpyeong Island, which is located in the Yellow Sea and belongs to South Korea. This was the first ground attack by the North Korean army since the Korean War and it resulted in bitter confrontation between the two countries. After the strike, the South Korean Government ended all official dialogue with the North Korean Government and NGOs faced difficulties

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<sup>12</sup> The number of North Korean defectors who lived in South Korea in 1998 was 947. In the first decade of the new millennium, the number grew rapidly to 20,400. Ministry of Unification, "Statistics of North Korean Defectors", Ministry of Unification (accessed November 7, 2014).

continuing their humanitarian work for North Koreans. As a further result of the attack in 2010, anti-communism and anti-North Korean sentiment again became rife in South Korea, and unification discourses, especially based on the homogeneity of the Korean nation, were strongly challenged.

With the growing influence of anti-communism and antagonism against North Koreans in the South, many South Koreans began to doubt the feasibility of the unification of the North and South. In a national survey in 2006, 65% of South Koreans answered that unification should be achieved, but by 2010 this percentage had dropped to 54%. It should be noted that the older generation who experienced the Korean War still exhibit strong antagonism towards the North Korean regime and claim that South Korea has to absorb the North for unification to be politically and socially possible.<sup>13</sup> This antagonistic attitude toward the North Korean regime also extends to religious spheres and can be found in the majority of South Korean Protestant churches, meaning it remains difficult for South Korean Protestants to work for the reconciliation and unification of the two Koreas. It is significant that Protestants constitute around 15% of the South Korean population and they are highly influential in South Korean society because Protestants comprise a high proportion of the leadership in government, social organisations and private companies. In these circumstances, it is vital to discover how Christian theology can contribute to redeeming the manipulated memory of war and the division of Korea, helping to dissolve the remaining antagonism towards North Koreans and the North Korean regime in order for reconciliation and, eventually, unification to be achieved.

## **2. Research Questions**

The current research project sets out to ask a number of questions about the national unification movement among Korean Protestant churches. The primary questions will be: “How far and in what ways have nationalist and evangelical agendas intertwined with South Korean anti-communism to shape the different

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<sup>13</sup> Centre for Peace and Unification, Seoul University, *2014 National Survey of South Korean's Thoughts on Unification of Korea* (Seoul: Seoul University, 2014), pp. 34-40.

theological thinking and pathways taken by Korean Protestant churches towards the ultimate goal of the unification of Korea since the Korean War?" Five subsidiary questions are as follows:

- First, in what ways has a nationalist agenda influenced historical analysis of the movement for the unification of Korea?
- Second, how have Korean Protestant churches promoted the unification movement since 1972, the year of the 7.4 Joint Communiqué between the governments of the South and North?
- Third, has the nationalist agenda contributed to the divisions among Korean Protestants in promoting the unification movement, and if so, how did evangelical churches respond to the nationalist agenda, particularly with regard to their anti-communism?
- Fourth, what differences are apparent between the respective theological standpoints adopted by the Protestant leaders Park Soon-Kyung (Methodist), Moon Ik-Hwan (Presbyterian), Han Kyung-Chik (Presbyterian) and Kim Young-Han (Presbyterian) on the movement for the unification of Korea?
- Fifth, to what extent could cooperation in constructing a Christian theology of memory and reconciliation contribute to the continuance of the Christian longing for the reconciliation and unification of Korea and to overcoming the disunity of South Korean churches in their responses to the problems of a divided Korea?

### **3. Literature Review**

Until recently, there have not been many historical studies in Christian academic circles that focus entirely on the unification movement. Rather, many scholars of Korean church history have devoted just one or two chapters to the history of the unification movement as a part of works on the churches' involvement in social issues. However, in 2006 Jeong Seong-Han published a book titled, *A*

*History of Unification Movements in Korean Churches*,<sup>14</sup> which is a revised version of his doctoral dissertation submitted to the Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary in Seoul. In his book, Jeong presented a long historical trajectory of the unification movement of South Korean Protestant churches in parallel with the history of South Korean society. He highlighted the unification efforts of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Tonghap*) as a compromising endeavour between the unification movements of liberal and conservative South Korean churches.

Among the academy of South Korean Christian scholars, the unification of Korea has been an important subject for Christian ethics. In 1999 Cho Eun-Sik wrote a history of the unification movement in Korea from the division of the Korean peninsula to the end of the 1990s. In his thesis,<sup>15</sup> he describes the churches' involvement in the unification movement and analyses the relationship between Christianity and the *Juche* ideology of North Korea, considering how Korean churches encountered North Korea's national ideology and tried to solve ideological problems. However, his research mostly deals with the unification movement of the more liberal churches represented by the NCKK.

Ha Chung-Yoube's work<sup>16</sup> highlights the differences between North Koreans and South Koreans through interviews with North Korean defectors and social-anthropological research on the Youngnak Church, the founding members of which are refugees from Northern Korea who fled to the South just after the division in 1945. This church has tried to embrace North Korean defectors. Ha argues that hostile ideological positions created differences in lifestyle and beliefs between North Koreans and South Koreans and that these differences have become so significant that it is hard for both groups to exist in one space. In his thesis, Ha criticises anti-communism, which he believes has overwhelmed conservative churches in South Korea and led the immigrant group of the church to explicitly and implicitly put pressure on North Korean defectors to assimilate into South Korean

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<sup>14</sup> Seong-Han Jeong, *A History of Unification Movements in Korean Churches* (Seoul: Greeshim, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Eun-Sik Cho, "Dimensions of Christian Mission toward Reunification of Korea" (PhD, United Theological Seminary, 1999).

<sup>16</sup> Chung Yoube Ha, "Migration Old and New: Accepting Diversity in Creating a Catholic Community in Youngnak Presbyterian Church" (PhD, University of Edinburgh, 2009).

society. He further suggests that we need to put aside the patronising attitude toward North Korean defectors to make a space for North Koreans to adjust on their own terms into South Korean society. His thesis is valuable as an illustration of the role of anti-communism as a basis for *wolnammin* (referring to the people who were evacuated from northern Korea before and during the Korean War) to discriminate against North Korean defectors, even within a Christian congregation. However, his study fails to explain the essence of anti-communism and its influence on the unification discourse in the broader community. Yoo Kyoung-Dong<sup>17</sup> approaches unification using Reinhold Niebuhr's thoughts on Christian realism. He argues that Koreans should find a moral foundation for unification that can be shared by the two Koreas. He proposes an "Agape love" of giving and sacrifice that promotes pacifism and overcomes violence in the Korean peninsula. This "Agape love" is not only rational, but also serves as the practical foundation for a potential unification.

Jeong Gyoung-Ho<sup>18</sup> traces the history of the division of Korea and describes how the division created '*han*' (a feeling of suffering and oppression) among the *minjung* in both the North and the South. The problem with the division is that this tragic situation was caused by imperial powers with interests in the peninsula: the United States, the Soviet Union, Japan and China. Thus, the *minjung* are the victims of the division and the Cold War. The only resolution for this *han* among the *minjung* is unification as God is the liberator and Jesus the reviver of the *minjung*. Park Sam-Kyung<sup>19</sup> also argues that the unification movement of Korea should focus on the resolution of *han* based on a synthesis of *Minjung* theology, *sangsaeng* (living together) theology, and *tongil* (unification) theology, and she concludes that the unification of Korea would not only be a political integration, but also the construction of a society of justice and peace.

Ha, Yoo, Jeong and Park have aptly analysed the current context of Korea. Ha delineates the critical differences between people in the two Koreas and Jeong and Park trace the reasons for the division and the meaning of unification for the

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<sup>17</sup> Kyoung-Dong Yoo, "Re-Visioning Reinhold Niebuhr's Christian Realism on the Road to Korean Unification" (PhD, Vanderbilt University, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> Gyoung-Ho Jeong, "Korean Christian Ethics for Peaceful Tongil between South and North Korea" (PhD, Union Theological Seminary, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> Sam Kyung Park, "Towards an Ethics of Korean Reunification" (Drew University, 2009).

*minjung*. Yoo attempts to present fundamental ground upon which to overcome ideological differences and conflicts in Korea and tends to emphasise peace more than unification. In spite of the various discussions on the reconciliation and unification of Korea, none of these, however, provide a relevant assessment of how South Korean anti-communism and anti-North Korean prejudice manipulated the memory and sentiment of the South Korean populace toward North Korea, as well as the Christian identity of South Korean Christians. Moreover, their arguments are unable to provide a specific theological explanation for how truthful and just memory could lead to justice, reconciliation and the eventual unification of Korea.

As mentioned above, one of the main themes of this study is the complex relationship between nationalism, *minjung* and unification from a Christian perspective. Western scholars have developed various approaches toward the concepts of the ‘nation state’ and ‘nationalism’, most of them tracing the origins of these concepts to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> Among these, modernist theories on the roots of nation, which became the most influential in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, focus on the economic and political reasons for the emergence of nationhood in the modern period. The most influential scholarly advocates of this theory are Ernst Gellner, Eric J. Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson; Anderson argued that the ideas of nation and nationalism are “cultural artefacts of a particular kind”,<sup>21</sup> whilst Gellner suggested that “nations are artefacts of men’s convictions and loyalties and solidarities.”<sup>22</sup> However, Adrian Hastings has defined ethnicity and nation by focusing on the history, language, literature and even religion of specific groups of people:

An ethnicity is a group of people with a shared cultural identity and spoken language...a nation is a far more self-conscious community than an ethnicity...it possesses or claims the right to political identity and autonomy as a people, together with the control of specific territory, comparable to that

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<sup>20</sup> For more details on Western studies of ‘nation’ and its origin, see Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>21</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (London: Verso, 2006), p. 4; see also Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>22</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers, 1983), p. 7.

of biblical Israel and of other independent entities in a world thought of as one nation-state.<sup>23</sup>

Upon this premise and against the modernist theory of the origin of nations, therefore, Hastings argued that for the English at least, nationalism already existed in the fourteenth century.<sup>24</sup> Hastings' arguments highlight the uniqueness of the origin of nations in accordance with the specific circumstances and histories of particular groups of people.

The dominant Western theories of nations and their origins can be criticised for their Eurocentric arguments, narrow sampling of European nations, and ignorance about the importance of genealogical history for people in other parts of the world, including Korea. On the basis of his research into the history of Korea circa 1895 through to 1919, Andre Schmid criticised the Western theories of nations and their origins, suggesting they could not adequately explain the Korean case and they were prone to "oversimplifying the genealogy of the modern nation".<sup>25</sup> Nationalism in Korea has developed along very different pathways from those outlined in Western models. For instance, while German nationalism based on strong ethnic loyalties became propaganda for right-wing parties and the grounds for German Nazism before the Second World War, Korean nationalism based on ethnic homogeneity was a strong propaganda tool favoured by political liberals who pursued the unification of Korea by overcoming the ideological fractions of the Korean people.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, it would be inappropriate to apply a Western understanding of nation and nationalism to the divided Korea and I will not develop a broader

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<sup>23</sup> Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>25</sup> Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 18-20. However, there have been some attempts to explain the origin of Korean nationalism with Western theories. For instance, in reference to Benedict Anderson, Henry H. Em argued that the Korean nation (*minjok*) was a product of the nationalist historiography that emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century "as an attempt to deflect the epistemic violence of the global nation-state system," Henry H. Em, *The Nationalist Discourse in Modern Korea – Minjok as a Democratic Imaginary* (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1995), p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Rather than engaging in contesting debates on the origin of nationalism in Korea, Shin Ki-Wook proposed that it is more necessary to explain "historical processes in which nation rose, was contested, overrode other forms of collective or categorical identities, and came to be conflated with ethnicity and race", Ki-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 8.

discussion of the ideas of nation and nationalism from a Western modernist perspective in this thesis.

Moreover, an ideological cleavage,<sup>27</sup> which has been strengthened by the authoritarian regime, has also caused a cleavage in the understanding of ‘nation’ in South Korea, as well as conflicts of identity among the South Korean people. Consequently, some researches have challenged the conventional interpretation of nationalism in Korea and argued that these approaches to Korean nationalism should be developed into a new understanding of the Korean nation that relegates the ethnic homogeneity of the Korean people to a place of secondary importance, instead searching for a new identity of the Korean nation based on shared values for a better future, which would include the unified Korea.<sup>28</sup> This thesis will illustrate that South Korean churches have not been unaffected by the ideological fractions of South Korea, and it will then seek a way to provide communal values to overcome ideological fractions in South Korea through a theological approach to truthful memory, forgiveness, restorative justice, and reconciliation for the unification of Korea.

It should also be emphasised that *minjung* sentiment was not confined to certain Korean Christian theologians, but was widely shared among social activists, intellectuals and students who participated in the democratisation movement under the authoritarian governments in South Korea. South Korean theologians developed this widespread *minjung* sentiment into a unique contextual and liberation theology of South Korea: *minjung* theology. In 1984, scholars in socio-political sciences and theology published a book entitled, *Essays on Minjung*,<sup>29</sup> to explain what *minjung* meant in terms of Korean history; they defined the *minjung* as ‘politically oppressed, and economically manipulated’ masses, arguing *minjung* should reflect the subjectivity of the history of Korea and be able to achieve the democratisation of

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<sup>27</sup> See Youngmi Kim, “Ideological cleavages and the debate over the National Security Law”, Ch.5 in *The Politics of Coalition in Korea: Between Institutions and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>28</sup> See Hyuk-Beom Kwon et al., *The Korean Peninsula and the Issue of the Unification* edited by Hyuk-Beom Kwon (Seoul: Daewangsa, 2002); some examples are also found among the research sources of the Institute of Humanities for Unification of Konkuk University.

<sup>29</sup> Byung-Moo Ahn et al., *Essays on Minjung* (Seoul: Korean Theological Study Institute, 1984).

South Korea. In 2009, Lee Nam-Hee published a book developing her doctoral dissertation on the origin of *minjung* sentiment and its movement in the 1980s. She argues that *minjung* sentiment was an artefact of the social culture of *jaeya* activists and scholars grounded on a revisionist history, in order to emphasise the history of Korea as a history of resistance to unjust imperial powers and social structures.<sup>30</sup> However, *minjung* and national sentiment and discourse in South Korea have been facing challenges in the changing socio-political landscape in South Korea in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially with regard to the unification discourse.

As a result, there have been growing doubts about the relevance of nationalism and *Minjung* theology as a basis for reshaping South Koreans' enthusiasm for the reconciliation and unification of Korea in accordance with the socio-political changes in 21<sup>st</sup> century South Korea. Among Christian scholars, Sebastian Chang-Hwan Kim and Kirsteen Kim present pertinent questions regarding the limitations of mono-ethnic nationalism in the Korean Protestant churches' promotion of the unification of Korea. In their *A History of Korean Christianity*, they challenge the current state of historical scholarship on Korean churches.<sup>31</sup> They argue that historical research on Korean Christianity should overcome the limits of mono-ethnic nationalism and *Minjung* theology whose limited identification of the Korean people is inappropriate within the current context of Korea. More than seven million Koreans live in foreign countries and even in Korea there is a large immigrant population. Compared to the social context in which *Minjung* theology first developed, they claim, Korean people have achieved significant progress in politics, economics and social welfare. The Kims also outline the history of Christianity in North Korea. Their presentation of the limitations of mono-ethnic nationalism and *minjung* theology is followed by a discussion of the unification movement. The Kims' book presents a general and insightful history of Korean Christianity, particularly given that they are living in the West, writing in English.

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<sup>30</sup> Nam-Hee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Sebastian C.H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity* (New York City: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Even though the works of secular scholars are not directly related to theological reflection on South Korean churches' involvement in unification discourses, some of their works are worth mentioning in developing an understanding of how South Korean nationalism has limitations as a basis for continued unification discourse. Seo Jung-Seok in particular questions the nationalist agenda in the unification movement. In his book, *Korean Nationalism Betrayed and Distorted*,<sup>32</sup> he insists that nationalism in Korea after the Korean War has not promoted the cause of unification, but rather has been a cause of conflict and sectarianism. Hence, with the nationalist agenda reinstated after the Korean War, it became difficult to find a new direction for unification in the Korean context. His research, as a secular historian, underlines the need for a new approach to nationalism and unification in which there is a dialogue between church historians and secular historians with a view to overcoming the current methodological impediments of the unification movements.

Kwon Hyuk-Beom<sup>33</sup> has also illustrated the risks of nationalism in modern South Korea, segregating 'others' from 'us' and the 'individual' from the 'nation'. Based on this phenomenon, people who have a strong sense of what ties a 'nation' together tend to discriminate against 'others' and to ignore the individual's freedom and rights for national development and security. Applied to the modern unification discourse in South Korea, this approach generally ignores individual freedoms and rights since only the unification of Korea is believed to have the potential to bring about the flourishing of the nation. Choo Yong-Shik approaches the unification movement from a socio-political perspective. He claims that the unification movement of Korea faces a difficult dilemma in so far as the movement aims to create one nation of ethnic homogeneity. He argues that even though the majority of people in the two countries do not doubt their identity as a homogeneous people, their leaderships have alienated each other, naming their counterparts "alien-installed, anti-national traitors".<sup>34</sup> Choo analyses the division of Korea into two

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<sup>32</sup> Jung-Seok Seo, *Korean Nationalism Betrayed and Distorted* (Seoul: Sungkyunkwan University Press, 2004).

<sup>33</sup> Hyuk-Beom Kwon, *Nationalism and an Illusion of Development* (Seoul: Sol Publication, 2000).

<sup>34</sup> Yong Shik Choo, "Rethinking Ethnic Homogeneity: A Dilemma of Reconciliation and Unification in Korea" (PhD, The Johns Hopkins University, 2003), p. ii.

countries with different ideologies and economies and concludes that in this dilemma, an ethnic homogeneous nationalism, a driving force toward the unification, has caused inner conflict among Koreans.

#### **4. Methodology**

This study is a predominantly historical survey that traces the trajectory of the unification movement driven by various churches represented by two major inter-denominational organisations: the NCKK and the CCK. Nevertheless, this study will also include a suggestion for an alternative theological approach to the unification movement, as an alternative to *Minjung* theology and the nationalism and North Korean missions of conservative Protestant churches that have been prevalent in discourses on the unification of Korea. Therefore, my analysis will rely on very few sources written in the West or written in English, instead focusing on resources written in Korean and by the Koreans who have worked for and studied the peace and unification of Korea. Chapter 7 is the exception to this, where I attempt to apply theologies of memory, healing and reconciliation from Western perspectives to the Korean context.

First, this study will question whether nationalism is a suitable basis for Christian thinking about unification by reviewing the literature of ‘revisionist’ and governmental documents. Scholars of revisionist Korean history have emphasised a nationalism that dominated during the Japanese occupation, rooting it in a homogenous ethnic identity that embraces North Korean communists and could be used to formulate an ideological basis for discourse on unification. In contrast, the anti-communist South Korean governments excommunicated the North Korean leadership and identified nationalism with anti-communism. Hence, the thesis will examine the two models of Christian nationalism in Korea – the ethnic model and the state model – applying these to the different approaches of South Korean Protestants and to the historiographies of revisionist historians and official governmental documents, such as the annual white papers of the Ministry of Unification, presidential inaugural speeches, congress papers and reports and so on, all issued after the division of the Korean peninsula.

Second, I will study the documents of the two inter-denominational organisations (the NCKK and the CCK) on the unification movement, including their resource books, the minutes of their meetings and their official reports on unification endeavours to search for the trajectories of the two distinct unification movements. Conservative Protestant churches did not engage in the unification movement in cooperation with other churches before the foundation of the CCK in 1989. However, even before 1989, a prototype for their unification movement can be found in their humanitarian concern for North Korean people via prayer meetings. Therefore, this part of the thesis is heavily dependent on the pamphlets and proceedings of the meetings and preliminary meeting reports. In contrast, the NCKK constructed their unification movement at an organisational level from the beginning. They held various conferences abroad with other churches in the world and released numerous proclamations. For instance, the Commission of Churches on International Affairs of the WCC met in Tokyo in November 1984 with the agenda of: Peace and Justice in North-East Asia: Prospects for Peaceful Resolution of Conflict.<sup>35</sup>

Third, in order to assess how far a nationalist agenda since 1972 has shaped the unification movement among the Korean Protestant churches, I will study primary sources relating to the main figures in the two groups. Park Soon-Kyung and Moon Ik-Hwan were prominent in the first generation of the unification movement (the liberal group) and are regarded as pioneers of a unification theology under the influence of a nationalist agenda of liberals and *Minjung* theology. Park published a few books on unification theology from a feminist perspective. Moon, meanwhile, published books and articles on unification, as well as actively engaging in social movements, as a result of which he was arrested and spent many years in prison. In contrast, Han Kyung-Chik was a well-known Christian leader who ministered in the North before the division and he founded Youngnak Church in Seoul in 1946 with other North Korean refugees. He dreamt of a Christianised and democratised nation and initiated various revival campaigns in Korea. He emphasised an approach to unification premised on Christian faith and love prevailing in the South as well as the North. He was a strong proponent of anti-communism, attacking communism as the

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<sup>35</sup> Cho, “Dimensions of Christian Mission toward Reunification of Korea”, p. 79.

ruling system of the North, and he launched various humanitarian activities for North Koreans. Most of his primary sources are held in the Kyung-Chik Han Memorial Library in Seoul and many of them are accessible online. Finally, Kim Young-Han is a professor at Soongsil University in Seoul and still works in the Korean Society of Christian Philosophy. In addition to engaging with his written work, I interviewed him so I was able to fully study his theological approach to the unification.

One challenge I faced in researching the unification thoughts of conservative and liberal Protestants was that I could not obtain enough written sources. In particular, as the conservative Christian churches considered unification a political agenda and they did not develop a theology fully dedicated to the unification of Korea, I had difficulty in finding written sources by conservative theologians and church leaders. Moreover, theologians who participated in unification movements were prone to be hesitant about frankly explaining their arguments in their written sources because the unification of Korea has long been a very sensitive issue, even among South Korean Protestant churches. Hence, to collect their stories relating to unification issues I tried to interview those who currently work for inter-denominational committees for the unification of Korea and who represent academic society. To reach the interviewees who worked for the unification within academic and Christian society, I communicated with personnel from interdenominational organisations such as the NCKK. The lists of the interviewees are included in the bibliography section of this thesis.

Fourth, I will present an alternative and constructive approach to Christian discourse on the unification movement in Korea. Many of the unification discourses focus on the goal of resolution without paying much attention to the preliminary steps to unification. Without resolving the historical conflicts between the two countries and even among South Koreans themselves, all efforts toward unification will be superficial. As stated in the literature review, scholars in Christian ethics argue that South Koreans have to overcome the South Korean anti-communism that was strengthened by the Korean War and the Cold War era, but they do not present satisfactory methods by which to achieve such a goal. I expect to find that anti-communism among many older South Koreans is not so much a theoretical and

ideological conviction as an experiential hatred of the North Korean regime, as well as being influenced by statist propagation of anti-communism and manipulation of their memories. Hence, I will describe how Christian belief can contribute to the current context of Korea in resolving these conflicts and hatreds in a realistic way with reference to theological studies of memory and reconciliation, particularly those of Miroslav Volf. Moreover, as the last chapter explores how memory of war and militant confrontations between the two Koreas influenced the South Korean population, I was curious about what the younger generations think of North Korea and North Koreans, as well as what happens when they physically engage with North Koreans. Hence, I communicated with a department director of the Training Centre for the National Team of South Korea in Jincheon where the South Korean Ladies' Ice Hockey Team trained with North Korean athletes for the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic Games. I interviewed six young athletes who actually played with North Korean players to find answers to my questions.

## **5. Contributions of the study**

Existing historical analysis of the unification movement in Korea has focused on the work of liberal churches and their political and social involvement in the movement. Nationalism and *Minjung* theology has provided frameworks for historical research into the unification movement. The work of conservative groups has therefore been neglected and insufficiently researched. Rather, their activities have been treated as wholly separate from the unification movement and labelled as missions to North Korea. However, I argue that their mission activities have been shaped by a vision that the two Koreas should become one based on biblical teachings of love. Even though their activities have attracted some suspicion and discontent among more liberal groups, their initial insights are worthy of attention in the current context of Korea. Moreover, without dialogue between secular historians and church historians and because of the supposition that unification can be realised only by political, social and educational endeavour, it has been hard to find an alternative theological approach to that of *Minjung* theology in the historical research on the unification movement of Korea.

Due to the fast economic development and a partially successful democratisation movement in South Korea, *Minjung* theology and the nationalist agenda for the unification movement are facing challenges. There has not been any satisfactory research on the unification movement since 2000 and *Minjung* theologians are struggling to find an alternative or supplementary theology by which to make *Minjung* theology appropriate for and relevant to contemporary Korea. Neglecting the growth of churches and the fulfilment of people's expectation for spiritual discipline, the churches supporting *Minjung* theology – mostly members of the NCCK – are experiencing stagnation in their numbers of church members, as well as numbers of churches themselves. Evangelical churches represented by the CCK are in the meantime engaging in the unification movement more passionately than before as the South Korean government attempts to open dialogue with the North Korean government. In the historical research, the evangelical churches' endeavours for the unification of Korea have not been satisfactorily studied. This work will therefore seek to compile and analyse the scattered historical materials dealing with the North Korean missions of Korean evangelical churches. Through historical research into the unification movement of evangelical churches, the thesis will reflect critically on their work and suggest an appropriate direction for the unification movement in the future.

It is hoped that this study of the unification movement in Korea, with its particular emphasis on evangelical approaches, will pave the way for the expansion of the sphere of the unification movement and lay the ground for liberal churches of *Minjung* theology and evangelical churches to cooperate in the future on the unification movement. In particular, this study argues for the need to deal with the inner conflicts and hatred against North Koreans among South Koreans that are due to traumatic experiences during the division and the war in the Korean peninsula and based on a collective memory constructed by authoritarian governments. This can be done by seeking a just and truthful memory as a step toward the reconciliation of Korea. This would perhaps mean overcoming South Koreans' anti-communist, anti-North Korean sentiments and even their absolute belief in the homogeneity of the nation of Koreans for the unification of Korea.

## Chapter 1

### **South Korean Anti-communism and the Birth of *Minjung* Theology among South Korean Protestant Churches**

After the division of Korea, South Korea fell under an authoritarian regime. Although the country achieved enormous economic growth under this regime, the population did not have freedom of publication and their human rights were limited by the government, ostensibly due to the need for state security against North Korean communists. In the political turmoil of South Korea, anti-communism became an ideology that dominated people's attitudes toward North Korea and manipulated their memories. South Korean anti-communism was also intertwined with statist nationalism that segregated North and South Koreans into salutary *kukmin* (referring people who live in a state with legitimate citizenship) and virulent *kukmin*, oppressing and persecuting the latter for their involvement in democratisation and human rights movements against the authoritarian governments. Against the nationalist discourse of authoritarian governments, social activists and scholars proposed an ethnic-centred nationalism that emphasised the homogenous national identity of Koreans for the future unification of Korea. Cooperating with social activists working towards the democratisation of Korea, liberal Christians and theologians developed *minjung* theology as a theological basis for the democratisation and unification of Korea.

#### **1.1. The Age of Political Turmoil and People's Demand for Democracy**

With the end of the Korean War in July 1953, Rhee Syng-Man accelerated his dictatorship through various political moves. First, he and the ruling party (*Jayudang*) imposed a constitutional amendment that illegally allowed Rhee life-time presidency. Second, after the decisive defeat of his ruling party at the general election in 1958, the government rigged the presidential election in 1960 using

political terrorist tactics against the opposition party and “oppressive measures”.<sup>1</sup> To ensure the security of their regime, Rhee’s government regarded people who stood against them as communist collaborators and enemies of South Korea. Regarding a relationship with North Korea, Rhee’s government announced that the only way to unification was by military methods and it suppressed public calls for a peaceful unification of Korea. In 1959, for instance, Rhee’s government purged a prominent politician, Cho Bong-Am, who proposed a peaceful unification of the two Koreas. The government made anti-communism a national ideology and insisted on the absorption of North Korea. However, when the 4.19 Revolution broke out against Rhee’s government, Rhee resigned from the presidency in 1960.

After the resignation of Rhee Syng-Man, Chang Myeon became prime minister of the second government of South Korea. He tried to progress democracy in Korea and to construct some consensus for the unification of the Koreas.<sup>2</sup> However, his experiments were unsuccessful and South Korean politics fell into chaos. On May 16, 1961, Park Chung-hee and his troops established a new regime through a military coup.<sup>3</sup> The majority of the military officials who took part in the military coup were in fact from North Korea, threatened by the unification dialogues of the Chang Myeon government. It was widely reported among immigrants from the

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<sup>1</sup> See Quee-Young Kim, “Disjunctive Justice and Revolutionary Movements: The 4.19 (Sa-Il-Gu) Uprising and the Fall of the Rhee Syng-Man Regime in South Korea,” *Journal of Developing Societies* 6 (1990).

<sup>2</sup> There were various official debates about the ideological differences between the North and South, including in relation to unification by neutralisation. The liberal parties argued that the division of the Korean peninsula, as well as capitalism in South Korea, led to economic injustice in the South and therefore, the South Korean government should seek socialist democracy and economic exchange with North Korea to solve poverty in the South. Chae-Ho Lee and Woong-Hee Kim, “A Comparative Study on the Unification Policies of South and North Korea,” in *A Korean Modern History and Unification Issues*, ed. Education Department of the Student Union for the Unification of South and North Korea, Source Book for the Unification Studies (Seoul: The Student Union for the Unification of South and North Korea, 1988), pp. 163-164.

<sup>3</sup> The Park Chung-hee military group outlined six principles of their military coup. First, they regarded anti-communism as a national ideology. Second, they would observe the Charter of the United Nations and strengthen their alliance with the United States and other friendly countries. Third, they would fight against corruption and notorious tradition, which had weakened national development. Fourth, they would improve the economic condition of South Koreans. Fifth, they would develop the competitiveness of South Korea against the North with a view to achieving the unification of Korea. Sixth, they would hand over their regime to reliable politicians when they achieved the goals they presented. Na-Mi Lee, “Park Chung-hee's Regime and Regression of Korean Conservatism,” *Critical Review of History* 95 (May, 2011), p. 46.

Northern Korea that six million North Korean refugees would be executed if South Korea became a communist country.<sup>4</sup> According to the difference between the two economies after the Korean War, it is understandable that the majority of South Koreans feared the South would be occupied by the communists from the North. With the end of the Korean War, the North Korean economy was rapidly restored because it grew fast from heavy industries put in place by the Japanese administration during the Japanese occupation. Compared with the growth of the North Korean economy, South Koreans still suffered from shortages of food and daily necessities.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, with an underdeveloped economy, and facing the rapid restoration of North Korea, South Koreans worried about the influence of North Korea over South Korea. Against this social context, Park Chung-hee and his military companions took power with anti-communist and economic development propaganda designed to attract South Koreans.<sup>6</sup> The South Koreans who acknowledged the military government believed that it was acceptable for their rights to be limited for the sake of economic development and victory over the North Korean communists. Park often proclaimed, “[we should regard] myself as a part of our nation and state, and a national development is my growth. Therefore, my service and sacrifice for our nation and state is eventually for myself.”<sup>7</sup>

The governmental propaganda emphasising anti-communism and economic development successfully attracted South Koreans. Even liberal politicians and NGO workers thought that Park’s government was a nationalist and democratic

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<sup>4</sup> Myeong-Jin Chae, “Autobiography of Chae Myeong-Jin: Across the Death-Line”, p. 389, recited from Jung-Lan Yoon, *The Korean War and Korean Protestant Churches* (Seoul: Han-Eol Academy, 2015), p. 291.

<sup>5</sup> As of 1961, the GNP of South Korea was 82 dollars, while that of North Korea was 195. In 1962, the gap between the GNP of the two countries grew bigger: in South Korea 87 and in the North, 211. Ki-Deok Park and Jong-Seok Lee, *Comparative Studies on the Governmental Systems of Two Koreas and on an Unification Methodology* (Seoul: Sejong Research Center, 1995), p. 274.

<sup>6</sup> Even the leaders of civil organisations welcomed the military coup. For instance, Jang Joon-Ha, who fiercely opposed Park’s regime in the early 1970s, wrote, “If 4.19 Revolution was a democratic revolution which brought about an improvement in politics and the social rights of South Koreans, 5.16 Revolution is a military revolution which devastates corruption, disorder and communists’ influence in South Korea. In a word, the military revolution is a nationalist movement to straighten a way forward into a right future for South Koreans.” Myung-Lim Park, “Resistance of *Jaeya* under the Park Chung-hee Regime: Focusing on the Rise and Expansion of Issues,” *Journal of Korean Political and Diplomatic History* 30, no. 1 (Aug. 2008), p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> A New Year’s Presidential Inauguration at a media conference January 9, 1970. “Editor’s Note: Pathway toward Unifying Our Mind and Calling,” *Kyung Hyang Newspaper* January 10, 1970.

government. The NCKK published an official statement welcoming the military coup:

The 5.16 Military Revolution was an inevitable solution to corruption and chaotic social order and will bring about a reconstruction of South Korea. We welcome the principles of the military coup and hope that they will drive these principles without any hesitation.<sup>8</sup>

However, this support for Park's government ceased when the government drew up a treaty with the Japanese government regarding the victims of the Japanese occupation. NGO leaders and students claimed that the Park's government was collaborating with the Japanese government and it was "anti-nationalist and anti-democratic", launching political protests against the government.

Even though Park's government achieved significant growth of the economy, they had no plan to hand over power through democratic elections. They began to purge opponents and amended the South Korean constitution to take a step toward a life-long presidency for Park Chung-hee. In 1969, Park's ruling party proposed an amendment of the constitution that enabled Park to remain in the presidency for three terms. Against the amendment, various NGOs gathered together and founded a People's League for Protesting the Amendment of the Constitution (*Samseon Gae Heon Banae Beom Kukmin Tujaeng Wiwonhoi*) on July 17, 1969. The league selected pastor Kim Jae-Jun as chairperson and announced that Park's government had been driving against the tide of the people's hope for democracy and economic justice.<sup>9</sup> The participants argued that Park's regime had become a dictatorship and was trying to make South Korea a totalitarian state. Nonetheless, a referendum on the amendment of the constitution on October 17, 1969 resulted in the amendment being allowed. With the result of the referendum, the protests against the government were rapidly weakened.<sup>10</sup> Along with a political protest against Park's government, liberal NGO leaders strongly drove civil right movements concerning the rights of labourers and the democracy of South Korea. On April 19 in 1971, they organised the People's

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<sup>8</sup> Yoon, *The Korean War and Korean Protestant Churches*, p. 292.

<sup>9</sup> Park, "Resistance of *Jaeya* under the Park Chung-hee Regime: Focusing on the Rise and Expansion of Issues.", p. 37.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

League to Protect the Democracy of South Korea (*Minju Suho Kukmin Hyeopuihoi*). In spite of these efforts, however, Park won the presidential election in 1972.

Starting his new presidency in 1972, Park's government put in place various plans for economic development and advertised Park's dictatorship and totalitarian governance as a 'productive democracy'. They also denounced the election system, a basic method of democracy, insisting that North Korea regarded elections in South Korea as an opportunity to penetrate South Korea because election campaigns could divide people and create havoc. Therefore, they propagated the message that the life-long presidency of Park without elections would create a genuine and productive South Korean democracy against North Korean communism.<sup>11</sup>

## **1.2. Developing a National Ideology: Anti-Communism (*Bangong*)**

In his discussion of the particular meaning that anti-communism assumed in South Korea, Kwon Hyuk-Beom has defined anti-communism in South Korea as the "oversocialised hostility toward North Korea through which the North Korean regime and government are defined as evil, and in which is embedded a desire that the evil North Korean regime and government should be destroyed or collapse, and it is justified to militantly oppress the left's ideology and thoughts..." He also insists that anti-communism is "an ideological expression of fierce hostile sentiment toward all the thoughts of leftists regardless of [the] social virtues" of the diverse political and sociological ideas.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, in this thesis, the term 'anti-communism' is used in a quite specific sense that differs from the general opposition to communism as an ideology. Rather, it reflects the individual, social and national sentiment in South

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<sup>11</sup> Ji-Hyung Kim, "The Dismantling and Continuance of the Governing Ideology of Park Chung-hee from 1960s to 1970s: Centering Found Mutual Constraints of Anti-Communism and Democracy," *Journal of Democracy and Human Rights* 13, no. 2 (2013), p. 180.

<sup>12</sup> Kwon, *Nationalism and an Illusion of Development*, p. 141: Similarly, anti-communism in Korea has coalesced with the various issues in South Korea, such as the continuance of American military bases in South Korea, regionalism and the National Security Law. For a further political analysis of these phenomena in political sciences, see Youngmi Kim, "Ideological cleavages and the debate over the National Security Law".

Korea expressed in militant hatred of North Korea and North Korean people and those who pursue progressive political agendas.

As noted above, the first governmental policy under Park Chung-hee was anti-communism, which was intertwined with state nationalism and developmentalism,<sup>13</sup> and the government used anti-communism to prolong their stay in power. First, Park's government and his ruling party legislated the anti-communism law that Rhee's government had tried to enact. The anti-communism law was used by Park's government to oppress people who resisted the government: around 2,000 people were arrested and taken to court on the basis of this law.<sup>14</sup> Second, in addition to the national security law enacted by Rhee's government, Park Chung-hee established the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) in 1961. The KCIA had the critical role of supporting Park's regime, rather than simply providing intelligence operations, and it showed significant skill in oppressing political activists and presenting them as anti-state organisations or communists.<sup>15</sup> With the support of the KCIA, the anti-communist law and the national security law, Park's government limited civil rights and punished people who protested against the government. They even fabricated cases of anti-state and communist activity in order to sway public opinion. One of the famous fraudulent cases was the Inhyokdang (People's Revolution Party) case, which resulted in the executions of eight innocent people.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Kun-Woo Kim, "The Discourse Topography of 1964 : Anti-Communism, Nationalism, Democracy, Liberalism, and Developmentism," *Journal of Popular Narrative* 15, no. 2 (2009), p. 74.

<sup>14</sup> Park, "Resistance of *Jaeya* under the Park Chung-hee Regime: Focusing on the Rise and Expansion of Issues.," p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> Nam-Hee Lee, "Making Minjung Subjectivity: Crisis of Subjectivity and Rewriting History, 1960--1988" (PhD, University of Chicago, 2001), p. 221.

<sup>16</sup> The Inhyokdang case was a fraud case brought by KCIA. They reported that some social activists had created a party named Inhyukdang and tried to overthrow the government. The first case took place in 1964 and the court sentenced 12 of the accused to be put in jail. The second case was in 1974 when political demonstrations against Park Chung-hee were fiercely fuelled after the amendment of the constitution, enabling the life-long presidency of Park. The KCIA announced that the people of the first Inhyokdang case had tried to restore the party and plotted against the government for the North Korean communist party. 23 people were found guilty and eight of them were executed just 18 hours after sentencing by the supreme court. In 2001, the Presidential Truth Commission on Suspicious Deaths reinvestigated the Inhyokdang cases: the Seoul District Court announced that the cases were a fraud and lacked evidence and the accused were innocent. Myung-Hyuk Jun, "A Study on People's Revolution Party in 1960s," *Critical Review of History*, no. 95 (2011), Hyongtae Kim "The Case of the Restoration Movement of People's Revolution Party," (Seoul: Forum Truth & Justice, 2007).

Park's government denounced both liberalism and communism, insisting that they were both the products of western culture and could be ignored in the South Korean context.<sup>17</sup> The government also blamed communism as it was a major cause of the Korean War and an ideology used to justify people being killed.<sup>18</sup> Park's government strongly encouraged anti-communism in the field of education. In particular, one third of the contents of ethics classes for junior and high school students were related to anti-communism. Anti-communist terminology appeared in the Charter of National Education in 1968, and in 1971 the charter identified a free democracy with anti-communism.<sup>19</sup>

Even though Park's regime strongly oppressed public opinion and limited human rights in South Korea, the majority of South Koreans agreed with the governmental policy of developmentalism and modernisation because they were facing the rapid economic growth of North Korea after the Korean War, while South Koreans were being challenged by a shortage of food supplies and poverty. Therefore, the most important governmental propaganda in the 1960s focused on how to achieve economic growth. Park outlined 'national modernisation' in November 1961 and strongly emphasised the terminology, mentioning it over 50 times in his public conferences and addresses in 1964.<sup>20</sup> The authoritarian government thus drove national modernisation policy to overcome North Korean communism in the Korean peninsula, disregarding democracy in South Korea.

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<sup>17</sup> Park Chung-hee presented Korean nationalist democracy rather than 'westernised' democracy, arguing that a western democracy is not economically productive, it would cause harsh conflicts among people and be wasteful with regard to economic progress. Therefore, he insisted that South Korea needed a new type of democracy that could guarantee economic development. He used the term 'administrative democracy' when he led a military coup in 1961. The term has an ironic double meaning in that even though Park's regime politically yearned for democracy, the human rights of South Koreans could be limited for economic development. Later he emphasised independent economy, modernisation and nationalism in using the term 'nationalist democracy'. Kim, "The Dismantling and Continuance of the Governing Ideology of Park Chung-hee from 1960s to 1970s: Centering Found Mutual Constraints of Anti-Communism and Democracy.", pp. 174-177.

<sup>18</sup> Kun-Woo Kim, "The Discourse Topography of 1964: Anti-Communism, Nationalism, Democracy, Liberalism, and Developmentism," *Journal of Popular Narrative* 15, no. 2 (2009), p. 75.

<sup>19</sup> Lee, "Park Chung-hee's Regime and Regression of Korean Conservatism.", p. 49.

<sup>20</sup> Byung-Ju Hwang, "The Ruling Discourse of Park Chung-hee Regime: Focused on the Modernisation Discourse" (Hanyang University, 2008), pp. 130-105, cited from Kim, "The Discourse Topography of 1964: Anti-Communism, Nationalism, Democracy, Liberalism, and Developmentism.", p. 75.

Park's government took advantage of its relationship with North Korea to make the regime stable. In August 1972, the North and South Korean Red Cross organisation held a conference and, in the following year, both governments signed the 7.4. Joint Communiqué. The South Korean people were surprised by the meeting because the government was believed to be a strong anti-communist government. Soon afterwards, Park's government published a special presidential announcement on October 17, 1972, which stated that the National Assembly would be dissolved as of 7pm that day and all kinds of political activities by political parties were prohibited. The government declared martial law and issued a constitutional amendment entitled, "A Proposal of Constitutional Amendment for a Peaceful Unification". Park argued that all the measures the government enacted were rooted in his personal will to continue South and North Korean dialogues in favour of creating rapid change in the world.<sup>21</sup> In this declaration, he mentioned the unification of the two Koreas 18 times and stated that the Yushin regime was essential for unification. Thus, ironically, a dictatorship was needed for peaceful unification.<sup>22</sup>

The unification policies of Park Chung-hee aimed at confrontational co-existence rather than the unification of Korea. These policies represented a move toward a 'peace and then unification' governmental plan. Park's regime tried to lower the risk of war in the Korean peninsula through various dialogues with the North Korean regime to ensure a stable economic development and to continue military tensions to secure the regime. They believed that outstanding growth by the South Korean economy would lead to a unification of the Korean peninsula and defeat of the North Korean communist regime.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the government oppressed the unification movements of NGOs and leaders of civil organisations such as Moon Ik-Hwan who believed that Park's government did not want the unification of Korea and that it was using South and North Korean relations to

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<sup>21</sup> *Dong-Ah Newspaper* 1972. 10. 18.

<sup>22</sup> Ji-Hyung Kim, "The Park Chung-hee Regime's Plans for South-North Korean Relations During Yushin Period, and Reality," *Quarterly Review of Korean History* 88, p. 72.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

strengthen Park's regime. They also questioned whether the unification of Korea would be possible without democracy.<sup>24</sup>

### 1. 3. Anti-Communism, Memory and Identity in South Korea

The backlash against the development of a national ideology under an authoritarian government is still influential in South Korean society as the process uncovered the weaknesses of human memory and identity. There has been much suspicion about the accuracy and integrity of human memory because it is vulnerable to errors and distortions when people recall the past, and vulnerable collective memory influences people's conviction of their identity. They remember their past through a process of reconstruction according to present conditions, which includes emotions, environments and social relations. Sue Campbell has argued that modern philosophers and scientists generally differentiate between two different types of memory activity, "archival and multi-causal account of memory",<sup>25</sup> which they use to explain the contents and activities of memory. Paul Ricœur has argued that there are stages in the activities of memory: "the memory that one has before the mind, the stage of the search for a given memory, the stage of anamnesis, of recollection...and move from memory as it is given and exercised to reflective memory, to memory of oneself."<sup>26</sup> Therefore, memory of the past is followed by the reconstruction of what we remember as the past and these activities of memory have a significant potential to be distorted as the stages progress; as Campbell insists, "memory is malleable and prone to distortion".<sup>27</sup> Agreeing with Campbell, Daniel Schacter identifies the process of remembering as "adaptive constructive processes" that "play a functional role in memory and cognition but produce distortions, errors, or illusions."<sup>28</sup> Ricœur

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>25</sup> Sue Campbell, *Our Faithfulness to the Past: Reconstructing Memory Value* (Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago ; London: Chicago ; London : University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. xvi.

<sup>27</sup> Campbell, *Our Faithfulness to the Past: Reconstructing Memory Value*, p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel L. Schacter, "Adaptive Constructive Processes and the Future of Memory," *American Psychologist* 67, no. 8 (2012), p. 604.

also differentiates memory and imagination as the latter is intended to “direct toward the fantastic, the fictional, the unreal, the possible, the utopian”.<sup>29</sup>

Another approach to human memory suggests that personal remembering is part of the complexity of collective memory, as “shared memory activity is central to our lives as rememberers”.<sup>30</sup> While collective memory can reconstruct accurate and faithful memories of the past, according to Ricœur, it can also contribute to a manipulation of the past when it leads to the fragility of identity that results from “the proximity between memory and imagination”; imagination in particular becomes memory’s “spur and its helper”.<sup>31</sup> Ricœur presents causes of fragile identity: “confrontation with others especially feeling of threat, and the heritage of founding violence”.<sup>32</sup> This fragility and demand for identity often tends to spark ideological phenomena that legitimate order and power, and efforts to manipulate the memory of people are a part of identity formation. In summary, this ideology is aimed at order and the authority of a society or a state, as Ricœur argues:

Ideology...revolves around power... In fact, what ideology aims to legitimate is the authority of order or power-order, in the sense of an organic relation between the whole and the past; power, in the sense of a hierarchical relation between governing and governed.<sup>33</sup>

In a state that strongly emphasises its identity against that of a rival state, with which a war has occurred and militant confrontation continues, an energetic ideology is developed. Once such an ideology integrates into a community, it develops into more visible phenomena, including conflicts and identity purification that demands members of society test their identity.

Since an ideological phenomenon of this kind “runs from top to bottom” of a society, various types of violence to sustain this static ideology against the enemy can also be found in a “bottom to top movement” in South Korea in which the South Korean people passionately collaborated with the state’s demand for ideological purification. Professor Park Young-Gyun and Kim Seong-Min of the Centre for

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<sup>29</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> Campbell, *Our Faithfulness to the Past: Reconstructing Memory Value*, p. 32.

<sup>31</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 81.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Humanities Study for the Unification in Konkuk University have articulated that the manipulated memory stored in the subconscious of the South Korean people against North Korea has led them to embrace anti-communism with a passion, and that they even “yearn for” the protection of authoritarian governments despite acknowledging that they were victimised by government violence.<sup>34</sup> The authoritarian governments, from the end of the Korean War and through the 1970s, strongly propagated nationalist sentiment and anti-communism as a form of bondage in the South Korean identity against North Korean communists. However, as stated above, they emphasised *minjok* sentiment to secure their regime, arguing that the state and the nation are identical. For instance, in 1946, Rhee’s government disbanded the Special Committee for Investigation of Anti-national Crimes During the Japanese Occupation because the committee charged some cabinet members of Rhee’s government for their collaboration with the Japanese administration. The police then arrested the members of the committee, suggesting that they worked for the communist party. For Rhee Syng-Man’s government, activities relating to the communist party were more severe crimes than collaborating with the Japanese administration.

In the nationalist discourse of the state, there was no place for North Korean communists and those who opposed the government were regarded as collaborators with the North Korean regime. The nationalism the South Korean governments pursued was a ‘one-nation state’, which emphasised, in order of priority, the state, the nation, and then individuals. The state was equivalent to the nation for South Koreans. Moreover, individuals’ rights and freedoms could be limited for the interest of the state, which would eventually bring about the nation’s prosperity. The North Korean regime also used nationalism to strengthen their statist ideology: *Juche* ideology, which replaced Marxism-Leninism from the end of 1980s. In 1985, they defined nationalism as “a concrete social community; at its core is independency, which has been integrated on the basis of one lineage, language, culture and regional

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<sup>34</sup> Seong-Min Kim and Young-Gyun Park, “Introductory Reflections on the Trauma of Division of the Korean Peninsula,” *Journal of the Korean Association For Studies of Philosophical Thought* 21, no. 2 (2010), p. 38.

specification through a long history.”<sup>35</sup> Therefore, a nation should achieve its independence against foreign interventions and at the same time the ideology strengthened the leadership of Kim Il-Sung and his family. The same claims about nationalism in North and South Korea were thus being used to differentiate themselves from their enemies and to sustain their regimes.

Against the statist nationalist sentiment and discourse of the authoritarian governments, social activists and scholars proposed a different nationalist discourse based on Korean ethnicity, highlighting the one ethnic identity of South and North Koreans.<sup>36</sup> After the liberation of Korea and in an era of democratic endeavour, there was a turning point in historical research which reinstated Korean nationalism at the centre of historical research to overcome the imperialistic historical narratives instilled by the Japanese administration. Nationalism in Korea has developed periodically in both the North and South, though an understanding of being a nation originated in the 13<sup>th</sup> century in response to the invasion of the country by the Mongol Empire. Historians such as Il-Yeon<sup>37</sup> wrote that all Koreans were descendants of *Dangun*, the son of god named *Whan-In*. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Korean patriots recapitulated this idea. Shin Chae-Ho wrote articles entitled “*Joseon Sang-go sa* (Early History of Joseon)”<sup>38</sup> to *Joseon Il-bo* (a Korean newspaper company) in 1931 and insisted that the Joseon (the name of the dynasty before the Japanese occupation) people had a distinctive history over against that of foreign powers like China and Japan. This idea of Joseon as a single ethnic national identity became a common ground of independence movements after the annexation by Japan in 1910.

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<sup>35</sup> Jong-Seok Lee, “The Sentiment of 'Nation' in the Divided Land and a Prospect of Unification,” *Kidokgyo Sasang(Christian Thoughts)* 34, no. 3 (1990), p. 57.

<sup>36</sup> Among the revisionist historians, Kang Man-Ghil tried to interpret the history of Korea from a perspective of ethnic centred nationalism which would be a ground for a historiography for unification of Korea. Kang, *Historiography of the Age of Unification*.

<sup>37</sup> Sung-Deuk Oak, “Shamanistic Tan'gun and Christian Hananim: Protestant Missionaries' Interpretation of the Korean Founding Myth, 1895-1934,” *Studies in World Christianity* 7, no. 1 (2001), p. 44.

<sup>38</sup> Chae-Ho Shin, *Joseon Sang-Go Sa*, trans. Jong-Seong Kim (Seoul: The Dawn of History, 2014).

Nationalist secular historians also emphasised the *Gabshin* Coup in 1884 and the *Dong-Hak* (later known as ‘*Cheondogyo*’) Peasant Revolt in 1894<sup>39</sup> which sparked people’s conscientisation to a modern nationalism for the establishment of an independent nation.<sup>40</sup> This historical understanding of modern nationalism which emphasised the ethnic homogeneity of Korean people became a ground for unification discourse among *Jaeya* activists. Therefore, they suggested, the nationalist discourse in South Korea should not exclude North Koreans hoping for North and South Korea to be unified in the future. They highlighted that the peninsula was mainly divided by foreign powers, the Soviet Union and the US in particular, and that the division had caused widespread pain among the Korean population. Therefore, Koreans, as one nation, should act in unity themselves for the resolution of ‘*Han*’ and national flourishing, which would secure the well-being of all the individuals in the peninsula.

Applying the thoughts of Ricœur regarding the ideology of the state and manipulation of people’s memory to the development of the South Korean identity and ideology against North Korean communism, we can suggest that anti-communism, which was developed around the time of the establishment of the South Korean government, is still influencing the memory of South Korean people and is still influential in South Korean society even though anti-communist education and government propaganda has officially ended. Anti-communism was first intensified by the government as a measure by which the state militantly segregated “pure *kukmin*” and “impure *kukmin*” and it evolved into a social norm among the South Korean population; some of the South Korean population voluntarily collaborated with the authoritarian government to prove their national identity. Finally, this transformed into hostile sentiment toward North Koreans, especially among the younger generations in 21<sup>st</sup>-century South Korea and made people suspect the ethnic

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<sup>39</sup> For the early historiography considering the Dong-Hak Peasant Revolt of 1894-5 as a primitive mass movement for modern nation-building, see Chong-Shik Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967).

<sup>40</sup> For instance, Lee Ki-Baek argued that *Dong Hak* was a leading nationalist group which sought national independence and transformation. They fought against Japanese troops and led the March First Movement in 1919. Ki-Baek Lee, *Nation and History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (Seoul: Iljogak, 1994), p. 229.

homogeneity of North and South Koreans even though the social activists and scholars developed unification discourse based on ethnic-centred nationalism.

#### **1. 4. Protestant Churches' Industrial Mission and Democratic Movement Based on *Minjung* Theology**

The *minjung* sentiment was widely shared by liberal politicians, social activists, historians and scholars, and even students participated in the democratisation movement in South Korea circa 1970s and 1980s. The *minjung* sentiment was used to emphasise *minjung*'s autonomy and subjectivity as grounds for the democratisation and unification of Korea. The *minjung* sentiment in South Korean society was begun by a number of artists, poets and writers who tried to rediscover *minjung* subjectivity against the ruling population, which had long been a major theme of Korean traditional folk music such as *Pansori* (a form of folk music performance consisting of one singer and a drummer chanting traditional epic stories, which was popular among Joseon commoners), literature, and even dance (*Talchum*: mask dance drama with a satirical theme focusing on the upper class ruling population), which had almost disappeared due to the harsh oppression of the Japanese administration, especially in the 1940s when the administration tried to annihilate Korean culture. With the emergence of *minjung* sentiment among cultural society, scholars, social activists and even religious leaders began engaging in productive discussions about *minjung* in various realms. Henceforth, some theologians tried to interpret *minjung* from Christian perspectives and their thoughts were developed into *minjung* theology. Even though *minjung* theology was a theological product of *minjung* discourse in South Korea in the 1970s, the theology also provided inspiration to *minjung* artists before and after the Kwangju

Democratisation Uprising highlighted *minjung*'s *han* and hope for unification of Korea, who suffered harsh oppression from unjust rulers.<sup>41</sup>

Lee Man-Yeol, a leading church historian, a professor emeritus of Sookmyung Women's University and a former president of the National Institute of Korean History, has argued that the unification movement of Korean Protestant Churches is largely the product of *Minjung* theologians and nationalist church historians. He insists that Korean churches formed the nationalist movement(s) in response to the Japanese occupation in political, educational and social realms and therefore, Korean churches should engage in social and political movements to fulfil their responsibilities as national churches. At the same time he has criticised the majority of evangelical Protestant churches who collaborated with military dictators while liberal churches struggled for the promotion of democracy and unification in Korea.<sup>42</sup> Likewise, Choo Jae-Yong, a former professor of church history and president of Hanshin University from 1988 through 1996 and a leading *Minjung* church historian, argued that the true identity of Korean churches was to be found according to the measure of their support for the Korean people in their time of suffering. Therefore, he maintained, Korean Christianity was formed and developed by *minjung* and became *minjung*'s religion in Korea.<sup>43</sup> According to *Minjung* theology, the duty of the Church is to relieve the sufferings of people. Hence, the churches should be involved in a social and political movement for the well-being of the *minjung*. Democratic development and the unification of Korea are both seen as requisites for their well-being, and the two agendas are intertwined, to be simultaneously achieved in Korea. Therefore, the emergence of *Minjung* theology became a starting point for a theological approach to the unification of Korea.

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<sup>41</sup> For the co-relation of *Minjung* theology and the *minjung* artists in 1980s, see Sebastian Kim, "'Justice and Peace Will Kiss Each Other' (Psalm 85. 10b): *Minjung* Perspectives in Peace-building," *Transformation* 32(3), 2015, p. 193-196.

<sup>42</sup> Lee, *A Study in the History of Korean Churches: Korean Christianity and National Unification Movement*, p. 352

<sup>43</sup> Jae-Yong Choo, *Korean Minjung and a History of Korean Protestant Churches*, ed. NCC Theology Committee, *Minjung and Korean Theology* (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1991), p. 219. Cited from Kyu-Hong Yeon, "*Minjung* as a *Juche* of a History and a History of Churches," in *Introduction of Minjung Theology*, ed. The Center for the Study of *Minjung* Theology (Seoul: Hanul, 1995), p. 57.

Facing governmental oppression and manipulation of South Koreans, these Christians identified the laypeople with *ochlos* in the New Testament, especially in the Gospel of Mark, referring to the masses who were discriminated against by the ruling population of Israel and whom Jesus called his “mothers and siblings”.<sup>44</sup> *Ochlos* are laypeople, but they are also the members of a new community for Jesus. They are *minjung*, oppressed and manipulated politically, economically and culturally, and thus this group began to portray unification as an achievement of the health of *minjung* in both Korea.

The turning point at which South Koreans began to acknowledge their consciousness of *minjung* subjectivity was the suicide of Jeon Tae-II who immolated himself in protest of working conditions in clothing factories on November 13, 1970. His death triggered people’s consciousness of human and labourers’ rights and drove liberal activists to believe that it was the duty of civil movement leaders and intellectuals to organise people and protect their rights.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, Protestant churches made their voice heard after the death of Jeon Tae-II and they tried to find ways to participate in the civil rights movement with a relevant theological reflection on the context of South Korea.<sup>46</sup> As a result, they developed a theology to explain the context of South Korea and to contribute to the development of human rights. These theological reflections began to be called *Minjung* theology in the second half of the 1970s.

Even before theologians entitled the contextual theology of South Korea concerning the oppressed people as *Minjung* theology, the liberal theologians had become deeply concerned about the unjust socio-political and economic system of

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<sup>44</sup> Byung-Moo Ahn, “Jesus and Oculos: Focusing on the Gospel of Mark,” in *Minjung and Korean Theology*, ed. KNCC Committee of Theological Study (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1982), p. 90.

<sup>45</sup> Park, “Resistance of Jaeya under the Park Chung-hee Regime: Focusing on the Rise and Expansion of Issues.”, p. 41.

<sup>46</sup> At a conference held at Yonsei University titled “Politics and Theology” the South Korean Protestant churches regretted that they could not make changes to the working conditions of labourers even though they had launched and continued urban industrial missions in the 1960s. They concluded that they lacked theological reflections on those issues and were not equipped with professional analysis of working conditions of labourers. Hence, their urban industrial missions were not successful outside of churches. Byung-Seo Park, “Christians’ Participation in Social Issues,” *Dong-Ah Newspaper* 1970. 11. 30.

South Korea. Economic development and rapid urbanisation shadowed the human rights of labourers from the 1960s. For the development of the state, it was considered understandable to limit the rights of people. However, some Christians and theologians tried to represent the oppressed labourers and some young pastors organised The Committee for Urban Special Missions. One of the founding members of the committee and the first generation of *Minjung* theology, Hyun Young-Hak, outlined an episode that he experienced when he worked for the committee:

When I was passing a narrow pathway along Cheong-gae-cheon (Cheong-gae stream), I saw some people standing looking two little girls fighting. They fought so fiercely that their clothes were almost ragged. They yelled and mocked each other. It was not difficult to guess a reason for their fighting. They were prostitutes. One girl took a customer from another girl and it caused them to fight. It was one of the most disgusting, mean, and horrible scenes I have seen in my life. Who should be blamed for the horrible lives of these little girls? Aren't the social system and governmental policies responsible for their situation?<sup>47</sup>

Witnessing people's suffering under the oppression of the authoritarian government and rapid urbanisation, early *Minjung* theologians attempted theological reflection on the context of South Korea and gave hope through gospel messages.

At first, some churches led by ministers and theologians who later became *Minjung* theologians, tried to represent the marginalised people impacted by the rapid growth of the economy and urbanisation in the 1960s. Young people from rural areas rushed into urban areas to find jobs, but what waited for them were low-income and inhumane working conditions. Due to the strong policies of economic growth driven by Park's government, young labourers could not organise labourers' unions and they could not acquire their rights. Churches tried to find a way to work for these labourers and they launched urban industrial evangelisation campaigns, which became 'urban industrial missions' in 1970. In addition to their concerns about the improvement of the working conditions of labourers in urban areas, churches worked on human rights issues.<sup>48</sup> They started the Friday Prayer Meeting for Human Rights

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<sup>47</sup> Young-Hak Hyun, "Minjung, Servant of Passion, and Hope," in *A Progress of Korean Minjung Theology in 1980s*, ed. Byung-Moo Ahn, Source Book of *Minjung* Theology (Seoul: Korean Institute of Theological Studies, 1990), pp. 16-17.

<sup>48</sup> Jin-Kwan Kwon, "Is the *Minjung* Church No Longer a Church of *Minjung*?: The Future of the *Minjung* Church," *Critical Review of History*, no. 89 (2009), p. 213.

and Thursday Prayer Meeting, and organised the NCKK Commission for Human Rights.

*Minjung* theologians and activists of *minjung* churches passionately engaged in the political issues of South Korea. Ahn Byung-Moo argued that Korean churches should confess the sins that had caused injustice in South Korea. He asked:

Where were the churches when *minjung* rose to fight against a dictator's oppression? Churches did not make any voice heard against the dictator and kept silent when students and intellectuals protested against the authoritarian government. Even under Park's regime only a few churches and a minority of Christians participated in democratic movements. Such cowardly attitudes by Protestant churches were a betrayal of Christian teachings and behaviours.<sup>49</sup>

He further explained that Jesus died "as a friend of *minjung*, for *minjung* and because he was present with *minjung*".<sup>50</sup> So, who are *minjung*? Ahn used a term from the Greek expression in the New Testament – *ochlos* – which he believed to symbolise *minjung*. *Ochlos*, or *minjung*, are marginalised people who followed Jesus. They are weary and burdened, lost lambs. They are poor, handicapped, blind, crippled, oppressed, slaves, hungry, persecuted and sorrowful.<sup>51</sup> The Korean churches, it was suggested, should share their sorrow and pain and work to relieve them. In particular, churches should work for the democracy and human rights of South Korea through organising social non-violent movements.<sup>52</sup>

The liberal churches gathered momentum for a democratic movement when Park proposed an amendment that enabled him to continue his presidency for three terms. NGO leaders and social activists organised a people's league to protest against the government and selected pastor Kim Jae-Joon as chairperson of the league. Kim encouraged Christians' participation in democratic movements, arguing, "our churches are called to be prophets in this unjust society. We have to organise *minjung*'s movements and act and proclaim messages of God to the world."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> In-Cheol Kang, "Park, Chung-hee's Regime and the Protestant Churches," *Studies in Religion and Culture* 9 (2007), p. 84.

<sup>50</sup> Ahn, "Nation, *Minjung*, and Church," p. 24.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>53</sup> *Sasang-gae*, October, 1969, pp. 108-111, cited from Park, "Resistance of *Jaeya* under the Park Chung-hee Regime: Focusing on the Rise and Expansion of Issues.", p. 38.

Christian leaders such as Chung Il-Hyung, Ham Seok-Heon, Kim Sang-Don, Yoon Bo-Seon, Park Hyung-Gyu, Moon Ok-Tae, Moon Jang-Shik and Min Seung organised the *Yeomkwanghoi* (Salt and Light Christian Fellowship) and joined in various campaigns to secure democracy in South Korea. The NCKK made an official statement criticising the constitutional amendment proposed by Park Chung-hee and his party. After the constitutional amendment of Yushin was enacted in December 1972, several Protestant pastors who led the democratisation movement were arrested and some missionaries who supported the movements were deported by Park's government.<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, the churches who participated in democratisation continued their protests against Park's regime and officially criticised Park Chung-hee at the Easter Service on April 22, 1973. Against the democratisation movements, Park's government issued the First National Emergency Measure with which the government could punish people who denounced the Yushin constitution, arguing that the new constitution was to ensure "Korean democracy and protection from the North Korean communist regime". Henceforth, the *Jaeya*<sup>55</sup> people and *Minjung* church leaders and theologians came to believe that democracy in Korea could not be separated from its unification. The following chapter provides an assessment of the history and theological grounds for the unification movement as understood by the liberal wing of Christian churches in South Korea.

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<sup>54</sup> Kang, "Park, Chung-hee's Regime and the Protestant Churches.", p. 91.

<sup>55</sup> It literally means "people staying in wilderness" and indicates non-government organisations and social activists especially against authoritarian governments after the Korean War. *Jaeya* came to include "religious leaders, intellectuals, students, labour leaders, and workers," under Park Chung-hee regime. Ho-Ki Kim, "The State and Civil Society in South Korea, 1987-1999: Civil Movements and Democratic Consolidation," *Asian perspective [S. Korea]* 25, no. 1 (2001), p. 236.

## Chapter 2

### South Korean Liberal Churches' Involvement in the Unification Movement and 'The Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Unification and Peace'<sup>1</sup>

From the early 1970s, the Kim Il-Sung regime politically stabilised after the North Korean government enacted a revised constitution that allowed for Kim's life-long presidency.<sup>2</sup> With the stability of North Korean politics, the religious bodies of the North were allowed religious activities and they began to contact international organisations.<sup>3</sup> Among the religious bodies of North Korea, the Korean Christian Federation (*Joseon Kidokyodo Yeonmaeng*, KCF) was most actively engaged in various dialogues with the WCC and South Korean immigrant Christians abroad.

As the North Korean Christian leaders started to appear on the global stage, South Koreans who resided abroad began to pay attention to Christianity in North Korea. In 1978, 34 South Korean Christians who had foreign citizenship (8 Canadians, 18 Americans and 8 West Germans) sent a letter through the Christian Peace Conference entitled "A Letter to Christians in Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea" to express their wish to communicate with North Korean Christians. South

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<sup>1</sup> The Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Unification and Peace will be abbreviated to '88 Declaration' in some parts of the dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> See dissertation by Dr Keum Joo-Seop for a detailed history of the churches in North Korea and the involvement of the WCC in the unification dialogue between North and South Korean Christians. Joo-Seop Keum, "Remnants and Renewal: A History of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, with Special Reference to Issues of Church and State, 1945-1994" (Thesis, PhD, University of Edinburgh, 2003), p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> The North Korean Government encouraged their religious bodies to interact with other religious bodies in the world, seeing religion as a tool by which to win over South Korea in international relations and isolate South Korea as a global state. Heung-Soo Kim and Dae-Young Ryu, *Religion in North Korea: A New Understanding* (Seoul: Dasan Publications, 2002), p. 233; also, Noh Seong-Lim has argued that KCF was founded and encouraged to interact with international NGO groups for political necessity by the North Korean regime. See Seong-Lim Noh, "Religion and Cultural Policy in North Korea: The Significance of Protestantism in Politics, Culture and International Relations from the 1970s to the Early 1990s" (Thesis, PhD, University of Warwick, 2017).

Korean immigrant Christians also organised the Association of Foreign-residing South Korean Christians for the Unification of Korea in 1980.<sup>4</sup>

The appearance of North Korean Christians attracted the attention of South Koreans, especially those who had lived abroad, because they had the freedom to travel to North Korea and were able to legally meet North Koreans.<sup>5</sup> At first, South Korean Christians criticised the meetings between North Koreans and South Korean Christians who had lived abroad because they had believed those meetings to be politically abused by the North Korean communist regime. However, these dialogues between North Koreans and South Korean Christians living abroad sparked and strengthened the unification sentiment among South Korean Christians, especially the more liberal Christian churches represented by the NCKK. Thereafter, through the mediation of the WCC, the NCKK began to meet KCF leaders at various consultations and exchanged various ideas on the issue of the unification and peace in the Korean peninsula.

However, when WCC and NCKK leaders met North Korean Christians, the conservative Christians in South Korea believed that the Christians they met were nominal Christians who had been forced to go by the North Korean communists; they suggested that the WCC was keen to appease North Korean communists.<sup>6</sup> The statements from the consultations between South Korean immigrant Christians and KCF members, as well as those between NCKK and KCF members, were also criticised by the majority of South Korean Christian leaders as being preferential to the North Korean communist regime because most of the published statements contained harsh criticism of the United States and South Korean authoritarian governments. Their anti-governmental statements made conservative Christians uncomfortable as they believed that churches should not be involved in political

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<sup>4</sup> Kim and Ryu, *Religion in North Korea: A New Understanding*, pp. 246-247.

<sup>5</sup> According to the National Security Law of South Korea, it is prohibited to meet North Koreans without the permission of the South Korean Government.

<sup>6</sup> The communist controversy over the WCC in South Korea began in the mid-1950s when the ICCC (International Council of Christian Churches) criticised the WCC as a communist church organisation. The Presbyterian newspaper *Kidokgongbo* reported that the ICCC's criticism of WCC also fuelled a controversy among Korean Christians. "The Strategy to Spread the Gospel into Communist Countries", *Kidokgongbo* 1955.10.24.

issues. Thus, the unification movements of the liberal churches of South Korea generated internal conflict and exposed strong anti-communism among South Korean churches. Hence, with the increasing nuclear threat from North Korea and concomitant military confrontations between the two Koreas, the unification movements of liberal churches represented by the NCKK began to lose influence.

This chapter presents a historical trajectory of the ecumenical movements of the liberal South Korean Protestant churches for the unification of Korea; it includes an account of the first meeting of South Korean Christians and North Korean Christians represented by the KCF. Second, this chapter examines the 88 Declaration of the NCKK, discussing how *Minjung* theology underpinned the declaration and what its weaknesses were. This part considers the reactions of conservative mainline South Korean churches who shared a strong anti-communist reaction to the ecumenical movement for unification. Third, the chapter examines how the ecumenical movement for unification weakened and changed to give greater emphasis to preserving the peace of the Korean peninsula, as well as Northeast Asia as a whole, in view of the military confrontations between the two Koreas, and especially the nuclear threat posed by North Korea.

## **2.1. Foreign-residing South Korean Immigrant Christians' Influence on the Christian Dialogue for Unification with North Korean Christians**

Direct dialogue between South and North Korean Christians began in Europe where South Korean immigrant Christians sought out meetings with North Korean Christians who, with governmental support, had appeared on the global stage for the purpose of isolating South Korea from international relations. As stated above, the South Korean immigrant group, led by Lee Young-Bin and Lee Hwa-Seon, sent a message to the KCF through the Christian Peace Conference and this initiated a series of publications entitled, "Unification and Christianity". They also organised a South Korean Immigrant Christian Fellowship and sent their leadership

to North Korea from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1981.<sup>7</sup> They met leaders of the KCF and agreed to a meeting between North Korean Christians and South Korean immigrant Christians in October of the same year. As agreed, they met in Vienna from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> of November and published a joint statement from the first conference of North Korean Christians and South Korean immigrant Christians for the Unification of Korea.<sup>8</sup>

The South Korean immigrant Christians and KCF members met for a second conference from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1982, in Helsinki. As part of the conference, the participants made various statements concerning South Korean politics, such as a request for the withdrawal of the US army from South Korea, the dissolution of the military regime of South Korea, a halt to the large-scale joint military training of the US and South Korea, and the adoption of a confederate governmental system as a unification policy of Korea.<sup>9</sup> Such statements from the participants at the conference clearly reflected an anti-American sentiment; they argued:

The unification of Korea is a long desire of all Korean people but we have not accomplished the unification even though 37 years have passed since the division. It was not because our passion was not enough for the unification movement but the United States prevented the unification and has been ruling South Korea for their national profit, which was acquired through the sacrifice of Korean people. Hence, anti-American and independent movements should be pursued for the unification of Korea.<sup>10</sup>

Even though the official statements from the three conferences between South Korean immigrant Christians and North Korean Christians represented by the KCF were widely regarded as a disguise of the political position of the North Korean

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<sup>7</sup> Kim and Ryu, *Religion in North Korea: A New Understanding*, p. 247.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248. 45 North Korean Christians and South Korean immigrant Christians participated in the conference and 30 people joined the conference as observers. In the statement, they reiterated various discussions from the conference. Dr Kang Wi-Jo from the United States criticised that South Korean churches had been collaborating with US imperialism in Asia and contributing to harsh confrontations between the two Koreas. He insisted that the *Juche* ideology of North Korea was not vastly different in the sense that it emphasised love and service for human beings. Elder Lim Guk-Heon, the vice president of KCF, emphasised that the United States should not interfere in unification dialogues of Koreans. They also attached five articles of resolutions of the conference in search of the independent and peaceful unification to one nation state based on mutual respect. Ik-Hwan Moon et al., *The Unification and a Theology for National Church of Korea* (Seoul: Hanul, 1990), pp. 299-301.

<sup>9</sup> *The Unification and a Theology for National Church of Korea*, pp. 304-307.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

communist regime, the conferences of the early 1980s triggered a direct dialogue between North and South Korean Christians. Consequently, the NCKC began to search for a way to meet North Korean Christians who it was assumed had disappeared behind the strong leadership of the communist regime in North Korea.

Along with the dialogue between foreign-residing South Korean immigrant Christians and KCF members abroad, some theologians also organised an association to construct a theology for the unification of Korea. The name of the association was the Association of Foreign-residing South Korean Immigrant Theologians for the Unification of Korea. Dr Kang Wi-Jo and Rev. Hong Dong-Geun organised the association in the late summer of 1986 in Los Angeles, USA. Later, Rev. Lee Young-Bin, who had lived in West Germany, joined the fellowship and they continued to meet North Korean Christians to discuss how they could contribute theologically to the realisation of the unification of Korea.<sup>11</sup> However, the South Korean government and some religious leaders regarded these conferences between North Korean and South Korean immigrant Christians as little more than an advertisement for North Korean *Juche* ideology and its unification policies.<sup>12</sup>

As stated in the resolution of the Vienna conference, the members of the Association of Foreign-residing South Korean Immigrant Theologians for the Unification of Korea expressed harsh criticism of American imperialism. Rev. Hong Dong-Geun, one of the founding members of the association, asserted that the USA and the USSR were responsible for the division of Korea and its aftermath. He particularly criticised the United States for monopolising the South Korean economy, culture and politics. Hong argued that “South Korea has become a military colony of the United States.”<sup>13</sup> He continued to argue that anti-communism and American imperialism were rife among the majority of South Korean Protestant churches, who portrayed social activists who worked for the democratisation and unification of

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. vi.

<sup>12</sup> Kim and Ryu, *Religion in North Korea: A New Understanding*, p. 249. Rev. Lee Young-Bin, who led the conferences, was refused entry by the South Korean Government in 1991 and 1994 because the government regarded him as an anti-state communist activist.

<sup>13</sup> Dong-Geun Hong, “Reconciliation and Peaceful Unification of Korean People”, in *The Unification of Korea and a Theology for National Church of Korea* (Seoul: Hanul, 1990), p. 42.

Korea as communists. He wrote that the main purpose of the association was to build an ideological and theological bridge between the two Koreas, with a view to achieving the reconciliation and unification of the two Koreas.<sup>14</sup>

The dialogue between South Korean Christian immigrants and North Korean Christians represented by the KCF surprised South Korean Christians. They thought that it was too soon to meet North Korean Christians directly because they were still unsure about the existence of Christianity in North Korea, which they believed had vanished after the division of Korea due to the communist regime. Although the meeting between South Korean immigrant Christians and North Korean Christians reflected possibilities for direct interaction between Christians of the North and South, in the opinion of most South Korean Christians, there was not enough consideration and explanation of how *Juche* ideology could be compatible with Christianity, which would be the first and most important step toward overcoming anti-communism among South Korean Christians.

## **2.2. Dialogues between North and South Korean Christians and Involvement of the World Council of Churches in the Unification Discussions of Korean Christians**

From the first moments of the KCF reaching out towards the global stage, the WCC played a crucial role in introducing KCF members to the NCKK. Several conferences and meetings between North and South Korean Christians and Christians in America followed, as shown in the table below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Meeting of North and South Korean Christians</b>	<b>Engagement of American Churches in Korean Issues</b>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<b>1984</b>	CCIA “Conference on Peace and Justice of North-East Asia” in Tozanso (29 October–3 November)	
<b>1985</b>	34 <sup>th</sup> General Assembly of NCKK “Peace to the World” (27–28 February)	
<b>1986</b>	Foundation of the Association of Foreign-residing South Korean Immigrant Theologians for the Unification of Korea ( <i>Tongil sinhak dongjihoi</i> ) Meeting of South-North Korean Christians at Glion Conference (2–5 September)	NCCCUSA representatives’ visit to North Korea (18 April) NCCCUSA’s statement on the Peace and Unification of Korea (6 November)
<b>1987</b>		Second visit of NCCCUSA representatives UMC’s resolution entitled “Peace, Justice and Unification of Korea” (21 October)
<b>1988</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Glion Conference of North and South Korean Christians (23–25 November) Publication of the ’88 Declaration	
<b>1989</b>		NCCCUSA hosts a “Conference for the Peace and Unification of South and North Korea” and North and South Korean Christians participate as observers (23–26 April) KCF leaders participate in WCC’s Central Committee Meeting in Moscow (16–26 July)
<b>1990</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Glion Conference (2 December)	

<Table 2-1. Chronological Summary of the Ecumenical Unification Movement>

When North Korean officials visited Geneva to deliver a letter from the KCF to the WCC headquarters, the WCC was unsure about the reality of Christianity in North Korea, which they had believed had been eliminated before and after the Korean

War. Therefore, they officially invited the KCF to the Tozanso Conference in Japan in 1984 and the executive secretaries of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of WCC (CCIA) visited North Korea to work out if Christian churches really existed in North Korea. The WCC delegates met the leaders of the KCF and advised them to meet South Korean Christians directly to discuss how Christian churches could contribute to the unification of Korea.<sup>15</sup> Further, during the era of resurgent democratisation movements in South Korea after the Kwangju Democratisation Uprising in 1980, and after the Tozanso Conference in 1984, the NCKK urged the WCC to mediate meetings with North Korean Christians with a view to undertaking unification discussions. In a situation where South Korean churches faced difficulties contacting the North Korean Christian organisations represented by the KCF, the WCC facilitated and mediated various dialogues between the KCF and the NCKK.

The WCC first invited KCF members to the CCIA “Conference on Peace and Justice of North-East Asia” in Tozanso, Japan, which ran from the 29<sup>th</sup> of October through to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 1984 as a follow-on program of the resolution of the general assembly of the WCC at Vancouver in 1983 which indicated that seeking justice and peace should be central responsibility of Christian communities. Rather than participating in the conference, the KCF sent a telegram to congratulate the conference as follows:

The Central Committee of the Korean Christian Federation extends warm congratulations to the International Conference for Peace and Justice in North East Asia and through the conference, to the representatives. We believe that the conference will make every effort to realise peace and justice in this region, particularly [the] peaceful unification of Korea, focusing attention upon the urgent situation of North East Asia, which is covered by the dark cloud of nuclear war...<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Keum, “Remnants and Renewal: A History of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, with Special Reference to Issues of Church and State, 1945-1994”, p. 267.

<sup>16</sup> The telegram was inserted into a letter from Erich Weingartner, the executive secretary of the CCIA, to Kim Hyong-Uh, the North Korean Ambassador in Geneva, on 12 December 1984. In the letter, Weingartner expressed an appreciation for the message of the KCF and the desire to maintain communications with the KCF. Heung-Soo Kim, *Documents of the WCC Library: Korean Christian Federation*, ed. Man-Yeol Lee, vol. 31, Source Book of Korean Church History (Seoul: Institute for Korean Church History, 2003), p. 83.

Regarding the congratulatory telegram, there were strong debates about whether the conference should accept the telegram and insert it into the official report. Some representatives of the South Korean churches suspected that North Korean Christians were ‘genuine’ Christians because the telegram was delivered by a communist organisation in Japan and they insisted that the KCF was simply a decoy religious organisation directed by the North Korean communist government.<sup>17</sup> Following the debates, the South Korean representatives agreed to insert the telegram with a request that the WCC should mediate dialogues between North and South Korean Christians. Moreover, the conference generated an official resolution of the WCC advocating peace and unification dialogues between North and South Korean Christians, as well as encouraging global Christian communities to take part.<sup>18</sup>

Following the Tozanso Conference, the NCKK held its 34<sup>th</sup> General Assembly under the title, “Peace to the World” from the 27<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1985, publishing the statement, “South Korean Churches’ Declaration for Peace”. In the statement, the member denominations of the NCKK insist that the division of Korea has contributed to violations of human rights and distributive injustice and that this has also been strengthened by the Cold War system and the South Korean military governments. Therefore, they argue that South Korean churches have been called to work for the peaceful unification of Korea.<sup>19</sup> The Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Tonghap*), the Presbyterian Church in Korea (*Hapdong*), the Presbyterian Church in Republic of Korea (*Kijang*), the Lutheran Church in Korea, the Korean Methodist Church, the Korea Evangelical Church and the Korea Baptist Convention

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<sup>17</sup> Kim and Ryu, *Religion in North Korea: A New Understanding*, pp. 252-253.

<sup>18</sup> The conference involved a Tozanso Process regarding the peace and unification issues of Korea; it reads, “8.2.1. The WCC is asked to explore, in collaboration with the CCA, the possibility of developing relationships with churches, Christians and others in North Korea, through visits and forms of contacts. 8.2.2. The WCC, in collaboration with the CCA, should facilitate opportunities where it would be possible for Christians from both North and South Korea to meet in dialogue. 8.2.3. The churches are encouraged to share with the WCC and the CCA plans for contacts with and results of a visit to North Korea.” “Findings and Recommendations”, CCIA/WCC Consultation on Peace and Justice in North East Asia, 29<sup>th</sup> October – 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1984, Tozanso, Japan. Cited from Keum, “Remnants and Renewal: A History of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, with Special Reference to Issues of Church and State, 1945-1994”, pp. 267-268.

<sup>19</sup> In the statement, the NCKK noted that *minjung* should be a subject of the unification of Korea and the South Korean churches should promote education in peace rather than confrontational anti-communism. Seong-Hwan Jeong, *A History of Unification Movements in Korean Churches*, p. 270.

also organised the Korean Christian Council for South-North Relations to address various issues regarding relations between North and South Korea and to consult with other global religious bodies on peace and unification dialogues with North and South Korean Christians.<sup>20</sup>

As argued above, the WCC, the leading church organisation to facilitate dialogue between North and South Korean Christians, officially sent a message through the North Korean Embassy in Geneva inquiring whether they could visit North Korea for the purpose of researching North Korean churches and meeting North Korean leaders to work out how the ecumenical organisations could improve peace and unification dialogues in Korea.<sup>21</sup> As a response, the Committee for the Peaceful Unification of the Fatherland of the North Korean Government and the Central Committee of the KCF sent an invitation to CCIA on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1985.<sup>22</sup> On the 10<sup>th</sup> of November in the same year, Nian Koshy and Erich Weingartner officially visited North Korea and suggested that the KCF should meet South Korean Christians directly and that the WCC could facilitate the meetings between Christians from the North and the South. Thus, the church leaders from South Korea and the KCF met at the conference of the Biblical and Theological Foundation of Christian Concern for Peace, in Glion, Switzerland from the 2<sup>nd</sup> through to the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 1986. The first Glion conference was the first stage on which North and South Korean Christians directly met to discuss the issues of unification and peace in the Korean peninsula. Even though there was no official statement from the Christians from the two Koreas, this created an important opening for a future dialogue and cooperation between Korean Christians of the two countries with a view to achieving peace and unification in the two Koreas.

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<sup>20</sup> The Lutheran Church in Korea, "Letter to the Rev. Dr Paul A. Wee, General Secretary of Lutheran World Ministries, 23 March, 1985," Kim, *Documents of the WCC Library: Korean Christian Federation*, 31, p. 84. The council had its first meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> of May, 1985 and met four times more until January, 1988. The council laid the foundation of the 88 Declaration. You-Na Lee, "The Unification Movement of the National Council of Churches in Korea and the Unification Activities of Several Groups' 88 Declaration", *Christianity and History in Korea* 32 (2010).

<sup>21</sup> Erich Weingartner, "The Tozanso Process: An Ecumenical Contribution to the Struggle for Peace and Justice in North-East Asia" in Kim, *Documents of the WCC Library: Korean Christian Federation*, 31, p. 89.

<sup>22</sup> Kim and Ryu, *Religion in North Korea: A New Understanding*, p. 255.

Following the Tozanso Conference, various church organisations and denominations sought out dialogue with the KCF.<sup>23</sup> The National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States (NCCCUSA) launched an immediate dialogue with the KCF. Representatives from the council visited North Korea on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 1986, and they issued an official policy statement in November of the same year: “Peace and the Unification of Korea: A Policy Statement of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA”, in which the member churches acknowledged that they had been responsible for the division of the Korean peninsula and its aftermath and they confessed that they had ignored North Korean Christianity after the Korean War. The statement concluded that the NCCCUSA would interact with the KCF as the representative Christian organisation of North Korea and work together for the peace and unification of Korea.<sup>24</sup> The NCCCUSA further stated that the US government should negotiate with the USSR to withdraw nuclear weapons targeted at Korea and promote peace in the Korean peninsula.<sup>25</sup> The NCCCUSA sent their representatives to North Korea in 1987 and contributed to the development of the relationship between the United States and North Korea.<sup>26</sup> In 1989, the NCCCUSA hosted a “Conference for the Peace and Unification of South and North Korea” from the 23<sup>rd</sup> through to the 26<sup>th</sup> of April. Various church organisations in Asia, Europe and North America participated in the conference as observers, as well as the NCCCK and the KCF. The conference was a stage where North and South Korean Christians met and discussed how Christianity could promote the peace and unification of Korea. The NCCCK sent Park Bong-Bae, Park

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<sup>23</sup> The list of church organisations and denominations that sought communication with the KCF are as follows: Lutheran World Federation, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Christian Conference of Asia, National Council of Churches in Korea, National Council of Churches in Japan, National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, and *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*. Keum, “Remnants and Renewal: A History of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, with Special Reference to Issues of Church and State, 1945-1994”, p. 268.

<sup>24</sup> The statement quoted, “The churches too have much to confess. Korea has suffered from uncritical acceptance by many in our churches and nation of the virulent anti-communism which gripped our society hard in the 1950s and has kept it in its grasp to varying degrees ever since... Nor have we sought sufficiently to comprehend the witness to the Gospel of the South Korean churches in their society, or to respond adequately to their call to us to be more responsible as U.S. Christians in relation to Korea...”. NCCCUSA, “Peace and the Reunification of Korea: A Policy Statement of National Council of the Churches in the U.S.A.”, pp. 8-10, cited from *ibid.*, pp. 324-325.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Kim and Ryu, *Religion in North Korea: A New Understanding*, p. 254.

Jong-Hwa, Jeon Kwang-Hoon and Song Mi-Hyun, and the KCF sent four delegates: Ko Ki-Joon, Kim Woon-Bong, Kim Nam-Hyuk and Kim Hye-Sook.<sup>27</sup> The Korean participants emphasised that they needed to build mutual trust and use the WCC as an institutional mediator between the North and South Korean churches. They also acknowledged the danger of North Korean missions initiated by South Korean conservative churches and argued that North Korean missions should not be used as a means of South Korean churches infiltrating the North, but should instead respect the independence and faith of the North Korean Christians.<sup>28</sup> The KCF participants in the meantime insisted that they wanted to support the ecumenical movement of the WCC on the issue of the unification of Korea and they respected the NCKK as their partner in the unification dialogues of Korean churches.<sup>29</sup> The NCCUSA's dialogue with the KCF and their statement influenced the publication of the NCKK's "Declaration of Korean Churches on the Peace and Unification of Korea" in 1988.

The KCF and the NCKK held a bilateral conference in Glion from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 1988, mediated by the WCC. Seven KCF and 11 NCKK representatives, along with 14 observers from the United States, the Soviet Union and eight other countries, gathered for the conference. Based on the conference, the participants from the KCF and the NCKK published a joint statement: "The Glion Statement of the WCC for the Peace and Unification of Korea".<sup>30</sup> After the conference, the WCC and the NCKK were eager to prepare the way for further dialogues between North and South Korean Christians. The WCC sent a letter to the

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<sup>27</sup> Ho-Kyung Kwon, "North and South Korean Christians in Washington D.C.", *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 33, no. 6 (1989), p. 165.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>30</sup> In the statement, they expressed strong support for the Statement Regarding the Peace and Unification of Korea published by NCCUSA in 1986 and the 88 Declaration of the NCKK. They argued that the division of Korea was caused by the Cold War powers: the United States and the Soviet Union in particular. They stated that Koreans had a right to decide to unify and live as a single nation-state and Korean Christians were called to work together towards the peace and unification of Korea. They also agreed to declare the year of 1995 as a jubilee year for the unification of Korea and observe every Sunday after Independence Day of Korea, 15<sup>th</sup> of August, as the common prayer day in which Korean churches hold common prayer for the unification of Korea. Also, Korean churches should encourage other churches in the world to join in this common prayer Lord's day. The participants reiterated that the *minjung* should be subjects of the unification of Korea and the unification should be led by Koreans independently refraining from submitting to the influence of foreign countries. Hence, the *minjung* of Korea were invited to join in unification movements. Ki-Cheon Jang, "Glion Reports", *ibid.*, no. 1, pp. 253-254.

KCF in which they invited them to the WCC conference on “Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation”, which was held in Seoul from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1990. The NCKK also invited KCF representatives to attend the general assembly of the NCKK held in February 1990 while they were staying in Seoul for the WCC meeting.<sup>31</sup> To ensure the security of the KCF delegates to Seoul, the NCKK acquired governmental permission and prepared to welcome North Korean Christians to Seoul.<sup>32</sup> However, the KCF ultimately sent a letter outlining their final decision that they could not participate in the WCC meeting and general assembly of the NCKK because of the militarism of the South Korean and US governments who continued their Team Spirit Joint Military Exercise and had intensified tension between the two Koreas.<sup>33</sup>

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1990, the KCF and the NCKK held the third Conference for the Peace and Unification of Korea at Glion. The main subject of the conference was similar to that of the first conference in 1986: “Biblical Foundation for Peacemaking with a Focus on Korea”. 14 South Koreans, six North Koreans, 10 foreign-residing South Koreans and 18 members from various church organisations in other countries participated in the conference.<sup>34</sup> At this third Conference for the Peace and Unification of Korea, participants were aware of the changing mood in Northeast Asia, with the ending of the Cold War Era and the 7.7. Declaration of the South Korean government in 1990, which included various policies intended to encourage progress in relationships with communist countries. In this hopeful context, they reiterated that the year of 1995 was a jubilee year in which they would accomplish the peace, justice, and unification of Korea and that Korean churches should give an impetus to the unification movement.<sup>35</sup> Based on the agreement at the

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<sup>31</sup> Emilio Castro, “Letter to KCF” (Geneva, 13 November, 1989), Kim, *Documents of the WCC Library: Korean Christian Federation*, 31, p. 190.

<sup>32</sup> Ho-Kyung Kwon, “Letter to WCC” (Seoul, 23 January, 1990), *ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>33</sup> Gi-Jun Ko, “Letter to WCC” (Pyeongyang, 28 February, 1990), *ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>34</sup> So-Young Kim, “Conference Reports of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Glion Conference for the Peace and Unification of Korea”, *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 35, no. 1 (1991), p. 134.

<sup>35</sup> The jubilee year phrase was stated in the 88 Declaration of the NCKK in 1988, which recruited a biblical term for the unification discourse of Korea. In the resolution of the conference, the participants suggested strengthening church education regarding the peace and unification of Korea in order to build a cooperative relationship with NGOs, religious organisations and political parties for the unification, and to ensure continuing dialogue between North and South Korean churches, as well

third conference at Glion, the NCKK and the KCF continued to meet and exchange their ideas on the peace and unification of Korea. They planned to hold the next Glion conference in the Korean peninsula, one in Pyongyang and one in Seoul. In fact, the fourth Glion conference was held in Kyoto, Japan, in March 1995, where they agreed on a joint jubilee worship service at Panmunjeom<sup>36</sup> on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1995. However, this did not happen because the South Korean government did not give permission for a service in Panmunjeom.<sup>37</sup>

The WCC and the KCF continued their close relationship on the issues related to the Korean peninsula. The WCC invited KCF leaders to the WCC Central Committee meeting in Moscow from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> of July 1989. The KCF leaders participated in the meeting as guests and the meeting approved “The Policy Statement for the Peace and Unification of Korea”, which was revised and signed by the delegates of the first Glion conference.<sup>38</sup> Then, in February 1991, KCF leaders participated as observers in the seventh General Assembly of the WCC in Canberra, Australia.<sup>39</sup> The active dialogue between the KCF and the NCKK mediated by the WCC achieved broad participation of member churches of the WCC and encouraged the South Korean government to publicise the unification discourse so that NGOs could join in developing the unification policies of South Korea. However, the active involvement of the WCC in the dialogue between North Korean Christians and South Korean liberal Christians represented by the NCKK caused harsh criticism of the

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as with international Christian organisations and denominations. Moreover, they suggested the reduced armament of the North and South Korean armies, as well as a ceasing of large-scale military exercises in both Koreas, such as the Team Spirit military exercise of the South Korean and US army. They agreed to encourage interactions of civil organisations between the two Koreas, such as the Red Cross, and to urge each government to act for the reunion of separated families. *Ibid.*, pp. 140-142

<sup>36</sup> Panmunjeom is the building where the Armistice Agreement of the Korean War was signed by the United Nations Command and the North Korean Army on 27<sup>th</sup> of July, 1953 to suspend the Korean War. Now this place is in the Joint Security Area and secured by the UNC and the North Korean army. Therefore, to access the Panmunjeom, all civilians require permission from the government of South Korea and the UNC.

<sup>37</sup> Kim and Ryu, *Religion in North Korea: A New Understanding*, p. 266.

<sup>38</sup> Ninan Koshy proposed the “Policy Statement on Peace and the Reunification of Korea” to the Central Committee and suggested that the committee invite Rev. Ko Gi-Jun, the General Secretary of the KCF, to the meeting in Moscow. Rev. Ko went to the meeting with his interpreter. Ninan Koshy, “Letter to Emilio Castro, on 5<sup>th</sup> of August, 1989”, Kim, *Documents of the WCC Library: Korean Christian Federation*, 31, p. 175.

<sup>39</sup> Kim and Ryu, *Religion in North Korea: A New Understanding*, pp. 258-259.

allegedly communist characteristics of the WCC among South Korean conservative churches.<sup>40</sup>

### **2.3. NCKK's 'the Declaration of Korean Churches on the National Unification and Peace' and Its Influence**

Along with the conferences of South Korean immigrant Christians and North Korean Christians abroad, the NCKK hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference of South Korean and West-German Christians (EKD, *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*) at Academy House in Seoul, on 8<sup>th</sup> of June through 10<sup>th</sup>, 1981. In the conference, the participants suggested that the NCKK should facilitate a committee dedicated to dealing with the unification issues of Korea. Following the resolution of the conference, the NCKK organised the Executive Committee for the Unification of Korea in February, 1982 and started to research unification issues. However, it was enormously difficult for the committee to facilitate meetings because of interventions by the South Korean government and it could not continue the project for four years.<sup>41</sup> A number of preparatory meetings and discussions followed and members of the committee engaged in harsh debates on several issues such as the withdrawal of the US army from Korea.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> In Korean the debate is called *Yonggong-nonjaeng*. The conservative South Korean churches fiercely criticised the WCC, suggesting it was an advocate of communism and North Korean communists. Hence, they argued that the WCC was neither a biblical nor a Christian organisation. The suspicions of the conservative South Korean Christians on the WCC were historically backed up by substantial historical evidence that the KGB of the Soviet Union used some bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church as their agents for advancing Soviet interests. C. Andrew and V. Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (Basic Books, 2000), pp. 486-507; W.R. Ward, "Peace, Peace and Rumours of War", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 51, no. 4 (2000)

<sup>41</sup> Man-Yeol Lee, "Marking the Tenth Anniversary of the Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Unification and Peace", *Bulletin of the Institute for Korean Church History* 31 (1998), p. 12.

<sup>42</sup> Dr Noh Jong-Sun, a member of the executive committee organised in 1986 for discussing and making an official statement regarding the peace and unification of Korea, insisted that it was difficult to compromise between members of the committee on the issue of the US army in Korea. Moreover, it was debated how the declaration assessed Marxism and a socialist ideology for unification discourse. Seo Kwang-Seon argued that the declaration should exclude any ideas that could be related to Marxism, while Oh Jae-Sik insisted that the declaration should propose a socialist ideology as a

In 1985, the NCK held its 34<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Onyang City on 27<sup>th</sup> of March, just after the Tozanso Conference. NCK issued an official statement entitled, “The Declaration of South Korean Churches for the Peaceful Unification of Korea,” which reads,

South Korean churches have the freedom and responsibility to participate in overcoming the aftermath of the division of Korea and accomplishment of the unification of Korea according to our belief in the peace of the kingdom of God.<sup>43</sup>

Through the statement, liberal South Korean Protestant churches proclaimed that they would actively engage in the unification dialogue and that the unification of Korea should be peaceful and be led by Korean people. With the publication of the statement, NCK held the 1<sup>st</sup> Consultation of the Committee for the Unification of Korea of NCK on the subject, “Justice, Peace and Church,” and four consultations followed until January 1988 leading up to the ‘88 Declaration. While the NCK continued their discussions aimed at making a unified and official statement of South Korean churches on the peace and unification of Korea, the NCCUSA published their own policy statement on the peace and unification of Korea on 6<sup>th</sup> of November, 1986 which acknowledged the responsibility of the US for the division of Korea and intensifying militarism of the Korean peninsula. The United Methodist Church of USA also published a resolution entitled “Peace, Justice, and Unification of Korea” on 21 October, 1987. In the statement, the UMC urged the US government to withdraw the US army from Korea when the military threats between the two Koreas eased. The prior statements of the NCCUSA and UMC encouraged the NCK to advance their arguments of reducing militarism in the Korean peninsula including the withdrawal of the US army.<sup>44</sup>

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methodology of unification discourse. Jong-Sun Noh, interview by Hoon Song, 23 September, 2016, Handwrite Dictation, Yonsei University.

<sup>43</sup> Gyoung-Ho Jeong, “Understanding of Tongil by Korean Christian Communities in 1980s”, *Theology and Ministry* 38 (2012), p. 24.

<sup>44</sup> Lee, “The Unification Movement of the National Council of Churches in Korea and the Unification Activities of Several Groups' 88 Declaration”, p. 272. In South Korea, insisting on the withdrawal of the US army was regarded as a reason to be suspected of supporting the North Korean communist regime and, therefore, the withdrawal of the US army from Korea is a still sensitive issue in South Korea in debates on the peace and unification of Korea.

The 88 Declaration is a distinguished statement which officially represented the theological reflections of NCKK on the unification of Korea. There had been harsh debates prior to the publication of the statement because it was still risky to talk officially about the peace and unification of Korea. The authors of the statement explained how difficult it was to prepare dialogues with various scholars and church leaders:

From 1985, we had five conferences to prepare the statement. Totally 350 people participated in dialogues for the statement. Making the statement, we sympathised pains and tears of Korean people. We prayed with tear for the people in Korea and passionately discussed critical issues of Korean people. We also confessed our sins for our ignorance of God's providence in the world and the universe. We poured all our energy for research and discussions to make a pathway to a new stage of the history of Korean people through the unification of Korea. All discussions and documents have been officially publicised. Moreover, NCKK tried to contact non-member denominations to collect their opinions and even we asked advice from the experts of political parties and even scholars of sociological and biblical studies. We also tried to include opinions of the youth and women.<sup>45</sup>

As they recommended, the NCKK organised an executive committee for the unification which consisted of nine members<sup>46</sup> in 1986. The '88 Declaration shared common ground with the various statements<sup>47</sup> prior to the '88 Declaration on topics such as the responsibility of the US for the division of Korea, a halt to militarism in the Korean peninsula and the proposal of a peace agreement between North and South Korea, and even the withdrawal of the US military.

In the statement, first, they insisted that South Korean Protestant churches were called to be apostles of peace to bring peace and unification of Korea. They believed that this was a missiological calling for Korean Christians since Christianity was brought to the Korean peninsula in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. They argued that the early Korean Christians were not obedient to Japanese authority and neither ignorant

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<sup>45</sup> Moon et al., *The Unification and a Theology for National Church of Korea*, p. 324.

<sup>46</sup> The nine members of the committee were: Kim Young-Tae, Seo Kwang-Seon, Kim Yong-Bok, Kim Chang-Rak, Min Young-Jin, Noh Jong-Sun, Park Jong-Hwa, Lee Sam-Yeol, Oh Jae-Sik and Kang Moon-Gyu. Lee, "The Unification Movement of the National Council of Churches in Korea and the Unification Activities of Several Groups' 88 Declaration", p. 271.

<sup>47</sup> The statements include, Tozanso Statement of the CCIA, "Peace and the Reunification of Korea" of the PCUSA adopted in 1986, "Peace, Justice and Reunification of Korea" approved by the GBGM (General Board of Global Ministries) of the United Methodist Church of the US. *Ibid.*, pp. 272-273.

of the pain of the oppressed under Japanese colonisation. Rather, they insisted, early Christians in Korea proclaimed good news to the people in desperation and worked for the liberation and independence of the Korean people. Moreover, under the dictators' regimes after the Korean war, South Korean Christians passionately took part in the democratisation movement. In the statement, NCCCK identified the independence movements and democratisation movement of Korean churches as peace movements for achieving God's justice in the Korean peninsula.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, South Korean churches' involvement in the unification movement should be seen as a part of the history of peace movements of Korean churches and it was South Korean churches' responsibility to break down the wall between the two Koreas and bring peace to the Korean peninsula.

Secondly, they confessed that they had sinned in that Korean Christians had uncritically accepted anti-communism and hatred against North Koreans. Moreover, they also recognised that the division of Korea and its aftermath were caused by the Cold War system and that they had not resisted the system. Hence, Korea had lost its independence and become subordinated to the Cold War system economically and politically. It stated:

We confess our sins of deep hatred against North Koreans in front of Korean people and God at the moment of publication of a declaration of peace and reconciliation... We hated, cheated, and killed our Koreans and tried to justify our sins by arguing that it was inevitable in the era of ideological and political conflicts. The division caused the Korean war and we have agreed a high technology militarism to prevent a new war in the Korean peninsula... We, Christians, have ignored our responsibility to bring peace to this land rather we have afforded the Cold War system. Moreover, we, Christians in the North and the South have idolised our ideologies sustained our governmental systems. It is a violence of the covenant with God which affirms God's sovereign authority. It is a sin of Korean churches to stand preferential for governments more than God's will. We confess that the Christians of the South especially have sinned by making a virtual religious idol out of anti-Communist ideology and have thus not been content merely to treat the Communists regime in the North as the enemy, but have gone further and damned our northern compatriots and others whose ideology differs from our own.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Moon et al., *The Unification and a Theology for National Church of Korea*, p. 311.

<sup>49</sup> NCCCK, "88 Declaration", *ibid.*, p. 313.

In the statement, NCKK criticised anti-communism as a tool of authoritarian governments and by which South Koreans expressed their hatred and hostility toward North Koreans. Even Christians had thought that anti-communism had been advisable to protect South Koreans from the threats of North Korean communists. It is clear in the statement that anti-communism is regarded as not compatible with Christian teachings which encourage Christians to promote peace and the justice of God.

Based on historical reflection on the Christian movements during the Japanese occupation and under military governments after the Korean War, and on Christian teaching on the promotion of peace and the justice of God, they proposed practical suggestions to South Korean churches. First, they argued that the unification movement of Korea should be based on the three principles of the 7.4 Joint Communiqué in 1972 between North and South Korean governments: namely, independence, peace, and one nation state overcoming different ideologies and governmental systems. Then they proposed:

First the unification is not only for the prosperity of nation and state but also securing human freedom and dignity because nation and state exist to secure human freedom and dignity of the people and also ideology and government are for flourishing of human beings. Hence, humanitarian policies should be considered and enacted immediately. Second, the participation of common people should be guaranteed for making unification policies. In particular, government should invite *minjung* to all unification discourses because they have been oppressed and marginalised under the governments of divided nations even though they are majority of Korean people.<sup>50</sup>

The statement reflected NCKK's theologians' preference for the *minjung* in the sense that they believed that the *minjung* had been desperate victims of the division of the Korean peninsula. However, the statement caused a debate how *minjung* could be identified separately from common Korean people.

The NCKK also made five proposals to the North and South Korean governments. First, they argued that the governments should engage humanitarian policies for the families separated by the division of Korea. They insisted that it would be a step toward healing the wounds caused by the division of Korea. They

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<sup>50</sup> NCKK, "88 Declaration", *ibid.*, p. 314.

urged both governments, to guarantee freedom to families to travel to meet their family members and to visit their hometown. They proposed, “the governments should allow those families to visit their separated family members at least during national holiday seasons such as New Years’ holidays or *Chuseok* (national autumn harvest season).”<sup>51</sup> Second, they urged that both Korean governments should encourage people in both Koreas to partook in unification discourses and in making policies for the unification of Korea. Moreover, the governments should secure freedom of publication of people and allow their criticisms against governments according to the UN’s Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>52</sup> Third, they urged the governments of North and South Korea to build up mutual trust to promote national identity regardless of ideologies and governmental systems. To build up mutual trust, both governments had to cease “mutual hostility and aggressive inclinations, and must eliminate the exclusivism which leads to the slandering and vilification of one another.”<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the governments should promote exchanges of personnel and culture in areas such as arts, sports and religion as well as cooperation for various academic projects in history, language, geography, biology and natural resources.<sup>54</sup> The fourth proposal was about the militarism of the Korean peninsula which provoked harsh debates among South Korean Protestant churches. The NCKK stated that both governments should sign a peace treaty which would end the military tensions of the Korean peninsula. Moreover, once a peace treaty was concluded, US troops should withdraw from the Korean peninsula with their nuclear weapons. Lastly, in the proposal, NCKK urged the two governments to avoid foreign interference in the unification dialogues of Koreans and to cooperate with each other in international relations for the prosperity of Korean people.<sup>55</sup>

The statement also included various practical policies by which both Korean church bodies could make progress toward peace and reconciliation of the two

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<sup>51</sup> NCKK, “88 Declaration”, *ibid.*, p. 315.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 316-317.

Koreas. First of all, the NCKK proclaimed that they were launching a jubilee movement for peace and unification of Korea;

The National Council of Churches in Korea proclaims the year 1995 to be the 'Year of Jubilee for Peace and Unification.' (Luke 4:18-19)... The 'jubilee year' is the fiftieth year following the completion of cycle of seven sabbatical years totaling 49 years. (Leviticus 25:8-10) The year of jubilee is a "year of liberation."... The Korean churches proclaim 1995, the fiftieth year after liberation, as a Jubilee Year, to express our belief in the historical presence of God, who has ruled over those fifty years of history- indeed over all of human history: to proclaim the restoration of the covenant community of peace: and to declare our resolution to achieve this restoration in the history of the Korean peninsula today.<sup>56</sup>

To prepare for the Jubilee Year of the Korean peninsula, NCKK proposed four practices which the Korean churches would carry out together. First, they argued that the Korean churches should strive for a church renewal movement for peace and unification. Second, the Korean churches should "carry out a broad program of education for peace and reconciliation."<sup>57</sup> Third, the Korean churches should prepare a liturgy for the peace and unification of Korea such as "Sunday of Prayer for Peace and Unification." Fourth, the Korean churches should continue to "develop a solidarity movement for peace and unification" which would embrace various religious and civil organisations as well as other international Christian communities.<sup>58</sup> The statement was submitted to the 37<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of NCKK on 29<sup>th</sup> of February, 1988 and unanimously approved by the representatives.

Following the statement of NCKK, in the end of March, 1988, the Association of Korean Feminist Theologians led by Park Soon-Kyung<sup>59</sup> published "The Declaration of Korean Feminist Theologians on the National Unification and Peace." In the statement, they alleged that the division of the Korean peninsula was "a product of a patriarchal dominance through a Western imperialism and colonialism as well as Cold War system of the United States and USSR after the

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<sup>56</sup> NCKK, "88 Declaration", Wi-Jo Kang, *Christ and Caesar in Modern Korea: A History of Christianity and Politics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 181.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

<sup>59</sup> Park Soon-Kyung is a distinguishing first generation South Korean feminist theologian who first developed a unification theology adopting nationalist and *minjung* sentiment, as well as a feminist theological approach to a history of Korea.

Second World War.” Feminist theologians argued that Korean women, the most vulnerable “*minjung*” in a Korean history, should be the subjects of unification movements and also work for transformation of the patriarchal social system in cooperation with other women in the third world.<sup>60</sup>

The impact of the NCKK statement was huge enough to bring various reactions from government, church organisations, and mass media. Conservative churches protested that the NCKK could not represent all Protestant churches of South Korea. Even some churches of the member denomination, especially the Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Tonghap*) objected to the statement. They criticised the statement first because NCKK could not represent all South Korean Protestant churches. Secondly, the arguments that US troops and nuclear weapons should be withdrawn was a premature opinion which did not reflect the situation of the Korean peninsula where the North Korean regime still looked for a chance to invade South Korea. Thirdly, the opponents of the statement argued that the KCF and North Korean churches were not true churches but just tools of propagation of North Korean communism.<sup>61</sup> The Fellowship of Korean Protestant Churches, an inter-denominational fellowship particularly consisted of conservative denominations such as Presbyterian Church in Korea (*Hapdong*), Full Gospel Church, and the Baptist churches of Korea, issued a statement against the NCKK’s 88 Declaration. Moreover, the conservative Christian groups argued that it was suspicious that the KCF publicised a supporting statement for the NCKK’s statement and that it might be evidence of NCKK’s political preference toward North Korean regime.<sup>62</sup>

Facing with harsh criticisms from conservative denominations and religious groups, NCKK published a document which explained that the criticisms had been raised by conservative Christians. In the document, the NCKK first welcomed both the appraisals and the criticisms for their statement in the sense that the reactions of

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<sup>60</sup> The Association of Korean Feminist Theologians, “The Declaration of Korean Feminist Theologians on the National Unification and Peace”, Moon et al., *The Unification and a Theology for National Church of Korea*, pp. 321-322.

<sup>61</sup> Detailed lists of the Christian groups that opposed the statement can be found in the book by Seong-Hwan Jeong. Jeong, *A History of Unification Movements in Korean Churches*, pp. 277-278.

<sup>62</sup> “Sketch: Conservative Protestant Denomination Publicised Opponent Statements against NCKK's Statement on Peace and Unification”, *Dong-Ah Ilbo* Mar. 26, 1988.

the South Korean churches to the statement revealed that South Korean churches were concerned the unification and peace of the Korean peninsula. Then they explained the process of publication of their statement and maintained that they had tried to embrace diverse opinions of member denominations as well as non-member denominations. However, the NCKK complained that the criticisms of the statement did not fully evaluate the main parts of the statement such as confession of sins of the Korean churches; rather the critics had only emphasised subsidiary agendas such as the withdrawal of US troops and their nuclear weapons. They reiterated that the withdrawal of US troops would not happen immediately but could be realised only when a peace between North and South Korea as well as US, China, USSR and Japan concretely realised. Moreover, they argued that the NCKK did not mean to advocate the unification policies of the North Korean regime by the statement but tried to present ancillary policies which could be implemented by the Korean churches for the unification of Korea. In addition, they insisted that they acknowledged the efforts of the South Korean government which triggered diverse interactions with communist countries of Eastern Europe.<sup>63</sup>

#### **2. 4. *Minjung* Theology and the 88 Declaration**

The preparatory committee members who drafted the declaration were theologians of liberal inclination and keen proponents of *Minjung* theology. They strongly suggested two principles should govern the unification discourse in order to ensure a preferential attitude to Korean *minjung*. First, the unification discourse should concern humanitarian issues such as the families separated between the North and the South. As the division of the Korean peninsula created ideological, economic, and cultural conflicts and turmoil among Korean people, the goal of unification should be a resolution of people's suffering. Second, the Korean *minjung*,

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<sup>63</sup> NCKK, "On the Critics Regarding the Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Reunification and Peace", Moon et al., *The Unification and a Theology for National Church of Korea*, pp. 323-325.

who were excluded from the national policy making process even though they were the majority of Korean society, should lead the unification discourse.

The declaration reflected *Minjung* theologians' understanding of sin, salvation, liberation and the kingdom of God. In the declaration, the participant churches argued that the division of the Korean peninsula and concomitant aftermaths including the Korean war were caused by the structural sin of the Korean society. Ahn Byung-Moo, a *Minjung* theologian, insisted that the *minjung* of Korea were oppressed and exploited due to the structural sin of Korea, in which the ruling people privatised public resources<sup>64</sup> and Noh Jong-Sun, a former professor of Christian Ethics of Yonsei University, argued that this sinful structure was supported by the imperial powers of the western world such as USSR and the United States.<sup>65</sup> The division of the Korean peninsula, as the participants of the declaration argued, was a result of the Cold War structure and brought harsh suffering to Koreans in the North as well as in the South.

In addition to the division of Korea by foreign countries, the capitalistic economic system of Korea suppressed and exploited South Koreans. Hence, in *Minjung* theology structural sin was linked more to economic injustice. Moreover, they argued that the unjust social structure of Korea was caused by the greed of ruling people who pursued 'privatisation of the public.' The Declaration quoted passages of Jeremiah 6:13 through 14 in the Old Testament which reads, "From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit. They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace".<sup>66</sup> Even though South Korea was famous for rapid economic development from the ashes of the Korean War of 1950-3, the

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<sup>64</sup> Ahn quoted the story of the rich man in the Gospel of Luke 12:16ff, who worried about the abundance of food he stored, saying, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." (Luke 12:19, NIV) Ahn argued that the story reflects how the rich exploited the farmers and their employees and how rich people privatise public materials that should be provided to the masses. Byung-Moo Ahn, "Jesus' Movement and an Understanding of Material", in *The Development of Korean Minjung Theology*, ed. The Institute for Korean Theology (Seoul: Ahn, Byung-Moo, 1990), pp. 354-356.

<sup>65</sup> Jong-Sun Noh, *Story God of the Oppressed: Joshua Syndrome and Preventive Economy* (Seoul: Hanul Publishing Co., 2003), pp. 40-43; "Minjung Theology and the Unification Movement".

<sup>66</sup> New International Version. Moon et al., *The Unification and a Theology for National Church of Korea*, p. 311.

life of the Korean *minjung* was still desperate under military governments. As depicted in the first chapter, military governments suppressed the voice of laborers, farmers and even the intellectuals who tried to secure basic human rights of Korean people by deploying propaganda in the name of national security against the North Korean communist regime. The division of the Korea was a tragedy of the poor people of South Korea, but the rich people, especially those associated with the *chaebol*,<sup>67</sup> benefitted from the division. In the NCKK statement presented to the conference “Justice, Peace and the Integration of Creation” held in Seoul in 1990, NCKK member churches declared that economic justice was not a charity work of the government or rich people but required a true confession of sins of the rich people and rich countries and their transformation.<sup>68</sup> The statement in 1990 was a continuance of *Minjung* theologians’ critical assessment of capitalism. *Minjung* theologians such as Song<sup>69</sup> and Ahn insisted that a structural sin was whatever oppressed and exploited *minjung*, and the participants of the declaration agreed that an obvious structural sin in modern Korea was the monopolisation of wealth and public power by the ruling class.

Liberation was also a main theme of the NCKK’s declaration in 1988 as well as of the *Minjung* theology. *Minjung* theologians tried to apply biblical stories to the Korean context. They interpreted the stories of the Old Testament like the Exodus and the Israelites’ return to Jerusalem as the story of the liberation of the *minjung*. Ahn Byung-moo paralleled a *minjung* ideology and a monarchic ideology in the Old Testament. Monarchic ideology was represented by the Egyptian rulers who oppressed and exploited the Israelites as slaves and kings of Israel such as King David and Solomon who established kingship in Israel and ruled the land. In contrast, the *minjung* of Israel escaped from Egypt and organised their own community after 40 years’ life in the wilderness and continuously developed their own faith movement that generated apocalyptic literature dreaming of the kingdom

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<sup>67</sup> *Chaebol* are powerful business conglomerates, such as Samsung, LG and Hyundai, which emerged under the protection of military governments.

<sup>68</sup> Committee of Unification of Korea, *Source Book of the Unification Movement of Korea* (Seoul: National Council of Churches, Korea, 2000), pp. 170-172.

<sup>69</sup> Gi-Deok Song, “Essence of the *Minjung* Theology”, in *The Development of Korean Minjung Theology*, ed. The Institute for Korean Theology (Seoul: Hanul, 1990), pp. 73-75.

of God who shall fulfil justice and peace in the world.<sup>70</sup> Later, the *minjung* movement which underwent the occupation of Israel by the Roman Empire was the cornerstone of Jesus' *minjung* movement. Jesus and the *minjung* advanced to Jerusalem, where Jesus proclaimed that the temple, the centre for the monarchic ideology which had been exploiting Israelites from the reign of King Saul, would be destroyed without a stone being left on a stone. Even though Jesus' *minjung* movement ended with his death on the cross, the *minjung* who followed Jesus spread all around the Roman empire and finally broke down the monarchy.<sup>71</sup> The *minjung* movement from Exodus to the time of Early Christianity was a basic motif of *Minjung* theologians who sought for the liberation of Korean *minjung* who suffered under imperialistic capitalism instituted by military governments of South Korea and their political supporter, the United States. Therefore, in the Korean situation, the liberation of *minjung* meant a liberation from imperialistic capitalism which had benefited mostly the rich and ruling people. As stated in the previous chapter, during the rapid economic development of South Korea, laborers and farmers' organisations pushed South Korean governments to improve their working conditions and initiated various human rights movements. However, the governments suppressed the human rights movements using the excuse of national security against North Korea and accused social activists of being collaborators with North Korean communists. Hence, *Minjung* theologians insisted that the unification of Korea should be a pathway toward the liberation of Korean *minjung*.

However, the liberation of Korean *minjung* did not only mean economic egalitarianism. Economic injustice was just one aspect of the *minjung*'s turmoil in Korea. Rather, *minjung* also included the culturally estranged such as the handicapped and those who were sexually discriminated against in the cultural context of South Korea.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, unification and liberation were related to the broad issues faced by the Korean *minjung* and not simply to the political unification of two Koreas. The unification of Korea was a groundbreaking process toward the

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<sup>70</sup> Ahn, "The Minjung Movement and the Minjung Theology", pp. 28-31.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., pp. 32-35.

<sup>72</sup> Nam-Dong Seo, *A Study of Minjung Theology* (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1983), p. 228.

realisation of the full humanity of the Korean *minjung*. Hence, the declaration stated that the unification should not only be a way to improve the national interest but also a way to “realise full humanity such as human freedom and dignity”<sup>73</sup> regardless of social and physical status.

The liberation of the *minjung* from poverty caused by Western imperialistic capitalism and the social discrimination under patriarchal culture of Korea was viewed as the prerequisite for the fulfillment of true humanity. Since the fulfillment of true humanity for the *minjung* would guarantee “self-determination and an ability to fully contribute in political, economic, and religio-cultural liberation,” the liberation of the *minjung* would bring about the realisation of the kingdom of God<sup>74</sup> and the mission of God. *Minjung* theologians interpreted the history of the early Korean churches as a *minjung*'s peace movement and for realisation of the kingdom of God.<sup>75</sup> The understanding of *Minjung* theologians of the history of early Korean churches as a mission of God was clearly reflected in the Declaration:

The peace movement of the Korean churches during the Japanese imperialist rule over our land was necessarily a movement for national independence which shared the pain of our enslaved people—a national liberation movement which proclaimed the kingdom of God and strived to realise this faith within history. The Christians of Korea stood in the forefront of the March First Independence Movement of 1919, resisted the policy of national annihilation by the Japanese imperialists, and shed martyrs' blood for their defiance of the enforcement of *Shinto* worship, a deification of Japanese nationalism.<sup>76</sup>

The participants and other *Minjung* theologians argued that the kingdom of God did not only mean an ethereal place but a kingdom realised on the earth as a goal of history. *Minjung* are becoming subjects of history rather than remaining as spectators and will finally obtain their ownership of the kingdom of God.<sup>77</sup> Seo Nam-Dong

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<sup>73</sup> 88 Declaration of NCKK in Korea, *Source Book of the Unification Movement of Korea*, p. 105.

<sup>74</sup> Park, “Towards an Ethics of Korean Reunification”, p. 80.

<sup>75</sup> *Minjung* theologians argued that the Korean church history was a movement of the Korean *minjung* who translated the Bible into Korean, organised revival movements such as the Pyeongyang Revival in 1907 and led various independent movements like the March First Movement in 1919. Kwang-Seon Seo, “The *Minjung* Theology of Korea”, in *The Development of Korean Minjung Theology*, ed. The Institute for Korean Theology (Seoul: Ahn, Byung-Moo, 1990), p. 47.

<sup>76</sup> The 88 Declaration of NCKK in Korea, *Source Book of the Unification Movement of Korea*, p. 103.

<sup>77</sup> Yong-Bok Kim, “The Bible and *Minjung*'s Social History”, in *The Development of Korean Minjung Theology*, ed. The Institute for Korean Theology (Seoul: Hanul, 1990), p. 178.

interpreted an idea of Christian utopia as a messianic kingdom<sup>78</sup> different from the conventional idea of ethereal heaven which was popular among South Korean Christians. Seo insisted that a messianic kingdom meant a new world through social transformation in which the *minjung* would enjoy self-determination and recover their human dignity.<sup>79</sup> Hence, the kingdom for *minjung* did not mean an imaginary, abstract and static place but a tangible and materialistic kingdom which would be realised by the *minjung*'s movement for liberation. *Minjung* theologians aimed not only to explain the kingdom of God but also to transform society so that "starving people can have enough foods, thirsty people can drink, sick people can be healed, imprisoned people freed."<sup>80</sup> As the division of Korea caused the *minjung*'s suffering, the unification of Korea, they argued, should be a cornerstone for the *minjung*'s liberation as well as the realisation of kingdom of God in this world.

The two major principles of the unification discourse proposed by the NCKK in the Declaration clearly reflected the theological understanding of *Minjung* theologians on the liberation of *minjung* and the realisation of the kingdom of God in this world through the unification of Korea. However, it was questionable how the vague concept of *minjung* could integrate Korean people in support for the movement of unification. Moreover, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Korean people have achieved a rapid growth of economy and improved human rights. It is still disputable how *minjung* can be defined and how many Korean people can be categorised as *minjung* in accordance. Moreover, according to a recent survey, around 31.5% South Korean people answered that they do not agree that North and South Korea should be unified; and even the population who supported unification of the Koreas insisted that the current South Korean economic and political system should be the basis for a unified Korea. The result signified that young South Korean people suspect the necessity of unification and showed that anti-communism after the division of Korea and strengthened by military governments is still flourishing

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<sup>78</sup> Seo argued that the mission in the New Testament began with Jesus' proclamation at the town of Galilee: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 4:17, NIV) According to Seo, the first stage of Jesus' mission for *minjung* was to instil hope for the messianic kingdom in the world. Seo, *A Study of Minjung Theology*, pp. 257-259.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 192-195.

<sup>80</sup> Song, "Essence of the *Minjung* Theology", p.82.

among the older elements of the South Korean population.<sup>81</sup> They could be the new *minjung* of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, then how *Minjung* theology would encourage South Koreans to partake in unification movements overcoming their hatred against North Koreans? Moreover, in 20<sup>th</sup> century, *Minjung* theologians have argued that unification is a prerequisite for South Korean democracy and economic justice but in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it has been agreed that South Koreans could improve economic justice and democracy without unification with North Korea even though South Koreans still struggling for democracy and justice. Meanwhile, the nuclear threat from North Korea has intensified the hatred of older generation South Koreans against North Korea and provoked anti-communism even among the young Korean population. As a result, in South Korea, even many activists who partake in peace movements are criticised as *Jongbuk*<sup>82</sup> by politicians and organisations which have inclinations to conservative government. Therefore, rather than focusing on a political unification as a prerequisite of social wellbeing of the *minjung*, an alternative approach toward unification is needed which puts unification as a goal of peace of Korea and proposes preparatory stages of healing memories and reconciliation of Koreans, especially those of an older generation.

## Conclusion

The Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Unification and Peace was the first official declaration on the unification of Korea published by an NGO after the Korean War.<sup>83</sup> For fifty years after the division of Korea, it had been prohibited for NGOs to publish official statements on the unification and peace of Korea. Even more, the statement touched sensitive issues such as the withdrawal of

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<sup>81</sup> Jong-Cheol Park et al., *A Survey of People's Opinions on South-North Integration: Perception, Factor, Category, and Types*, ed. Research Council on Unification Policy, Research Papers of KINU (Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2015), p. 60.

<sup>82</sup> *Jongbuk* is a Korean word that means communist collaborators. The author interviewed Yoon Hwan-Chul, the director of the Mirae Foundation for Sharing that supports young North Korean defectors, and he explained how *jongbuk* criticism challenges the work of the foundation and other South Korean NGOs for peace in the Korean peninsula. Hwan-Chul Yoon, interview by Hoon Song, 2 September, 2016.

<sup>83</sup> Lee, "The Unification Movement of the National Council of Churches in Korea and the Unification Activities of Several Groups' 88 Declaration", p. 277.

US troops and the proposal of a peace treaty between surrounding countries of the Korean peninsula. The issues of US troops and a peace treaty were also included in the following governmental policies. Moreover, the suggestions to the governments included in the declaration were later adopted by the 7.7 Declaration on National Independence, Unification, and Prosperity in July, 1988, issued by South Korean government, the Joint Agreement for the Reconciliation, Peace, Interaction and Cooperation between South and North Korea signed on 13<sup>th</sup> of December, 1991, and the South-North Joint Declaration of on the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula on 31<sup>st</sup> of December.<sup>84</sup>

The declaration of the NCKK in 1988 was a result of the ecumenical movement promoted by the WCC and other church organisations such as NCCCUSA regarding peace and unification of Korea. After the publication of the statement, the NCKK held “The International Consultation on Peace on the Korean Peninsula” sponsored by CCIA and CCA (Christian Conference of Asia) on 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> of April, 1988. This affirmed the 88 Declaration of NCKK and proposed seven policies which global churches were encouraged to adopt.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, at the central committee meeting at Moscow, the WCC issued a statement entitled, “Peace and the Unification of Korea: Policy Statement,” in which the WCC acknowledged the KCF as the representative Protestant organisation of North Korea and noted KCF’s contribution to the ecumenical movements for peace and unification of Korea. Moreover, the WCC reaffirmed the 88 Declaration of NCKK and indicated that they would monitor and support the ecumenical efforts of NCKK for the peace and unification of Korea

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<sup>84</sup> Lee, “Marking the Tenth Anniversary of the Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Unification and Peace”, p. 21.

<sup>85</sup> “First, the member churches study the statement of the NCKK and partake in action according to the statement. Second, the member churches invite non-member churches to discuss the issues of Korea and collect all criticisms and suggestions into the discourses of unification and peace of the Korean peninsula to form a common ground for Christians to work for peace in Korea. Third, the member churches cooperate with other religious bodies to broaden public interest in a peaceful unification... Fourth, the member churches work with NGOs of the *minjung* movement to achieve democratisation and justice in South Korea as a pathway toward the unification of Korea. Fifth, the member churches use all media sources to communicate with all Koreans to invite them to undertake unification dialogue. Sixth, the member churches teach Christian love for their neighbours to replace Koreans’ militant hatred of each other. Seventh, the member churches work for the release of political prisoners as well as prisoners of conscience.” International Consultation on Peace of the Korean Peninsula, “Statement”, Moon et al., *The Unification and a Theology for National Church of Korea*, p. 329.

through CCIA.<sup>86</sup> A number of consultations held or sponsored by the WCC continued and the participants stated that they supported the statement of the NCKK.

The NCKK statement seemed to throw a stone into the peaceful pond of conservative South Korean Protestant churches who simply believed that the unification discourse of Korea should be managed only by the government and that churches should confine themselves to the evangelisation of North Korean people. Therefore, they believed that the only thing South Korean churches could do was to pray that the North Korean regime would collapse and that South Korean churches would advance to the North. However, they were urged to work for the unification more progressively. *Kidokgongbo*, a newspaper published by the Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Tonghap*), strongly criticised NCKK's statement in 1988, saying:

40 years have passed since the division of Korea even before Koreans could taste sweetness of freedom from Japanese occupation. The unification of Korea is our dream and a missiological task of the South Korean churches...The South Korean churches are responsible for the evangelisation of South Korea as well as North Korea...Therefore, unification discourses should not be solely dedicated to the Department of Unification of South Korean government but be a cooperative task of all Koreans. The South Korean churches should involve in the dialogue for the unification with a missiological purpose...Missiological approach toward the unification of Korea requires the South Korean churches be more sensitive toward social issue. It means that the South Korean churches should humbly confess their sins and be renewed for mission works for North Korea.<sup>87</sup>

Even though the conservative churches did not agree with the statement of the NCKK, they felt that South Korean churches needed to approach the unification of Korea from different perspectives such as mission work including humanitarian involvement for North Koreans supported by governments of both Koreas. Hence the major figures of conservative churches insisted that the government should open the

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<sup>86</sup> WCC, "Peace and Reunification of Korea: Policy Statement", Moscow, 16<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, Keum, "Remnants and Renewal: A History of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, with Special Reference to Issues of Church and State, 1945-1994", p. 320.

<sup>87</sup> *Kidokgongbo*, "Editorial Notes", 23<sup>rd</sup> of April, 1988. Jung, *A History of Unification Movements in Korean Churches*, p. 282. Even though the *Kidokgongbo* was a denominational newspaper of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, *Tonghap*, it represented more conservative voices among the denomination and expressed a strong antagonism for the NCKK's statement.

debate to the public and invite NGOs and religious organisations to the table of unification dialogues.<sup>88</sup>

As examined above, the NCKK's Declaration of the Churches of Korea on Peace and Unification influenced the governmental policies regarding the relationships with the North Korean regime and widened ecumenical involvement for the peace and unification of Korea. Moreover, it brought a limited change of mind among conservative churches toward the unification issues. However, even though NCKK succeeded in provoking people's interest in the peace and unification of Korea, they had difficulty in securing the adoption of the ecumenical approach to the unification of Korea, for various reasons. First, the statement could not achieve the broad support of South Korean Christians. Even the Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Tonghap*)<sup>89</sup>, a founding member of NCKK, failed to reach an agreement on the statement and NCKK's ecumenical efforts for the unification. Second, as Lee Man-Yeol argued, the declaration did not invoke meaningful discussions on how Christianity could make a productive and supplemental ideology for a unified Korea in dialogue with *Juche* ideology of North Korea, the capitalist and anti-communist ideology of South Korea.<sup>90</sup> Third, the declaration also lacked a methodology by which to achieve the unification of Korea while other NGOs or religious bodies proposed their own methodologies for the unification such as a unification through absorption (the conservative solution) or via confederate governmental system of two Koreas (the liberal solution).

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<sup>88</sup> Lee, "The Unification Movement of the National Council of Churches in Korea and the Unification Activities of Several Groups' 88 Declaration", p. 278.

<sup>89</sup> The Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Tonghap*) was representing the ecumenical movement of Korea with the *Kijang* Presbyterian Church. However, due to the controversy over the NCKK's statement, the denomination was divided into two major streams: those who argued that denomination should drive for a unification dialogue with North Korean Christians and those who argued that the denomination should withdraw from the NCKK. The Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Tonghap*) decided to remain in the NCKK and established a committee for the unification issues that could widely discuss the ecumenical movement for the unification, as well as issues of North Korean missions and, at the same time, they participated in the foundation of the Christian Council of Korea (CCK, *Hangichong*) in 1989 with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (*Hapdong*) and other conservative denominations.

<sup>90</sup> Lee, "Marking the Tenth Anniversary of the Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Unification and Peace", p. 19.

The reactions against the ecumenical efforts of the WCC and the NCCCK revealed once again the strong anti-communism among the majority of South Korean conservative Christians and raised the pertinent question of how a direct unification dialogue would be possible without a deeper engagement with anti-communism among South Korean churches. Moreover, in response to the nuclear issues that surfaced in the early 1990s, the hostility among South Koreans against the North Korean regime deepened and many criticisms were raised against the unification movement as advocated by more liberal churches. Furthermore, the South Korean churches entered a transitional period in the early 1990s when North Korea faced a leadership change due to the death of Kim Il-Sung and a terrible food shortage. As a result, the unification discourse of South Korean churches increasingly focused on humanitarian projects for North Korean people. The conservative South Korean churches, particularly mega-churches such as Younngnak Presbyterian Church (*Tonghap*), Somang Church (*Tonghap*), Yoido Full Gospel Church (*Pentecostal*) and Namseoul Church (*Hapdong*), launched various humanitarian projects for North Korean people and passionately formulated their own theological approaches to the unification intertwined with humanitarian issues, evangelism and anti-communism.

Along with the harsh reactions of conservative churches against the liberal churches on their unification movements, the liberal churches' unification movements became weakened under the presidency of Kim Dae-Jung (Feb. 1998-Feb. 2003) and Roh Moo-Hyun (Feb. 2003- Feb. 2008). This was because South Korean governments made progress in their own unification dialogue with the North Korean regime, through such means as the First Presidential Summit and June 15 Joint Declaration in 2000, and the Second Presidential Summit in 2007 and the establishment of the Gyeseong Industrial Complex where South Korean companies built factories in a North Korean city and hired North Korean workers. With the progress of the relationship between the two Koreas at governmental level, the liberal churches somewhat withdrew from political engagement for the unification of Korea and started to join in humanitarian movements for North Korean people. However, under the presidencies of Lee Myeong-Bak and Park Geun-hye from 2008, the South Korean governments declared that there would be no more interactions with the North Korean government for as long as they tried to develop nuclear weapons.

Moreover, due to regional military confrontations between two Koreas such as the artillery attack of North Korea on Yeonpyeong Island and sinking of a warship named Cheon-an, the Lee Myeong-Bak government blocked all humanitarian supports and civil communications to North Korea from 24<sup>th</sup> of May in 2010. Recurring confrontations between the two Koreas refuelled anti-communism among South Korean people and weakened unification dialogue among liberal churches in South Korea, as Kim Heung-Soo, a church historian, has argued:

The theologians who once studied *Juche* ideology and presented unification theologies are silent and it is hard to find new researchers of studies of the unification of Korea. It is even hard to find pastors among NCK member churches who engage in unification movements. In a word, the unification movements of South Korean Protestant churches are in a state of dormancy.<sup>91</sup>

In view of this situation, the leaders of liberal churches concluded that without establishing peace in the Korean peninsula, any unification dialogue would not be possible. For instance, Yoo Kyung-Dong argued that the unification movements in South Korea had generated decisive conflicts among South Korean people on the issues of US military bases in Pyeongtaek and Jeju, and US' Missile Defence system in South Korea. He pointed out that those issues were brought to the fore by Lee and Park's governments which were collaborating with the United States which in building up a new Cold War system in the Korean peninsula. Because of the resurgence of the Cold War system in the Korean peninsula and the reality that the unification movements in South Korea are hugely influenced by the governmental power, liberals concluded that South Korean churches should bring a new phase of a peace movement to encourage South Koreans to elect a government which would develop policies for peace and unification of Korea.<sup>92</sup>

The unification movements for the Korean peninsula thus became transformed into peace movements which adopted wider goals such as opposition to war and nuclear weapons rather than unification itself, while they had formerly

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<sup>91</sup> Heung-Soo Kim, "For a New Beginning of Unification Movements", *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 644 (2012), p. 17.

<sup>92</sup> Kyoung-Dong Yoo, "The Peaceful Unification of North and South Korea and a Task of Christian Ethics: Is There an Alternative Way?", *Theology and the World* 78 (2013), pp. 262-263.

highlighted unification as a continuance of the peace movement of South Korean churches started from the era of Japanese occupation. The changing emphasis of the ecumenical movement for the unification of Korea by liberal churches represented by NCKK and WCC was clearly reflected in the statement of the 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of WCC in Busan in 2013. WCC emphasised that a sustainable peace must include a peace treaty which would replace the Armistice Agreement in 1953 and would end the state of war between two Koreas, and a nuclear-free agreement in the Korean peninsula between the two Koreas, China, the United States, Japan and Russia.<sup>93</sup> In the changing political and social landscape of South Korea in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the liberal churches' unification movement partly merged into the movements concerning humanitarian issues faced by North Koreans initiated by conservative Protestant churches of South Korea.

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<sup>93</sup> *Encountering the God of Life: Official Report of the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches*, ed. Erlinda N. Senturias and Theodore A. Gill Jr,(Geneva: WCC Publications, 2014), pp. 281-282.

## Chapter 3

### **Humanitarian Works and the Missions for the North Korean People Led by the Conservative Churches of South Korea**

While the liberal churches generally saw the unification movement as a means of forwarding the *missio Dei*, the conservative churches tended to emphasise personal transformation and salvation,<sup>1</sup> which led to evangelisation efforts directed at North Koreans and North Korean defectors in South Korea. From the early 1990s, when the economy and the military power of South Korea began to surpass that of North Korea and North Koreans suffered natural disasters and shortages of food, the conservative churches concentrated their energy and resources on humanitarian work for North Koreans as seeds for the evangelisation of North Korea. This chapter presents a historical trajectory of the development of the conservative churches' approach to the unification of Korea, including an analysis of how their approach was formulated after the Korean War and under authoritarian governments. This chapter also sets out to analyse how the evangelical South Korean churches presented the Christian mission to North Korea as a method to bring about unification, while at the same time expanding their humanitarian projects in cooperation with South Korean liberal churches.

#### **3.1. Anti-Communism and the South Korean Conservative Churches**

The unification movement of the conservative South Korean churches has been deeply rooted in a dualistic anti-communism and the tendency to emphasise earthly blessings, which has characterised the spirituality of the majority of South Korean Christians since the Korean War. After the Korean War, the faith of many South Korean Protestant Christians was distanced from an emphasis on social

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<sup>1</sup> Sang-Gyoo Lee, "Church and Nation: The National Unification of Korea from an Evangelical Perspective in the Korean Church", *The Bible and Theology* 37 (2005), p. 146.

transformation and justice and focused more on national security and earthly blessings. Kim Heung-Soo argued that, “the Korean War brought a psychological disorder to South Koreans, such as a horrific trauma against the North Korean communists, so that the rapid social changes after the war made South Koreans feel insecure”.<sup>2</sup> Many conservative Christians yearned for earthly blessings that would secure their life in a land that had been devastated by civil war and they believed that their faithfulness and sincerity in church activities, such as observance of the Lord’s Day and tithing, would be pathways through which God’s earthly blessing would be bestowed. Church planting and proselytisation were also regarded as blessed works that would expand the kingdom of God.<sup>3</sup> This characteristic of faith was most strongly exhibited among Christians who had been evacuated from North Korea.

The most prominent figures in the conservative South Korean churches were immigrants who escaped from Northern Korea between the time of the advance of Soviet armies into the North in August of 1945 and the end of the Korean War in the summer of 1953. Among these people were those who had their property confiscated by the North Korean communist government, and those who sought political and religious freedom to avoid persecution by the communists. The Christians who escaped from the North gathered and founded new churches in South Korea and invited other North Korean refugees to their churches. In the era of the division of the Korean peninsula in 1948 and the end of Korean War in 1953, the population of Protestants who migrated from North Korea reached 25% of the Protestant population in South Korea. In the case of Presbyterian churches, the North Korean immigrant pastors and elders organised the North Korean Christian Fellowship (*Ibuk Shindo Daepyohoi*) and supported North Korean immigrant Christian communities with the strong support of the Presbyterian Mission Board of the United States and the Christian World Service (CWS).<sup>4</sup> The North Korean immigrant Presbyterians

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<sup>2</sup> Heung-Soo Kim, *A Study of the Korean War and This-Worldly Blessings in the Christian Churches* (Seoul: The Institute for Korean Church History, 1999), p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Kwang-Hee Lee, “Evaluation of Modern Pneumatology: Church Growth and the Work of the Holy Spirit from a Perspective of the Theology of Blessing”, *The Bible and Theology* 20 (1996), pp. 468-469.

<sup>4</sup> Jeong-Ran Yoon, “The Fractions and Competitions of South Korean Denominations and the Aid of International Relief Organisations”, *Bulletin of the Institute for Korean Church History* 99 (2012).

organised a synod for North Korean immigrant Presbyterian churches, which soon became the biggest synod in South Korea. They also established a number of social welfare and education facilities. From thereon in, the North Korean immigrant church leaders became the leaders of Christian denominations in South Korea.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the majority of South Korean churches were centres of anti-communism and the preachers proclaimed that South Korea should defeat the North, excommunicate, and finally eliminate the communists from the Korean peninsula. During the Korean War, the conservative Christians were involved in military combat with North Koreans, and church leaders such as Han Kyung-Chik<sup>6</sup> encouraged young Christian men to join the South Korean armies to fight the “evil communists”. When the North Korean armies advanced on and captured Seoul in 1950 during the Korean War, the South Korean church leaders evacuated to Daejeon and organised the Christian Alliance to Save the Nation. They continued to work alongside the South Korean armies retreating to Daegu and Busan. They concentrated their efforts on relief work for war refugees, broadcasting and comforting the soldiers, but they also encouraged young Christians onto the battlefield.<sup>7</sup>

South Korean church leaders saw the Korean War as a crusade against the expansion of communist forces into the Korean peninsula and hence they believed that the South Korean and UN armies were fighting for God’s cause. Therefore, they officially opposed the negotiations between the UN, China and North Korea to suspend the war and insisted that “the unification of Korea [could] never be accomplished by negotiation with communists but by defeating them”.<sup>8</sup> They sent letters to the headquarters of the UN armies and the US government urging them to stop the negotiations and advance towards the North to defeat the North Korean communists and unify the Korean peninsula. The pastors of the conservative

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<sup>5</sup> In-Cheol Kang, “(Speical Report) South Korean Society and North Korean Refugees - South Korean Churches and Anti-Communism under a Conservative Anti-Communist Government”, *Critical Review of History* 23 (1993), pp. 75-76.

<sup>6</sup> Han Kyung-Chik (1902-2000), a famous conservative Christian leader, was a North Korean pastor who escaped the North in 1945 and founded Youngnak Presbyterian Church in 1946.

<sup>7</sup> Kim, *A Study of the Korean War and This-Worldly Blessings in the Christian Churches*, p. 57.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

churches also strongly embraced hostility towards North Koreans and all the communist nations in the world.

Even in the early 1970s when the North and South Korean governments started to discuss the unification of Korea, anti-communism was still rife in the South Korean conservative churches. For instance, pastors of the conservative South Korean churches joined in the Christian Crusade for Saving Korea, a Christian organisation established by a multi-religious leader, Choi Tae-Min, and supported by Park's government. The pastors joined in military training camps and designated themselves as a crusade army fighting against North Korean communists and the people who would 'threaten' South Korean society.<sup>9</sup> For the South Korean churches facing the threat of North Korea, anti-communism was intertwined with opposition to the power of Satan, expectations of eschatological salvation and the belief that God had chosen South Koreans as his instruments to defeat communism. The leaders of new revival movements in Korea insisted that when the communists disappeared from the Korean peninsula, Jesus would come to the land to bring salvation to South Korean Christians. This eschatological belief spread widely among conservative Christians. Even after the leaders of the movement were criticised as pagans by South Korean Protestant churches, this belief continued to have a strong influence among conservative South Korean Christians.<sup>10</sup>

The conservative churches were very concerned about the state security against the North Korean communist regime. Most of the church leaders who escaped from North Korea had experienced the Japanese occupation and its oppression. Hence, they believed that the existence of a nation-state in the South was vital and that Christians were responsible for serving the state, as Romans 13:1 states, "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God".<sup>11</sup> Therefore, conservative Christians tended to have a close

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<sup>9</sup> "Park Geun-Hye, the Daughter of the President, Visited the Dismissing Service of Patriotic Pastors' Military Camp", *Kyunghyang Newspaper* 26 May, 1975.

<sup>10</sup> In-Cheol Kang, "[Special Issues: Protestantism in Korea] the Production and Reproduction of Anti-Communism in the Korean Protestant Churches", *Critical Review of History* 70, (2005), p. 49.

<sup>11</sup> New International Version.

relationship with the authoritarian governments after the division of the peninsula and they also enjoyed governmental support through such means as the inception of the army chaplaincy under Rhee Syng-Man's government. The churches welcomed the inception of the chaplaincy, hoping that Christianity would strengthen the soldiers' zeal for fighting against North Korean communists and that the chaplains would present the Christian message to the younger male population of South Korea who had to complete their national service in the army. They thought that the army camps and schools were "blue oceans" for evangelisation. The representative pastors of the conservative South Korean churches were invited to morning prayer meetings organised by the authoritarian governments, who used these religious meetings to justify their governments that had taken power through military coups.<sup>12</sup> They were primarily interested in the evangelisation of the nation and the growth of South Korean churches. Therefore, while the liberal churches engaged in social justice and human rights movements under authoritarian governments, most South Korean Protestant churches emphasised national evangelisation and programmes of church planting. The South Korean churches, which had a tendency toward church planting and refraining from engaging in political issues, were thus inclined to talk about taking over North Korea and opening a door for evangelisation.

The approaches of the conservative churches toward the unification of Korea were closely aligned with the governmental positions. They believed that the unification was a political issue between the two Koreas and that churches were not responsible for promoting unification dialogues. The only thing churches could do, they believed, was to pray for the leaders of South Korean governments to develop wise unification policies, and for the North Korean people to embrace the gospel message and become Christians. In addition, they prayed that a just God would punish the North Korean communist leaders and their governments would collapse soon. Their hope for an imminent end to the North Korean communist regime resulted in the retarding of the unification movement and a campaign for the re-

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<sup>12</sup> Lee Man-Yeol has criticised conservative pastors for 'complimenting' and 'blessing' the military leaders who took over the government despite the fact that they claimed to be opposed to the political involvement of churches. Man-Yeol Lee, "70 Years' Division of the Korean Peninsula: Historical Assessment of the Christianity of Korea", *Christianity and History in Korea* 44 (2016), p. 15.

establishment of Christian churches and communities in North Korea, which were supposed to have been destroyed under the communist regime. Thus, the conservative churches emphasised anti-communism more than the unification of Korea, and they believed that, “North Korea is an evil country where Christians are persecuted and killed by the anti-Christian communists and the North Koreans should be saved from persecution by communists.”<sup>13</sup>

However, in the early 1970s the political and diplomatic conditions in the Korean peninsula began to change rapidly. From 1970, the United States and China started to develop their relationship, and in July 1971, Henry A. Kissinger, the Secretary of State in the United States administration at that time, visited China to prepare for a presidential meeting between the US and China. As well as breaking down the wall between China and the US, this meeting led to the North Korean Government declaring that they were willing to talk with the South Korean Government.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, the South Korean Government could not avoid some changes in its policies towards North Korea. First, President Park Chung-hee publicised a “Plan for Peaceful Unification” at the memorial ceremony on the National Independence Day (15 August) in 1970 and announced that the government would start a new stage of dialogue with the North Korean Government.<sup>15</sup> Second, in 1971 the South Korean Government proposed a dialogue with the North Korean Government on the issue of separated families through the Red Cross of South Korea. The changing mood toward global diplomacy and the changed attitude of the South Korean Government toward the North resulted in the 7.4 Joint Communiqué of 1972.

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<sup>13</sup> Lee, “Church and Nation: The National Unification of Korea from an Evangelical Perspective in the Korean Church”, p. 125.

<sup>14</sup> Ha-Na Lee, “Changes in the Logic of the Yusin Period’s Anti-Communism, and Cold War Sensitivities”, *Critical Studies on Modern Korean History* 32 (2014), p. 517.

<sup>15</sup> “Announcement of a Plan for Peaceful Unification by President Park Chung-hee”, *Kyung Hyang Newspaper* 15 August, 1970.

### 3.2. *Seung-gong*<sup>16</sup> Discourse and the Churches' Message of Earthly Blessings

The 7.4 Joint Communiqué challenged the dominant anti-communism among South Koreans and their attitude toward unification. Under the Rhee and Park governments, conservative South Korean Christians had believed that the North would soon collapse and South Koreans could take over the North. Therefore, unification discourse between the two Koreas, they thought, was unnecessary. Moreover, unification dialogue with the North Korean communists would not be possible because the latter still had a plan to make the Korean peninsula into a single communist country and because the communism of North Korea could not coexist with Christianity in the Korean peninsula. Hence, conservative South Korean Christians had previously argued that they were responsible for “missionary work in the North and that they should rescue North Korean Christians and even rebuild churches in the North.”<sup>17</sup>

However, with the development of North-South Korean dialogue and the 7.4 Joint Communiqué, the South Koreans now began to acknowledge North Korea as a rival state and thought that unification would only be possible when South Korea overtook North Korea economically, politically and militarily.<sup>18</sup> The conservative South Korean Christian leaders now preached this kind of message from the pulpit.<sup>19</sup> Even liberal South Korean Christians, pushed by conservatives to prove their anti-

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<sup>16</sup> *Seung-gong* literally means ‘a victory over communism.’

<sup>17</sup> Eunsik Cho, “Dimensions of Christian Mission toward Reunification of Korea”, p. 69.

<sup>18</sup> The idea of anti-communism became that of overtaking communism, which is referred to as *Seung-gong* in Korean; South Korea had to show that the South Korean capitalist democracy was superior to the North Korean communist democracy. Lee, “Changes in the Logic of the Yusin Period's Anti-Communism, and Cold War Sensitivities”, p. 524.

<sup>19</sup> *Seong-gong* sentiment already existed among some South Korean people before the 1970s. For instance, Bang Ji-Il, the senior pastor of the Youngdeongpo Presbyterian church in the 1960s, argued that the Christian family should be a centre for resisting communism by teaching children about Christian appreciation and happiness. Ji-Il Bang, “Family and *Seong-Gong*”, *New Family*, August (1968).

communism, emphasised “the democratisation and securing the human rights to bring a victory over the North Korean communism.”<sup>20</sup>

The *Seung-gong* discourse of the government based on the economic development of South Korea won the support of South Koreans. Having experienced harsh years under the Japanese occupation and horrific shortages of food after the Korean War, South Koreans agreed with the governmental campaign for economic modernisation, including a rural development movement (*Saemaul Undong*).<sup>21</sup> Along with the national campaign of the government for economic development, church leaders also preached about earthly blessings and the goodness of God. Rather than a message about God’s justice and human rights, which would make the authorities uncomfortable, church leaders preached about earthly blessings and positive thinking about the world. The leaders of Protestant churches developed programs about spiritual experience and healing, and held revival meetings in churches, as well as mass prayer gatherings in prayer retreat centres.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the Protestant churches in South Korea achieved rapid growth in membership and numbers of churches during this period. From the 1980s mega-churches emerged with more than 10,000 members. South Korea now had more mega-churches than any other country in the world and “most of the mega-churches were conservative churches”.<sup>23</sup>

Emphasising earthly blessings, the pastors preached that the earthly blessing from heaven were God’s promise to Korea and South Koreans, God’s chosen people, who would win a spiritual battle against North Korea that would eventually enable

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<sup>20</sup> Kang, “[Special Issues: Protestantism in Korea] the Production and Reproduction of Anti-Communism in the Korean Protestant Churches”, p. 56.

<sup>21</sup> *Saemaul Undong* was planned by the South Korean government led by Park Chung-hee, which aimed at the development of the infrastructure of rural areas and the income of people who lived in rural areas. Through rapid development of manufacturing in urban areas, the gap in the gross income between the population in urban cities and rural towns had widened. Concomitantly, the ruling party under Park’s regime was losing the support of the population of the rural towns. As the government proclaimed a “race to overtake the North”, economically, the development of rural towns was essential for the continuance of Park’s regime, as Park Chung-hee argued, “*Saemaul Undong* is a cause of Yushin...and the movement is for indigenisation of democracy in Korea, making the state a more secure and ideal model of modern citizenship in Korea.” Yong-Ghi Lee, “*Saemaul Undong* in 1970s: A Practical Way to Realise Yushin Ideology”, *Historical Studies for the Future* 48 (2012), p. 73.

<sup>22</sup> Kim, *A Study of the Korean War and This-Worldly Blessings in the Christian Churches*, p. 198.

<sup>23</sup> Kang, “[Special Issues: Protestantism in Korea] the Production and Reproduction of Anti-Communism in the Korean Protestant Churches”, p. 57.

the unification of the two Koreas. After the Korean War, South Korean Christians yearned for material security as well as spiritual consolation and they believed that the development of the economy and political life would lead to victory over North Korean communism. Han Kyung-Chik, appearing in 1984 on a television discussion program with young college students, insisted:

To achieve the unification, South Korea should surpass the North in every aspect. We should prove that our society is morally superior to the North Korean society... Finally, we should create economic progress, which would bring us a prosperous life that North Koreans cannot have...<sup>24</sup>

In the same year, Cho Yong-Gi (David), the founding pastor of Yoido Full Gospel Church, wrote that the only way to protect South Korea from the North Korean communists was through the empowerment of the economy and the military force of South Korea. He insisted, “Let’s imagine a fence to protect sheep from the attack of wolves. If the sheep safe in the fence broke the fence and invited wolves to negotiate for peace. What would happen?” Cho portrayed North Korean communists as untrustworthy and constantly ready to occupy the Korean peninsula. Therefore, he concluded that South Koreans should be aware of the threat and keep praying for national security and prosperity.<sup>25</sup> In addition to seeking to surpass North Korea economically and in terms of military power, the conservative Christians started to publish academic materials to explain theoretically how the communism of the North could not be compatible with Christianity and to educate young Christians about the dangers of communism, rather than simply ignoring the ideology of North Korea.<sup>26</sup>

Following the 7.4. Joint Communiqué between the North and South Korean governments and the increasing number of appearances of the KCF at international conferences, conservative Christians started criticising the KCF as a governmental religious organisation controlled by communists, and hoped that there would be

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<sup>24</sup> KBS (Korean Broadcasting System), “Rev Han Kyung-Chik and 100 College Students: A Free Discussion” (Seoul: KBS, 3 February, 1984).

<sup>25</sup> Yong-Gi Cho, “Let’s Brighten up the Candle of the Unification of Korea by Prayer and Devotion”, *Tongil Hankook (The Unified Korea)* 4 (1984), p. 53.

<sup>26</sup> Kang In-Deok, a former KCIA analyst agent and minister of Unification of the South Korean government, said that he delivered lectures about the dangers of communism in Korea at influential churches such as Younknak, Yeondong Church, where college students organised groups to protest against authoritarian governments. In-Deok Kang, interview by Hoon Song, January, 2016.

underground ‘genuine’ Christians who were left behind before and during the Korean War. They believed that the North Koreans were still in need of the gospel message and ‘real’ church communities. It was the responsibility of South Korean churches to take the gospel message to the North and evangelise the people in the North who had been brainwashed by North Korean communism.<sup>27</sup> South Korean churches were also called to restore the Christian communities in the North that had been destroyed by the North Korean communist regime after the division of the Korean peninsula.<sup>28</sup> Before the 88 Declaration of the NCKK, missions to North Korea were based on militant anti-communism that regarded the North Korean communist regime as an evil force that would be brought to an end by God’s providence. In that period, the conservative Christians believed that their mission to North Korea and the restoration of North Korean Christian communities would be fully realised. Thus, the conservative churches, motivated by a strong anti-communism, rejected interactions and dialogue with the North Korean Government and believed that the North Korean communist regime would collapse soon as South Korea was winning the ideological battle with the North. Hence, they strategically emphasised indirect evangelisation through broadcasting systems.<sup>29</sup> They believed that in this way the gospel message would reach the people in the USSR and China and even those in North Korea. Then, they argued, it would bring about a transformation in North Korean society.

The chairperson of the committee for North Korean missions of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Tonghap*) insisted that if the gospel message were spread throughout North Korea it would contribute to the peace and unification of Korea, but that North Korean missions should be limited to the “governmental guidelines for national security”. The committee would not accept dialogue between

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<sup>27</sup> A number of organisations already existed from the 1970s to pursue North Korean missions, such as the committee for the North Korean mission in the Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Tonghap*, established in 1971) and Christian Fellowship for North Korean missions (established in 1974). Eun-Sik Cho, “A Study on Reunification Movement of the South Korean Churches: From 1945 to 1990s”, *Mission and Theology* 15 (2005), p. 24.

<sup>28</sup> Myung-Hyuk Kim, “The Role of the Church in South Korea for the Reconstruction of the Church in North Korea”, *Hapshin Theological Journal* 10, no. 2 (1992), pp. 406-407.

<sup>29</sup> Far East Broadcasting Association later merged with Asian Broadcasting System, which operated from 1954, and their broadcast covered Chinese and Russian territory. Gwan-Ji Ryu, “The Current Status of Broadcasting Evangelisation to Communist Countries”, *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 23, no. 8 (1979)

the KCF and other WCC member churches.<sup>30</sup> The conservative South Korean churches were cautious about interactions between North Korean churches represented by the KCF and the WCC member churches. They worried that the North Korean communists would expand their influence over South Korean Christians through meetings between Western and North Korean churches. Han Kyung-Chik, the chairperson of the preparatory committee for commemorating the centennial of South Korean Protestant churches, argued:

We should be cautious about the expansion of the communism of North Korea, which threatens the freedom of faith, Christian communities and mission works in the Korean peninsula...we still believe that the unification of Korea will be realised only through a national evangelisation.<sup>31</sup>

As it pursued the unification of Korea in cooperation with the KCF, the NCKK – although not with the support of all its member churches – increasingly departed from the anti-communism that was rife in South Korean society and even in Christian communities. Meanwhile, the conservative churches remained as wedded to anti-communism as ever. Therefore, from the end of the 1980s, anti-communism became a more clearly divisive line between the conservative and the liberal South Korean churches.<sup>32</sup>

### **3.3. The 88 Declaration of the NCKK and the Response of the Conservative Churches**

The year 1988 was a momentous one for South Korean society in terms of its relationship with North Korea. In spite of the terrorist acts of the North Korean communist regime, such as the Rangoon bombing, which targeted the president of South Korea in 1983, and the blowing up of a Korean Air aircraft in 1987 by North

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<sup>30</sup> Jeong, *A History of Unification Movements in Korean Churches*, p. 247.

<sup>31</sup> Kyung-Chik Han, “A Special Address to Celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Independence of Korea”, in *Yearbook of the Centennial of South Korean Protestant Churches* (Seoul: The Committee for Celebrating the Centennial of South Korean Protestant Churches, 1985), recited from Jeong, *A History of Unification Movements in Korean Churches*, p. 251.

<sup>32</sup> Kang, “[Special Issues: Protestantism in Korea] the Production and Reproduction of Anti-Communism in the Korean Protestant Churches”, pp. 57-58.

Korean intelligent agents, South Koreans were confident that South Korea had surpassed North Korea, both economically and in military power. South Korea hosted the 1988 Olympic Games and communist regimes in Eastern Europe were collapsing. Thus, there was a hope among South Koreans that there would soon be peace in the Korean peninsula and the North Korean communist regime would give up their national plan to make the Korean peninsula a communist land.

When the NCKK produced the 88 Declaration amidst changing circumstances around the Korean peninsula, the conservative churches strongly criticised the declaration, but at the same time they agreed that there should be a change in the attitude of South Korean churches toward North Korea and the unification of the two Koreas. Before the interactions of the South Korean and North Korean churches represented by the KCF, as well as those between South and North Korean governments, the conservative churches had ignored the existence of the churches in North Korea and had not acknowledged the North Korean communist regime as a legal government. However, they now became interested in the underground churches, as well as the *Juche* ideology of North Korea.

The governmental policies to promote interactions with North Korea in the fields of sports and arts, and the confidence of South Koreans that South Korea had already overtaken North Korea militarily and economically, encouraged conservative Christians to search for ways to take the gospel to the North. Kim Myung-Hyuk, a former professor of the Theological Institute of the Korean Presbyterian Church (*Hapdong*) and a former president of the CCK, argued that the South Korean churches should prepare workers and materials that could be used to rebuild church<sup>33</sup> buildings and Christian communities in the North, which had formerly been supposed to have disappeared after the Korean War, even though that seemed not foreseeable. He continued:

First, the North Korean underground Christians will provide ways to rebuild churches and the Christian communities of North Korea... Second, Koreans living abroad and holding foreign citizenship, especially those of communist countries, could bring gospel messages into North Korea... Third, South

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<sup>33</sup> The CCK was an inter-denominational organisation aiming to represent the voices of conservative churches in South Korea. The history of its foundation will be presented in section 3.4.

Korean Christians need to urge the South Korean government to broaden interactions with North Korea so that South Koreans easily travel to North Korea with the Bible... Fourth, the South Korean churches should prepare for the moment when the North Korean communist regime collapses...<sup>34</sup>

The 88 Declaration of the NCKC led the South Korean conservative churches to regard North Korean churches as potential partners in the unification of Korea in spite of their suspicions about the “Christian authenticity” of the KCF. For instance, the Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Tonghap*) formed a committee for the evangelisation of North Korea after the 88 Declaration of the NCKC to placate the strong critics in conservative member churches, and they sent Lee Eui-Ho, the chairperson of the committee, to the Glion conference in 1989. Lee reported:

It was miracle to see remnant churches in North Korea where Christians worshipped God. If South Koreans are stubborn about accepting the changes happening in the Korean peninsula and ignore the existence of Christian communities in the North regarding them as a propagation of North Korean communists, we are opposing God’s providence as he answers our prayer to open a small door for missions toward North Korea...<sup>35</sup>

The declaration encouraged the conservative churches to become more involved in the unification discourses with other non-government organisations. The Lausanne Covenant of 1974 partly influenced the South Korean conservative churches to become more concerned with and involved in the unification issues of Korea in the late 1980s.<sup>36</sup> The conservative churches had previously been characterised by their indifference to social and political issues. While liberal South Korean churches actively engaged in social and political issues under authoritarian governments, the conservative churches had previously insisted that churches were not responsible for social and political issues. However, after the Lausanne Congress, there were notable changes among the South Korean conservative churches regarding social issues. For instance, they established the Christian Ethics Movement of Korea in 1987 and

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<sup>34</sup> Kim, “The Role of the Church in South Korea for the Reconstruction of the Church in North Korea”, pp. 417-420.

<sup>35</sup> Eui-Ho Lee, “Special Report: Meeting North Korean Christians - an Era of the Reconciliation between South and North Korean Churches Just Began”, *Kidokgongbo* 4 March 1989.

<sup>36</sup> Eun-Sik Cho, “A Study of Missiology for the Unification of Korea through Interactions between South and North Korean Churches”, *Korea Presbyterian Journal of Theology* 21, no. June (2004), p. 349.

promoted the social responsibilities of the conservative churches of Korea.<sup>37</sup> Concomitantly, after the declaration, the conservative churches came to acknowledge their responsibility for the unification movements in the social realm. Therefore, the conservative churches saw the declaration and the interactions between the KCF, the WCC, and the NCKK as opportunities to make a connection with North Korean churches and North Korean Christians. For instance, Kwak Sun-Hee, the former pastor of Somang Presbyterian Church in Seoul (*Tonghap*), who was regarded as a representative pastor of the conservative churches of South Korea, visited Pyongyang on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 1991 to discuss the future projects of pastoral interactions between the churches of the two Koreas. Kwak was the first individual to visit North Korea with governmental permission and without representing any organisations in South Korea.<sup>38</sup> However, conservatives still believed that the North Korean communist regime could not be trusted to pursue a dialogue for a peaceful unification.

The South Korean conservative churches now criticised militant denominationalism. While the NCKK argued in the 88 Declaration that it was a sin for the Korean Christians not to resist the division of the Korean peninsula and the strong hatred established between the two Koreas, the conservative churches began to confess that they had sinned against God through divisive denominationalism and ignorance toward the suffering of North Koreans.<sup>39</sup> They argued that South Korean churches should speak in one voice for the evangelisation of the entire nation, including North Korea. The majority of South Korean churches organised committees for national evangelisation and propagated their vision through various events, such as Saving Korea prayer gatherings. In terms of evangelising works for North Koreans, the conservative South Korean churches launched various organisations for mission works in communist countries such as China, the USSR

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<sup>37</sup> Lee, "From Conflict toward Reconciliation: Liberals and Conservatives in the History of Korean Churches", pp. 53-54.

<sup>38</sup> "Reverend Kwak Sun-Hee Arrived in Pyongyang and Will Discuss Issues of Pastoral Interactions between the Two Koreas", *Hankyoreh Newspaper* 21 September, 1991.

<sup>39</sup> The Committee for the Restoration of North Korean Churches, "The Policy Statement of South Korean Churches for the Unification of Korea", in *Annual Report of the Restoration of North Korean Churches* (Seoul: The Christian Council of Korea, 1997).

and Mongolia. For the missions to North Korea, and the countries bordering North Korea, they believed that decisive cooperation between denominations and even between individual churches was essential.

The 88 Declaration thus stimulated the conservative South Korean churches, who had previously shown a tendency to consider unification issues as simply political and had argued that South Korean churches should not engage in unification movements, to take part in unification dialogues with the North and South Korean governments. They also began dialogues with North Korean churches represented by the KCF, although only on limited humanitarian and religious issues. The declaration, coming as it did from the liberal wing of South Korean churches, also provoked the conservative churches to establish a new inter-denominational organisation that could reflect their own ideas regarding North Korea and the unification of Korea.

### **3.4. Establishment of the CCK (Christian Council of Korea) and their Approach to Unification**

Recognising the need for cooperation between churches on the issues of unification and national evangelisation, the conservative churches established the CCK as a rival to the NCCK. They believed that the NCCK had a strong tendency toward embracing North Korean communism and they were too much involved in anti-state and political movements, which was regarded as ‘not evangelical’ by the conservative churches. Therefore, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December 1989, following the visit of Rev. Moon Ik-Hwan to North Korea, the representatives of the conservative denominations, including the Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Tonghap*), a member denomination of the NCCK, gathered at Gangnam Holiness Church in Seoul to establish an inter-denominational organisation named the *Hangichong* (CCK).<sup>40</sup> The

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<sup>40</sup> The leaders of conservative churches first met on 9<sup>th</sup> February in 1989 in Yuseong City to discuss the establishment of an inter-denominational organisation and they had a preparatory meeting at Youngnak Presbyterian Church in Seoul on 28<sup>th</sup> of April, 1989. Christian Council of Korea, “Founding Statement of CCK”, [http://cck.or.kr/html/intro/intro\\_02.php](http://cck.or.kr/html/intro/intro_02.php).

leaders of the conservative churches had begun to discuss the possibility of forming a new inter-denominational organisation in the early 1980s. However, the 88 Declaration by the NCCCK and the visit of Rev. Moon Ik-Hwan hastened the establishment of the CCK in 1989. The founding statement of the CCK clearly emphasised the unification of Korea as a purpose of the organisation. It stated:

...the participants of the preparatory meeting for the establishment of an inter-denominational organisation agreed that the South Korean churches should be unified to prepare for the new millennium and the unification of Korea as well as to make one voice on the political and social issues of South Korea...<sup>41</sup>

After the foundation of the CCK, the member churches tried to avoid political involvement in movements for unification, but their projects and dialogues with the governmental offices of North and South Korea were influenced by the political landscape of the Korean peninsula.<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, they still believed that the unification movement of the South Korean churches was a form of spiritual warfare and their projects and dialogues with the two governments were limited to their object: unification through evangelising the two Koreas. The first project of the CCK relating to the unification of Korea was the Drive for Sharing Rice of Love, proposed by Han Kyung-Chik, the former pastor of Younknak Presbyterian Church and an honorary chairperson of the CCK in 1990. The early 1990s in North Korea were marked by a devastating flood and food shortages. The CCK organised the Centre for the Drive for Sharing Rice of Love on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 1990, which was first aimed at the poor people within South Korea, but on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July in the same year they sent 800 tons of rice to North Korea. The centre reported that the rice was delivered to non-governmental organisations in North Korea and hence the project did not have any political purpose.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> The conservative churches used three methods to conduct missions toward North Korea: the movement for the restoration of North Korean churches, humanitarian works for North Koreans, and supporting North Korean defectors. Myung-Soo Park, "Anti-Communism, Unification, and Missions toward North Korea: Comparative Study on the NCCCK and CCK", *The Holiness Church and Theology* 21, no. Spring (2009), p. 134.

<sup>43</sup> "No Political Purpose in Sending the Rice of Love to North Korea", *Kidokgongbo* 5 January 1991. recited from Jung, *A History of Unification Movements in Korean Churches*, p. 328.

The early 1990s saw a number of acts of national reconciliation and peace in the world. North and South Yemen were unified on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 1990 and West and East Germany were unified on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October in the same year. North and South Korea also both became members of the United Nations in September 1991, and the countries agreed to expand civilian interactions between the two countries in February 1992. Despite the nuclear issues of North Korea in 1994 when the North Korean Government refused the inspection of IAEA, and the death of Kim Il-Sung in the same year, South Korean Christians hoped that unification might be realised sooner than they had once expected, and they hastened projects relating to the unification of Korea.<sup>44</sup>

Compared to the rapid diplomatic changes between the two Koreas and the development of the unification movement of the NCKK, the unification discourse of the CCK was not systematic until 1996. In 1996, the CCK published their first unification policy statement in which they argued that the unification of Korea was the responsibility of South Korean Christians, expressing a hope that a “graceful God would open a door to North Korea and enable missions toward North Korea”. They proposed 12 essential elements for the unification of Korea and nine of them are summarised:<sup>45</sup>

First, the unified Korea should be a national commonwealth governed by God’s justice and love.

Second, the unified Korea should be a country of freedom, equality and peace.

Third, the unified Korea should be a country where everyone can enjoy human dignity.

Fourth, the unified Korea should be a country that operates an economic system enabling everyone to live with full humanity.

Fifth, the unified Korea should resolve the conflicts between generations, regions and economic classes.

Sixth, the unified Korea should promote peace and reconciliation in Northern East Asia.

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<sup>44</sup> Lee, “Church and Nation: The National Unification of Korea from an Evangelical Perspective in the Korean Church”, p. 145.

<sup>45</sup> Dong-Chun Lee, “A Study of Unification Methods of the Korean Church from the Perspectives of Public Theology” (PhD, Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary, 2010), pp. 69-70.

Seventh, unification is not a goal of Korean history but a process toward a fulfilment of God's will in this country. Hence, we disagree that unification will resolve all the problems of the Korean peninsula.

Eighth, the unification of Korea should be peaceful.

Ninth, to promote the reconciliation and unification of Korea, the two governments should enhance humanitarian works, especially regarding the separated families.

The CCK members therefore rejected the perspective of the NCKK that the unification would provide a pathway toward a single Korean democratic state and they argued that the unification was not only a political or economic matter, but also a spiritual and cultural matter, and churches should passionately engage in the latter. Therefore, they argued that before the unification, the South Korean churches should become involved in movements to restore people's relationship with God and develop a vision for rebuilding the North Korean Christian communities after the unification. Thus, the CCK considered the unification as a means by which to restore North Korean Christianity and promote the evangelisation of the North Korean people. In 1996, the CCK organised a Special Committee for the Reconstruction of North Korean Churches and outlined three principles for North Korean missions: the first principle was to install a single office for the project; the second was to establish one denomination in North Korea; and the third was that the North Korean churches, which would be restored in the future, should eventually become independent and self-supporting.<sup>46</sup>

After the death of Kim Il-Sung in 1994, and the series of natural disasters that followed, the CCK strengthened its humanitarian work for the North Korean people. The Sunshine Policy<sup>47</sup> of the Kim Dae-Jung government (February 1998–January 2003) also encouraged the South Korean churches to become more involved in humanitarian work for North Korea. However, discourses about missions to North Korea and the rebuilding of North Korean Christianity were rarely engaged when the

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<sup>46</sup> Seong-Tae Kim, "A Missiological Proposal for the Unification of Korea with a Historical Assessment of the Development of the Missions toward North Korea Reflecting from the Current Situation of the Korean Peninsula (2)", *Presbyterian Theological Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (2003), p. 124.

<sup>47</sup> The Sunshine Policy was enacted by the Kim Dae-Jung government to enhance economic support for North Korea and promote civil exchange between the two Koreas with a view to resolving the nuclear weapon development plan.

South Korean churches were involved in humanitarian works for North Korea and the South Korean Government adopted the Sunshine Policy toward North Korea. Practically, North Korean missions and the rebuilding of North Korean Christianity were based on the expectation that South Korea would take over North Korea or that the North Korean communist regime would collapse. The conservative churches now became worried that their enthusiasm for the rebuilding of churches and Christian communities in North Korean territories would injure South-North relationships and lead to a blockage in the exchange of material and human resources.<sup>48</sup> The conservative churches therefore increasingly refrained from using the discourse on rebuilding North Korean churches and Christian communities, which would provoke the KCF and the North Korean Government. Rather, they focused their projects on the relief of the North Korean people, as well as work among North Korean defectors.<sup>49</sup>

Along with the project for North Korean human rights, the CCK also established a special committee for helping North Korean defectors. Through the committee, the CCK provided the North Korean defectors with basic materials to live in South Korea and legal and job-seeking advice so that the North Korean defectors could adjust to living in an unfamiliar capitalist society.<sup>50</sup> The CCK also secretly cooperated with South Korean missionaries in China who helped the North Koreans escape from North Korea and supported Korean diaspora Christians in China to organise underground Christian communities.

In 2006, the CCK issued a policy statement regarding North Korean missions. In the statement, they described North Koreans as objects of evangelisation, not subjects of the unification of Korea. Therefore, they insisted, “the

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<sup>48</sup> Tae-Joon Jung, “The Unification Movements and the Missions toward North Korea of South Korean Protestant Churches”, *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 44, no. 8 (2000), p. 156.

<sup>49</sup> Kim Myung-Hyuk argued that, “we would better not use discourse about North Korean missions or the restoration of North Korean churches. There is nothing more worthwhile for people who are robbed than foods and medical care... It is not appropriate to strongly put forward North Korean missions or the restoration of North Korean churches before the North Koreans...” Myung-Hyuk Kim, “Editorial Notes: What Can We Do for Unification?”, *Shin-Hak Jung-Ron (Theological Studies)* 15, no. 1 (1997), p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> Do-Hong Joo, “The Evangelical Approach toward the Unification of Korea”, *Christianity and the Unification* 3 (2009), p. 2002.

evangelisation of Korea is prior to the unification of Korea...and the unification shall be realised by God's providence as a free gift of God."<sup>51</sup> Thus, they held that the South Korean Christians should prepare for the eventual unification of Korea, but they insisted on the spiritual transformation of South Korean Christians as a prerequisite for the unification. Their approach to North Korea also distinguished the North Korean communist regime from North Koreans in general: while they could help the North Koreans, they could not embrace the North Korean communists. Their unification policy with its approach separating the North Korean communists from the North Koreans and the belief that God would realise the unification stimulated some groups of conservative Christians to seek a practical and active methodology for the unification of Korea.

By the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the CCK had become the biggest inter-denominational organisation in Korea. Park Myung-Soo, a professor at Seoul Theological Seminary, has argued that the CCK became a "big tent" enabling conservative churches and Christian organisations gather together to face the challenge of the governments of Kim Dae-Jung and Rho Moo-Hyun, which had a tendency to embrace more politically liberal agendas and sought an equal relationship with the United States and a closer relationship with the North Korean communist regime, because the majority of South Korean churches were originally evangelical and gave preferential support to the governments that adopted a more conservative line toward North Korea. Obtaining a degree of political power, the CCK started to represent the political voices of the conservative churches in relation to North Korean issues.<sup>52</sup> The CCK criticised South Korean liberal churches, as well as the South Korean governments that implemented the Sunshine Policy to North Korea, for their alleged lack of concern about the human rights issues in North Korea, even though the liberals had continuously worked to secure human rights in South Korea. While the liberals explained that agitation about the human rights of North Koreans would provoke the North Korean Government and cause a

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 201.

<sup>52</sup> Park, "Anti-Communism, Unification, and Missions toward North Korea: Comparative Study on the NCCK and the CCK", p. 142.

discontinuance of North-South interactions, the CCK encouraged South Korean conservative churches to push the members of the South Korean Parliament to pass the North Korean Human Rights Act in 2016, which corresponded to the Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK adopted by the UN Commission on Human Rights in 2003.<sup>53</sup> The South Korean conservative churches' push for the legislation of the North Korean Human Rights Act was primarily aimed at criticising the North Korean communists and the South Korean governments of Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo-Hyun, which launched and continued the Sunshine Policy respectively. They also sought to secure the religious freedom of North Koreans so that they could expand their mission work for North Koreans.<sup>54</sup>

Even though the conservative churches pursued an apolitical and evangelical approach to the unification movement of Korea, the prayer gatherings of the conservative churches had a strong tendency toward embracing political agendas such as the Iraq War and the issues of the nuclear weapon development programme of North Korea. From 1998, the CCK announced that they would not remain silent on social issues such as anti-American sentiment<sup>55</sup> among the South Korean younger generation and the debate about homosexuality. Their campaigns became more frequent under the governments<sup>56</sup> that were inclined to adopt more liberal policies such the Sunshine Policy for North-South Korean relations. The political engagement of the conservative churches became evident in the early 2000s in opposition to the government, which had applied more liberal policies regarding issues of social welfare and a new taxation system for rich and mega-companies. They argued that

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<sup>53</sup> Yonhap News, "The South Korean Assembly Passed the First North Korean Human Rights Act", [http://www.huffingtonpost.kr/2016/03/03/story\\_n\\_9365886.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.kr/2016/03/03/story_n_9365886.html).

<sup>54</sup> For details of North Korean human rights issues and the approaches of South Korean conservative churches toward these issues, see Sung-Up Huh, "Looking at the Strategic Policies of Missions to North Koreans in the Lens of Unification: Focusing on North Korean Human Rights and Problems Concerning Defectors", *The Korean Society of Mission Studies* 42.

<sup>55</sup> The CCK hosted the "Prayer Vigil for Peace and Security of Korea" on 11 January, 2003, and the catchphrases of the prayer gathering were "No Nuclear Weapon of North Korea, No Retreat of US Army, and No Anti-Americanism". CCK Publicity Department, "Timetable for the Prayer Vigil for Peace and Security of Korea", <http://www.cck.or.kr/chnet2/board/viewPrint.php?id=8&code=intro05c&cate=>.

<sup>56</sup> The governments led by president Kim Dae-Jung, and then by president Roh Moo-Hyun.

free democratic capitalism was the national ideology of South Korea and in this they strongly emphasised anti-communism.

The 'New Right' camp was the leading Christian fellowship for the Christian involvement in South Korean politics. The 'New Right' movement was organised around the early 2000s before the presidential election in 2007 and the people involved in the movement supported Lee Myung-Bak, the candidate for the largest opposition party, the *Hannara* Party. Conservative Christian leaders took part in the movement; such figures included the pastor Kim Jin-Hong, a former president of *Durae* Commonwealth, a Christian NGO founded for rural development. Kim worked as the chair of the board of the National New Right Alliance and officially announced that he supported Lee Myung-Bak. Jeon has noted that this New Right movement could be characterised by three points. The people involved in the movement unanimously emphasised the freedom of the market, rather than political freedom. They tended to criticise egalitarianism and the nationalist approaches toward the unification of Korea widely shared among the revisionist historians and some liberal politicians of South Korea. Finally, they used general ideas about human rights and democracy to attack the North Korean communist regime.<sup>57</sup> Partly influenced by and involved in the New Right camp, some church historians and theologians have argued that South Korean Christians should be proud of their anti-communism and the history of Christian collaboration with the authoritarian governments of Rhee Syng-Man for the foundation of a strong anti-communist government in 1948. Therefore, while liberal theologians and historians have argued that the unification movement of conservative churches was encumbered by their anti-communism,<sup>58</sup> conservative theologians and church historians have evaluated

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<sup>57</sup> Jae-Ho Jeon, "A Study on the Ideological Character of Korean Conservatism in the 2000s: With a Focus on the New Right", *Journal of Contemporary Politics* 7, no. 1 (2014) p. 165.

<sup>58</sup> Lee Man-Yeol argued that the unification movement of the conservative churches revealed the limitations of anti-communism among the conservative Christians and the conservative churches contributed to confrontations between the two Koreas after the Korean War. Man-Yeol Lee, "A History of the Unification Movement of South Korean Churches", *Journal of Reformed Theology* 26 (1996), p. 73; Noh Jong-Sun argued that the South Korean Churches have to overcome confrontational antagonism and move toward prosperous co-existence. Jong-Sun Noh, "A New Paradigm for the North-South Sharing Movement in the Age of Unification Sentiment", *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 44, no. 8 (2000), p. 135.

anti-communism as an essential feature of the Christian movement of the conservative churches. Park Myung-Soo has insisted that:

Anti-communism and pro-Americanism were the piths of the conservative ideology in South Korea. Practically, anti-communism and pro-Americanism cannot be separated and they are the essence of societies that ensure human freedom. Anti-communism was a tool to protect South Korean society from the attack of North Korean communism and anti-communism is possible only with pro-Americanism.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, entering into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, anti-communism among the conservative churches represented by the CCK was still influential even though their humanitarian projects continued in North Korea; the ideology even became a pole to sustain their Christian identity.

### **3.5. Conservative-Liberal Churches' Alliance for the Unification Movement**

During the 1990s, based on a common concern about supporting North Koreans, the liberal churches and some conservative churches began to cooperate in various humanitarian and research projects for the unification of Korea. Even though the participants came from both the conservative and liberal churches of Korea, most of the funds and personnel came from the conservative mega-churches. For instance, Hong Jung-Ghil, the former pastor of Namseoul (Southern Seoul) Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Hapdong*), led the foundation of The South-North Sharing Campaign and raised funds for this. The current chair members are also from conservative denominations. Thus, the NCKK provided the connections with the North Korean churches represented by the KCF, while the conservative churches provided funds and personnel, especially people who had influence with the South Korean Government. The South Korean assembly passed and the South Korean Government enacted the Act on the Exchange between South-North Korea in June 1989 in response to the 7.7 Declaration of the South Korean Government in 1988.

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<sup>59</sup> Park, "Anti-Communism, Unification, and Missions toward North Korea: Comparative Study on the NCKK and the CCK", p. 141.

The act enabled NGOs to legally launch a variety of humanitarian projects for the North Koreans.<sup>60</sup> The first and the most famous cooperative NGO of the South Korean churches that aimed to contribute to humanitarian work with North Koreans and the unification of Korea was The South-North Sharing Campaign, begun in 1993. In its founding statement, the authors argued that they had launched the campaign in “prophetic calling” and “priestly sacrifice” to “remind the South Korean churches of the consciousness of the unification of Korea and to realise reconciliation between the two Koreas”. They further insisted that they “seek to share love with people in both Koreas which shall be grounds for national peace, reconciliation and unification”.<sup>61</sup>

To a greater extent than the churches in the liberal camp, the conservative churches had enough funds and resources to support Christian NGOs in humanitarian work in North Korea. The North Korean Government also welcomed the conservative churches’ involvement in humanitarian work for North Korea. The pastors of leading mega-churches like Younknak Presbyterian Church, Somang Presbyterian Church and Yoido Full Gospel Church, mostly CCK member churches, frequently visited North Korea and supported the humanitarian projects to establish food factories, educational and medical facilities and infrastructure. The president of the KCF officially appreciated the South Korean churches’ involvement in humanitarian works and gave an address suggesting that the North Korean churches would be transformed into a commonwealth of social service.<sup>62</sup> The Protestant churches passionately engaged in humanitarian work for North Koreans more than any other religious organisation. According to the statistics outlining the number of NGOs engaged in humanitarian work for North Koreans with the permission of the Department of the Unification of Korea of the South Korean Government, in 2007

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<sup>60</sup> Byung-Ro Kim, “An Analysis of the Changing Shape and Demography of Christian NGOs Running Programs of Humanitarian Works for the North Koreans”, *Christianity and the Unification 2* (2008), pp. 68-69.

<sup>61</sup> The main projects of the campaign were targeted at the children of North Korea who were most vulnerable to the natural disasters that struck North Korea in the early 1990s. The Center for the South-North Sharing Campaign, <http://sharing.net/content/page.php?seq=21>, [accessed 11 January 2017].

<sup>62</sup> Heung-Soo Kim, “The Historical Analysis of the Works of Christian NGOs”, *Christianity and the Unification 2* (2008), pp. 65-66.

the Protestant churches were operating 21 organisations (29% of 79 NGOs), while Catholics and Buddhists had only four organisations each.<sup>63</sup> However, in addressing humanitarian work to North Korea and seeking the support of church members, many South Korean pastors exaggerated the situation of North Korea and even tended to mock the North Korean communists. Moreover, even though the CCK officially acknowledged the KCF as the representative organisation of the North Korean churches, some pastors of the conservative churches who visited North Korea did not change their view that the KCF was a governmental and communist organisation rather than a real Christian organisation.<sup>64</sup> Hence, the conservative churches need to reconsider their views of the KCF and how they relate their humanitarian works and missions to North Korea to the unification of Korea.

In addition to humanitarian projects for the North Korean people, various church organisations founded research centres to study the unification from a Christian perspective. The South-North Sharing Campaign launched a research centre in 1993 that was developed into the Korea Peace Institute in 2007, an independent research institute. The institute is now a leading NGO research centre for unification studies in South Korea. The people who are currently involved in the institute come from various denominations, organisations and academic institutes. The advisor of the institute is Lee Man-Yeol, a famous church historian, and the chairperson is Kim Ji-Cheol, the senior pastor of Somang Presbyterian Church (*Tonghap*). The board members also come from various backgrounds; they include: Oh Jeong-Hyun (senior pastor, Sarang Community Church, PCK *Hapdong*), Kim Dong-Ho (pastor and director, God's Will Mission, PCK *Tonghap*), Son Dal-Ik (senior pastor, Seomun Church, PCK *Tonghap*), Lee Jae-Hoon (senior pastor, Onnuri Church, PCK *Hapdong*), Yoon Young-Gwan (professor, Seoul National University), Lee Jang-Ro (professor, Korea University), Jeon Woo-Taek (professor, Yonsei University) and Kim Chang-Soo (professor, Korea Institute for Defence Analysis).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Soo-Jeong Kim, "A Research of Humanitarian Works for the North Koreans by South Korean Protestant Churches" (PhD, Ewha Womans University, 2008), p. 9.

<sup>64</sup> Young-Han Kim, interview by Hoon Song, 14 October, 2016.

<sup>65</sup> Korea Peace Institute, "Structure and Personnel", <http://www.koreapeace.or.kr/>, [accessed 11 January 2017]. The Korea Peace Institute outlines their goal as to "seek a vision, strategy, and alternative methodologies for the peace and unification of Korea from Christian perspectives, and

The Christian Fellowship for North Korean Missions was founded in 1998 to research the unification and North Korean missions and to help churches to prepare for the unification of Korea from a Christian perspective, emphasising national evangelisation as a means to integrate North and South Koreans.<sup>66</sup> In 2008, with the support of Sarang Community Church, the Jubilee United Prayer Campaign<sup>67</sup> was launched to organise prayer meetings and to provide information on the unification movement to South Korean churches. The Korean Christian Prayer Fellowship for the Peaceful Unification began vast prayer gatherings every Monday from January 2015 with the support of Myeong-Seong Presbyterian Church (*Tonghap*). Speakers invited to these prayer gatherings were from both the liberal and conservative wings of the church, as well as those from governmental offices and NGOs.<sup>68</sup> The conservative churches also supported colleges and seminaries to inaugurate specialised programs on unification, such as the Christian Training Centre for Leadership for the Unification at Soongsil University, and most seminaries installed specialised programs to teach the students Christian approaches to the unification of Korea.

Through the Christian NGOs led by the CCK member churches in cooperation with the liberal camp of the South Korean churches, conservative churches were able to continue their humanitarian and mission work for the North Korean people despite the turbulent situation between the two Koreas, such as the naval battles near Yeonpyeong Island in 1999 and 2002 and the tensions caused by the nuclear tests undertaken by North Korea. The relief work of the conservative churches brought them into direct contact with the North Korean Government, which seemed incompatible with their position, which had hitherto ruled out political negotiation with the North Korean communist regime. Significant differences also

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educate and spread them to Korean churches and society to contribute to peace in the world.” Woo-Taek Jeon, “Introduction of the Korean Peace Institute”, in *The Unification of Korea and the Role of Christianity*, ed. Woo-Taek Jeon (Seoul: The Korean Peace Institute, 2014), p. 78.

<sup>66</sup> Byung-Ro Kim, “The Unification of Korea and the Role of Christian Think Tanks”, *ibid.* (The Korea Peace Institute), p. 69.

<sup>67</sup> The Jubilee United Prayer Campaign consists of 50 organisations considering North Korean missions and holding prayer meetings every Thursday.

<sup>68</sup> Seong-Won Kim, “The Recent Unification Movements of South Korean Churches and Some Suggestions”, *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)*, no. 679 (2015), p. 53.

emerged between the conservative pastors and conservative lay people in their perspectives on missions for North Korea. Many leaders of the conservative churches have, in recent years, tended to acknowledge the existence of North Korean Christians and even the KCF member Christians and have tried to forge and maintain relationships with North Korean Christians. They now believe in the peaceful unification of the two Koreas rather than taking over North Korea. However, research conducted in 2000<sup>69</sup> showed that the laity of the churches, especially the older generations, were still suspicious of the KCF's purpose and the existence of North Korean churches. They still thought that the most important project for the South Korean churches for the unification of Korea was the evangelisation of North Koreans, including establishing Christian communities in the North.

## Conclusion

The unification movements of the conservative churches, co-ordinated by the CCK, have been based on apolitical and evangelical approaches. Conservative South Korean Christians have argued that the purpose of unification would be realised by national evangelisation. Park Young-Hwan, a professor of Seoul Theological Seminary, has argued that South Koreans, as God's chosen people, have a responsibility to expand the Christian message to North Korea, even though the North Korean regime has continuously provoked military conflict. Moreover, the South Korean churches should yearn for the evangelisation of the Korean peninsula through reconciliation and forgiveness between the two Koreas.<sup>70</sup> However, the view of the conservative churches led to a 'dualistic' approach toward unification when they continued to express a strong anti-communism. How could they explain their

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<sup>69</sup> In the research of Hong, the laity of South Korean Christians were poorly informed on the unification movements and theological approaches of their denominations toward the unification. Moreover, the South Korean Christians are still suspicious about the North Korean churches and North Korean government. Seong-Joo Hong, "A Study of the South Korean Christians' Sense of the Unification of Korea" (PhD, Methodist Theological University, 2000)

<sup>70</sup> Young-Hwan Park, "Genesis Perspectives on North Korean Mission", *Korean Journal of Christian Studies* 90, no. 1 (2013), pp. 284-286.

activities in North Korea, greeting North Korean communist officials with a smile in front of the humanitarian facilities in Pyeongyang, while condemning Kim Jong-Un and his colleagues in North Korea in political anti-communist demonstrations in Seoul?<sup>71</sup>

In contrast to the variety of humanitarian and mission activities for the North Korean people they have undertaken, the conservative churches have hardly developed any theological approaches toward peace, reconciliation and the unification of Korea. For instance, they have not engaged in theological reflection on such subjects as how the conservative churches could be brought to a meeting table discussing North Korean *Juche* ideology for a unified Korea, or indeed why it is necessary for the two Koreas to unify. If religious freedom and freedom of travel and publication in North Korea were secured so that the South Korean churches could evangelise the North Korean people, would the unification of Korea then be needless? These questions remain unanswered.

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<sup>71</sup> Park Young-Hwan, a conservative theologian of Christian ethics, criticised that, “the political activities of South Korean conservative churches were regarded as a part of the unification movement or of the North Korean missions and caused tensions between the two Koreas. Hence, the South Korean churches have to metamorphose the structure of political agendas toward those of humanitarian teachings of the bible.” “Unification, North and South Korea, and the Role of Christianity”, *Theology for Mission* 22 (2009), p. 29.

## Chapter 4

### **From Nationalism and *Minjung* Theology to Unification Theology in South Korea: The Contributions of Moon Ik-Hwan and Park Soon-Kyung**

As previous chapters have emphasised, after the Korean War (1950–1953), anti-communism was rife in South Korea and the authoritarian governments used anti-communism as a tool to strengthen their regime. For those living in South Korea, even speaking about unification with North Korea meant risk to their life. Anti-communism also facilitated a harsh oppression of democratisation movements as authoritarian governments persecuted liberal politicians and social activists in the name of national security and anti-communist laws. Thus, anti-communism was a powerful tool for the authoritarian leaders of South Korea to use to suppress democracy. In this context, social activists against the authoritarian governments – the so-called *Jaeya* – came to believe that democratisation could not be separated from the unification of Korea. Liberal Protestant churches engaged in social issues like labourers’ rights in urban industries and they later spoke out in favour of the democratisation of South Korea. They developed *Minjung* theology,<sup>1</sup> a contextual theology for South Korea that believes the *minjung*, a term meaning the ‘common people, especially those who are oppressed’, should be the subjects of an authentic Korean theology.

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<sup>1</sup> The first theologian to apply the *minjung* sentiment to theological reflection was Ahn Byung-Moo, who delivered a lecture on the meaning of *minjung* entitled, “A Nation, the *Minjung*, and the Church” at the conference to welcome the professors who had been released from imprisonment by the South Korean government on 1 March, 1975 at the Saemoonan Church in Seoul. Chang-Rak Kim, “*Minjung*’s Liberation Movement and *Minjung* Theology: Focusing on the *Minjung* Movement in 1970s and the Theology of Ahn Byung-Moo”, *Theological Studies* 28 (1987), p. 93. Later, the term, ‘*Minjung* theology’ was officially used from 1979 at the Conference of Asian Theology hosted by the NCKK. The members of the preparatory committee continuously discussed a term for a theology originating in the Korean context. Among terms like ‘theology for the *minjung*’, ‘theology of the *minjung*’, ‘theology by *minjung*’, they agreed to term the theology ‘*Minjung* theology’. Hyun, “*Minjung*, Servant of Passion, and Hope”, p. 11.

In addition to *Minjung* theologians and activists, Moon Ik-Hwan and Park Soon-Kyung developed their own perspectives on the democratisation and unification of Korea. Moon Ik-Hwan was a Protestant pastor who led civil democratisation and unification movements from the middle of the 1970s, as well as visiting North Korea to meet Kim Il-Sung in 1989. He continuously fought against the authoritarian governments and tried to find a way for the Korean people to achieve both democratisation and the unification of Korea. Park Soon-Kyung is particularly notable for her contributions to the formation of theological reflection on the unification and feminist theology of Korea. She developed her own unification theology based on nationalist and feminist agendas of South Korea, as well as the *minjung* sentiment widely shared among the *Jaeya* people. Park spoke fiercely against Western theologies and the mainline Korean evangelical churches for their collaboration with the imperialistic Western capitalism that had devastated the lives of people in Korea. It is worth noting that both Park and Moon worked to facilitate progress in the dialogue between Christianity and communism, as well as between the ideologies of the two Koreas (South Korean free democracy and North Korean *Juche* ideology), and to oppose anti-communism in South Korea, a task that had not been undertaken by theologians and church leaders in South Korea before.

This chapter aims to describe the historical trajectory of the development of liberal Protestant churches' theologies for the unification of Korea after the Korean War, and then to introduce and analyse Moon Ik-Hwan's involvement in the unification movement and discourse and the unification theology of Park Soon-Kyung.

#### **4.1. Development of *Minjung* Theology and *Minjung* Theologians' Various Reflections on the Unification of Korea**

Following the intensive involvement of liberal Christians in the democratisation movements of the 1970s and the early 1980s, as described in the first chapter, liberal Christians, *Minjung* theologians in particular, increasingly turned

their attention to the unification of Korea. They believed that the wellbeing of the *minjung* and social justice could not be realised without the unification of Korea and thus they developed their own theological reflections on the unification. For instance, Choo Jae-Yong articulated a theology for the unification suggesting a few theological principles for the unification of Korea: Shalom, integrity and meeting. He argued that shalom does not simply mean peace and refraining from military confrontation, but it includes peace, joy, co-existence, mutual reliance and social justice. Shalom is a kind of power that enables people to overcome desperate conditions and seek a hope for a new generation. Shalom would be given through the grace of God. The second principle, integrity, according to Choo Jae-Yong, does not refer to a simple uniformity between the two states, but mutual integration with which the two seek a common goal through dialogue and negotiation. The third principle, meeting, is a fundamental interaction of the two Koreas without any consideration of ideology; they should meet each other with respect and search for a way of relieving the pains of the *minjung* who are suffering as a result of the division of the Korean peninsula.<sup>2</sup>

Later, as the South Korean Government tried to build a new relationship with North Korea and other communist countries, alongside the termination of military rule in 1988, South Korean Protestant churches developed a theological approach to the unification of Korea based on the idea of the ‘jubilee’ in the Old Testament. The idea of the jubilee was also noted in the “88 Declaration of Korean Churches for the Promotion of the Peace and Unification of Korea” in 1988. They argued that the North and South should be unified in 1995, a year that marked the fiftieth anniversary of the division of Korea. 1995 would be a jubilee year for people who had suffered from the division of the Korean peninsula, which would bring freedom and peace, especially to the poor and the marginalised. From the early 1980s Min Young-Jin developed the jubilee idea as a basis for a theology of unification. He argued that the jubilee year is a year of God’s grace proffered toward the poor, the heart-broken, the captives and the desperate. Therefore, the proclamation of a jubilee

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<sup>2</sup> Jae-Yong Choo, “A Unification Discourse of Korean Churches”, *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 25, no. 6 (1981), pp. 35-38.

for these people includes good news, healing, liberation, release and consolation. Min insisted that the proclamation of the jubilee was not violating the socio-political system of Korea, even though Western capitalism controlled the social and judicial system and in spite of a suspicion that the proclamation would appease communists. God has already proclaimed and achieved jubilee by his grace through the coming of Jesus. Henceforth, Min has continuously argued that our actions in comforting those who are hurt, releasing those who are captive, and resolving pain are not illegal either.<sup>3</sup> In 1989, Min asserted that the jubilee law in the Old Testament requires the peace and restoration of people who are laid off from companies, as well as those who are manipulated and deported from their living places and who have lost their freedom of consciousness because of the ideological conflicts in the divided land.<sup>4</sup> Noh Jong-Sun claimed that the division of the Korean peninsula is against the integrity of the creation of God and the unification of Korea proffers a way to restore God's creation.<sup>5</sup> Park Jong-Hwa has argued that the Korean Protestant churches should confess their sins of collaborating in the division of Korea. Moreover, the Korean churches' theology for the unification should seek a just peace and then the Korean Protestant churches could be truly national, representing the *minjung* of Korea.<sup>6</sup> In addition to biblical scholars and theologians in South Korea, Korean theologians abroad organised the Fellowship of Korean Theologians Abroad to discuss issues of democracy and unification of Korea. Communicating with these theologians, Moon Ik-Hwan and Park Soon-Kyung developed their own understanding of the unification of Korea and worked fiercely in both academy and society to achieve their visions of the unified one nation.

## **4.2. Moon Ik-Hwan's *Minjung*-Driven Unification Movement and his Visit to North Korea**

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<sup>3</sup> Young-Jin Min, "The Meaning of the Jubilee", *ibid.* 26, no. 1 (1982), pp. 23-25.

<sup>4</sup> "The Jubilee and a Proclamation of Liberation", *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 33, no. 8 (1989), p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Jong-Sun Noh, "The Division of the Korean Peninsula and a Preservance of God's Creation", *Korean Journal of Christian Studies* 4, no. 1 (1988), p. 131.

<sup>6</sup> Jong-Hwa Park, "National Unification and the Foundation of Unification Theology", *ibid.* 3, pp. 115-116.

Moon Ik-Hwan (1918–1994) was a pastor of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, a liberal Old Testament scholar, a passionate social activist and a poet. This section focuses on his life trajectory: how an anti-communist youth became a passionate unification activist and what was the reason for and result of his visit to North Korea and his meeting with Kim Il-Sung, the founding leader of the North Korean Government.

Moon was born in Manchuria in June 1918, the son of Moon Jae-Rin, who was arrested by the Japanese police for his pro-independence activities. Moon Jae-Rin (? – 1985) was also a nationalist who took part in the democratisation movement against the authoritarian government, dreaming of a democratised and unified Korea. Moon Ik-Hwan reported that his unification activities were strongly influenced by the life of his father.<sup>7</sup> Moon studied at Eunjin Junior High School with Ahn Byung-Moo and Kang Won-Ryong, a Christian social activist, and at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary from 1938, but he returned to Korea in 1941 without finishing his program. After he returned to Korea, he continued his theological studies at Bongcheon Theological Seminary and served a church in Manchuria. When Korea was liberated from Japanese occupation, he and his family remained in Manchuria for a year and then they travelled through North Korea en route to Seoul in 1946. Upon arriving in Seoul, Moon studied at Joseon Theological Seminary where Kim Jae-Joon and Han Kyung-Chik taught. After his graduation from Hanshin University, he was ordained in 1947. In 1949, he travelled to the United States and started a master's program at Princeton Theological Seminary. When the Korean War broke out, he joined the UN Army as an interpreter, and after the war he returned to America and graduated with an Th.M. degree in 1954. From 1956, he taught at Joseon Theological Seminary and he was also elected as a directing member of a biblical translation project with the Korean Catholic Church in 1968.<sup>8</sup> He served the

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<sup>7</sup> Court Secretary of the Republic of Korea, "Record of the Trial of Moon Ik-Hwan", (Seoul 1986.10.7). cited from You-Na Lee, "The Formation and Character of the Unification Theory of Moon Ik-Hwan", *Christianity and History in Korea*, no. 27 (2007), p. 175.

<sup>8</sup> Hyung-Soo Kim, *The Biography of Moon Ik-Hwan* (Seoul: Silcheon Moonwhasa, 2004), pp. 199-357.

Hanbit Church as a senior pastor, but resigned in 1970 to focus on the translation of the Bible.

Moon claimed that he was heavily influenced by St Augustine and Dietrich Bonhöffer. Moon wrote that he was impressed by Augustine's *Confessions* in which a man agonises deeply over his fallen nature and sins. In undergraduate school, living under the Japanese occupation and troubled about his calling for his nation, Moon began to compare his own agony with that of Augustine. When he became a senior in the seminary, he carefully read the works of Bonhöffer who, Moon believed, had broken down the barriers between the world and the church and taught him that the church should be salt for the world, rather than the light of the world: Christians are obliged to sacrifice themselves for God's justice and God's kingdom.<sup>9</sup> Like Bonhöffer, Moon searched for a pathway through which Christianity could transform Korean society into a free egalitarian commonwealth as described in the Bible. However, from his viewpoint, Korean churches had not made any progress toward a better society where God's justice could be realised. For instance, after the 4.19 Revolution, Moon criticised Korean churches for being more interested in their disciplines and institutions than humanity. They had given up operating as a true religion that works for the liberation and transformation of human beings. Moreover, the Korean churches had split into hundreds of denominations and become shameless about their sins of collaborating with authoritarian governments. They had resorted to pietist language about forgiveness and grace, but refused to recognise their social sins. They had lost the true power to resist unjust authorities. To ensure a better society, Moon insisted that churches had to establish a messianic voice against social injustice, even if this put them at risk of losing their lives.<sup>10</sup>

Moon Ik-Hwan frequently emphasised God's justice, especially for those who were suppressed and marginalised, and he argued that leaders and Korean churches should concern themselves with what God might hope for. Moon was

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<sup>9</sup> Ik-Hwan Moon, "Theologians Who Influenced My Life and Their Writings", *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 7, no. 11 (1963), pp. 24-25.

<sup>10</sup> "Some Thoughts on the 4.19 Revolution," *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 4, no. 7 (1960), pp. 84-85.

probably quoting Isaiah 11:3b-5<sup>11</sup> when he insisted that a good leader should work and speak for the people, especially widows and orphans, who are oppressed and encouraged to remain silent, even though they have to live with severe difficulties. Thus, a good leader should be a good servant who regards the pains of the masses as his or her own.<sup>12</sup> The Korean churches should also seek God's justice and peace,<sup>13</sup> fighting against the injustice and corruption of Korean society.<sup>14</sup>

Deep concern for the needy and the marginalised drove Moon to partake in the democratisation and unification movements of Korea. When he was in jail from 1976,<sup>15</sup> he exchanged correspondence with Kang Won-Ryong and Ahn Byung-Moo, by which means he was able to develop his ideas of unification. According to the correspondence sent to Ahn Byung-Moo, his theology on unification reflected ideas of *Minjung* theology. He wrote:

I believe that our *Minjung* theology should develop to a theology for peace if we want our theology to be a theology for unification. *Minjung* are the underprivileged people who are most vulnerable to a war and should be protected. Therefore, *minjung* are always yearning for peace.<sup>16</sup>

Moon's theology developed from *Minjung* theology to a unification theology and later to a theology emphasising peace.<sup>17</sup> Moon's ideas about unification can be

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<sup>11</sup> Isaiah 11:3b-5 quotes, "He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist." (NIV)

<sup>12</sup> Ik-Hwan Moon, "Essential Characteristics of Good Leaders", *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 13, no. 10 (1969), pp. 52-54.

<sup>13</sup> Moon emphasised human flourishing as a condition of peace in the bible. He argued, "Peace in the Bible does not simply mean a state without wars. Rather, it signifies a wholeness which means a healthy, strong, flourishing status of all human beings. There are no distortions and suppressions." "Yearning for the Kingdom of Messiah", *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 14, no. 2 (1970), p. 54.

<sup>14</sup> "A Vision for the Korean Churches", *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 16, no. 2 (1972), p. 39.

<sup>15</sup> Moon was imprisoned six times for violating the emergency measures of Park's regime and national security law and he spent 12 years in jail.

<sup>16</sup> Ik-Hwan Moon, 1989.8.5, Lee, "The Formation and Character of the Unification Theory of Moon Ik-Hwan", p. 176.

<sup>17</sup> According to a letter to Paik Nak-Cheong, a professor of Seoul National University, which was written during Moon's second imprisonment from 1980-1982, Moon developed his idea of the unification of Korea for the establishment of peace in Northeast Asia and the world. He argued that the collapse of North Korea and unstable status of the Korean peninsula would lead to a confrontation between China and Japan, as well as between the Soviet Union and the United States of America. Therefore, a peaceful unification is essential for peace in Asia and the world. Ik-Hwan Moon, "Letter from the Jail: An Idea for the Future of Northeastern Asia and the Relationship between Korea, China and Japan", *Creation and Criticism* 21, no. 2 (1993), pp. 309-311.

characterised as founded on three principles. First, unification should be accomplished by the *minjung*. While the unification movements after the division were mostly led by politicians and governments, Moon believed that the *minjung* should play a central role in unification movements. Second, a unification movement should have a politically neutral attitude. The early unification movements were part of the democratisation movements and therefore opposed to South Korean authoritarian governments and they tended to be sympathetic to North Korean unification policies. However, Moon urged that unification movements should be continued from a neutral attitude toward both North and South Korean society and they should search for a way to bring changes to both North and South Koreans. The third principle was legitimacy. The early unification movements were criticised for the illegal activities of social activists and they could not gain people's support. Therefore, unification movements should operate within legal boundaries and maintain cooperation with the government. In this way, the unification movements would be able to develop social publicity, which could put pressure on politicians and governments to engage more in unification dialogues with North Korean governments.

Considering Moon Ik-Hwan's efforts for the unification of Korea, it may appear strange that he was in fact a North Korean anti-communist immigrant. When he was in North Korea, he joined an anti-communist underground group named the Emmanuel Group. Furthermore, during the Korean War, he worked for the United Nations Forces as an interpreter.<sup>18</sup> When anti-communism was rife in South Korea and the 4.19 Democratic Revolution overthrew the dictatorship of Rhee Syng-Man, South Korean society was unstable and Park Chung-hee seized power through a military coup. Moon Ik-Hwan commented that the military coup was "for a recovery of human rights rather than political greediness".<sup>19</sup> From this, we may deduce that Moon was theologically liberal, but by instinct, politically conservative. However, experiencing Park Chung-hee's authoritarianism, he became deeply concerned about

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<sup>18</sup> Seong-Hwan Lee, "A Prophet Who Has Broken a Cold Wall: Moon Ik-Hwan's Unification Principles and Heritage", *The Radical Review* 64 (2015), p. 91.

<sup>19</sup> Moon-Hwan Chio et al., "The Korean War and a Self-Reflection of South Korean Churches", *The Christian Thought* 4, no. 6 (1960), p. 52.

democracy and the unification of Korea. In 1968, he wrote in an article that only independent individuals can create an independent nation, and the independence of Korea would be achieved with the unification of Korea. Therefore, South Korean churches should search for love, forgiveness and reconciliation rather than factionalism and hostility toward communism.<sup>20</sup>

Emphasising forgiveness and reconciliation with North Korean communists, Moon welcomed the 1972 Joint Communiqué between the North and South governments because it opened a way to overcome the ideological differences between the two countries. Moon argued that in order to promote unification, South Koreans did not need to adhere to the political ideology of South Korea; instead they should look for a better ideology for Korean people through dialogue with North Koreans. He believed that communism and Christianity were engaged in a healthy competition to work out which was better suited to advocate the rights of *minjung* and to accomplish an egalitarian and just society.<sup>21</sup> Hence, South Korean churches needed a theology that South Korean Christians could use to create a dialogue with North Korean communism and thus demonstrate Christianity's ideological superiority. This theology would eventually heal the pains of a divided land, as well as contributing to realising equality and peace in the land.<sup>22</sup>

Even though Moon had been developing his own ideas on the unification and democratisation of Korea, he had not thus far fully engaged in the democratisation and unification movements. However, the suspicious death of his closest friend, Jang Joon-Ha, in 1975, fuelled Moon Ik-Hwan's passion for the democratisation of South Korea and he now became strongly involved in these movements. Lee You-Na argues that the death of Jang changed Moon's ideas of unification towards a nationalist style of unification that emphasised a unification of the people of the two Koreas more than territorial unification.<sup>23</sup> In 1971, he wrote a draft of the "3.1 Declaration for a Salvation of Democracy and South Korea", which criticised the dictatorship of Park Chung-hee and appealed for the abolition of the National

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<sup>20</sup> Ik-Hwan Moon, "Self-Reliant People", *New Family* Mar. 1968, no. 158 (1968), p. 22.

<sup>21</sup> "Korean Churches and Unification of Korea", *The Christian Thought* 16, no. 10 (1972), pp. 54-55.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>23</sup> Lee, "The Formation and Character of the Unification Theory of Moon Ik-Hwan", p. 70.

Emergency Measures and the release of political prisoners. The declaration also emphasised the need for a restoration of democracy based on a separation of three powers: the legislation, administration and judiciary. Due to his involvement in the “3.1 Declaration for a Salvation of Democracy and South Korea”, Moon was sentenced to eight years in jail.

After the “3.1 Declaration for a Salvation of Democracy and South Korea”, Moon came to think that the two goals of achieving democracy and the unification of Korea could not be separated. He argued that “the unification of Korea is a completion of democracy” and that a democracy of South Korea should be “a democracy which can finish this status of division and bring the unification of Korea”.<sup>24</sup> He believed that the unification movement should be a national goal for three reasons. First, the division of the Korean peninsula was a humiliating historical episode for the Korean people that caused harsh confrontations between people in the North and the South, in which North Korea had developed relationships with the Soviet Union and China who fought against South Korea during the Korean War. Second, the unification movement was a humanitarian movement to resolve the pains of the Korean people, especially the families who had been forced to live separately in the North and the South. Moreover, the division had caused inhumane incidents such as the 4.3 Massacre in Jeju and the Yeosu-Suncheon Rebellion in 1948. Due to militant anti-communism, a number of people had been accused and persecuted as supposed communists. Third, the unification movement was a liberation movement for the *minjung*, particularly labourers and farmers who lived in poor conditions and were forced to work with inhumane working conditions. The division of Korea had thus contributed to a distributive injustice.<sup>25</sup>

As a methodology of the unification of Korea, Moon strongly emphasised a unification in which the *minjung* took the lead. He also insisted that a unified Korea would gain a neutral nation status so it would not disturb the four powerful states

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<sup>24</sup> Ik-Hwan Moon, “Democracy and Unification Are Identical!”, *The Voice of People*, June (1985), p. 58.

<sup>25</sup> Min-Hwa Choi, *Why I Visited Pyeongyang - Interview with Moon Ik-Hwan* (Seoul: Nanum Publications, 1989), pp. 37-42.

around the Korean peninsula: China, the Soviet Union, Japan and the United States.<sup>26</sup> In 1984, he wrote an article – “The Current Stage of the Conscientisation of Unification Issues” – which presented a new methodology of unification, balancing the two different social ideologies and systems of the two Koreas. The North should develop an element of freedom, while the South needed to move toward a more egalitarian society.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Moon’s methodology for the unification of Korea envisaged a process of mutual transformation of the two Koreas. His idea was distinctive in the sense that the majority of South Korean people supported a form of unification that aimed at the absorption of North Korea, whereas the North aimed at a confederation of governmental systems, which South Koreans believed to be a strategy by the North Korean communists to take over South Korea and subject the South to a North Korean communist regime.

In 1990, Moon wrote a poem entitled “I Shall Go Even by My Foot”. The poem was about a vision that he had dreamt in 1988:

... living a history in this land means to  
denounce the division with all of my body  
screaming that there is no 38 line  
and go to train stations in Seoul, Busan and Kwangju and ask staff at ticket  
booths  
to give tickets to Pyongyang.  
...  
I shall go there even by my foot  
or swim the Imjin River.  
I do not care even though I might be shot to death.  
I will live in spirit like clouds in the sky...<sup>28</sup>

Whereas South Korean society was full of confrontations between anti-communism on the one hand, and anti-Americanism and anti-imperialism on the other, with apparently little progress being made by the pro-unification sentiment in the South Korean Government, Moon believed that there could be sufficient momentum to take

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<sup>26</sup> Ik-Hwan Moon, “Democratisation and Unification of Korea”, *Voice of the People*, March (1978).

<sup>27</sup> Lee, “The Formation and Character of the Unification Theory of Moon Ik-Hwan”, p. 71.

<sup>28</sup> Ik-Hwan Moon, *I Shall Go There Even on Foot* (Seoul: Silcheon Munhwasa, 1990), pp. 18-19.

a big step toward the unification of Korea as the fiftieth year of the division approached. Moreover, following the June Democratisation Protest in 1987, a new president was elected by the South Korean people. Moon thought that democratisation was almost accomplished and it was time to accelerate the unification movements by engaging the power of the *minjung*. Therefore, Moon Ik-Hwan, the chairperson of the People's League for Democratisation and Unification of Korea, travelled to local cities giving speeches and attending conferences, to listen to various ideas about unification and expound principles of compromise that could be widely shared with other NGOs.<sup>29</sup> At a conference at Yonsei University on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1988, he suggested a peace treaty between the North and South governments and a unification methodology of confederate governments that would allow each government its own military forces and diplomacy. Moon also presented his methodology for a neutral nation status.<sup>30</sup> He thought that civil society, rather than the South Korean Government, could make more progress towards unification and that dialogue between South Korean NGOs and North Korean civil organisations would enable politicians to make realistic progress towards unification.

The experience that made Moon decide to travel to the North was the suicide of Lee Dong-Su, a student of Seoul National University, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 1986. While Moon was delivering a lecture at Seoul National University, Lee set himself on fire and jumped out of the building where Moon was lecturing. Moon was shocked and determined to stop the suicides of college and university students who were involved in student democratisation movements; he thus came to believe that the only way to stop these suicides was through the unification of Korea.<sup>31</sup> He also believed that through his visit to North Korea, he would be able to present the possibility of breaking down the wall built by the Cold War imperialists between the two countries, as well as to discover what Kim Il-Sung and his governmental officials thought exactly of the unification of Korea. He hoped that his visit would

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<sup>29</sup> Lee, "The Formation and Character of the Unification Theory of Moon Ik-Hwan", p. 72.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>31</sup> Choi, *Why I Visited Pyeongyang - Interview with Moon Ik-Hwan*, pp. 43-45.

pave the way for dialogue between politicians of the two Koreas. This visit to North Korea was not a spontaneous event; it had been on his mind for years.<sup>32</sup>

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 1989, responding to the invitation of Hur Dam, a chairperson of the Committee of a Peaceful Unification of Korea in North Korea, Moon flew to Pyeongyang via Beijing.<sup>33</sup> His 1988 vision of dialogue at the level of civil society therefore came true. Following his arrival in Pyeongyang, he joined an Easter service at Bongsudae Church in Pyeongyang and said that the “the resurrection of Korean People is the unification of Korea”.<sup>34</sup> He had two meetings with Kim Il-Sung and signed a 4.2<sup>35</sup> Joint Statement with Hur Dam.<sup>36</sup> The South Korean Government later evaluated the joint statement and concluded that it contained practical and meaningful direction for future dialogue between the two Korean governments. The minister of the Department of Unification of the South Korean Government, Lee Hong-Gu, commented that the statement showed that “North Korea is willing to continue exchange programs as well as military and political dialogues with the South Korean Government. Hence, it brightened the possibility of South-North higher officers’ meeting.”<sup>37</sup> However, the South Korean

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 51-52.

<sup>33</sup> “Arrival of Pastor Moon Ik-Hwan to Pyeongyang”, *Hankyerae Newspaper* 1989.3.26.

<sup>34</sup> The Ministry of Unification of South Korea announced that Moon said that he had visited North Korea to meet Kim Il-Sung. Moon explained that he talked frankly with Kim about the future of Korea. “Moon Ik-Hwan's Visit to North Korea Shocked South Korean Political Society”, *Dong Ah Newspaper* 1989.3.27.

<sup>35</sup> The number 4.2 refers to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, the date when the statement was signed. This numeric title is generally used to name specific historical incidents in Korea such as the 6.15 Joint Statement of Presidential Meeting of North and South Korea and the 7.4. Joint Communiqué of North and South Korean governments.

<sup>36</sup> The statement reconfirmed the three principles of the 7.4 Joint Communiqué, which quotes, “the unification of Korea should be independent, peaceful and involve the restoration of one nation-state.” Article three states that both governments will continue military dialogues to soothe military confrontations and launch various exchange programs, such as family reunions. The fourth article emphasises that both countries shall not aim to absorb another country, rather searching for a phased confederate methodology of unification that guarantees each other’s existence. The joint statement showed that there was a change in the unification policy of the North Korean government from Korean Confederate Governments to a phased confederate system that ensures each other’s independence from military and diplomatic action. The last article of the statement proposes that the statement would a base for future dialogues of the two governments. Lee, “The Formation and Character of the Unification Theory of Moon Ik-Hwan”, p. 77, Lee, “A Prophet Who Has Broken a Cold Wall: Moon Ik-Hwan's Unification Principles and Heritage”, p. 106.

<sup>37</sup> Secretary of the National Assembly, Minutes Sessions of Commission of Foreign and Unification Affairs, 23 May, 1989. “A Prophet Who Has Broken a Cold Wall: Moon Ik-Hwan's Unification Principles and Heritage”, p. 101.

Government also criticised Moon Ik-Hwan for his illegal visit to North Korea, which had caused confusion about the unification policies of the South Korean Government.<sup>38</sup>

Even though Moon had visited North Korea as a leader of an NGO, South Korean churches could not help speaking out on this question because Moon was a Protestant pastor and an Old Testament scholar. In particular, the opinions of liberal and conservative churches were divided based on their political attitudes. The liberal churches commented that his visit to North Korea was a brave action that opened the door for civil society to promote dialogue between the South and North Korean governments. Moreover, the contents of the joint statement corresponded to the opinions of liberal churches on the unification of Korea. In contrast, the conservative churches criticised Moon because he had violated a civil law and he appeared to completely agree with the unification policies of the North Korean Government.<sup>39</sup> On the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1989, representative pastors and church members of 20 conservative Protestant denominations also founded the Christian Council of Korea (CCK), which aimed to represent the voices of conservative South Korean Protestant churches and launched an alternative unification movement with an emphasis on evangelisation and humanitarian work, as described in the previous chapter.

Moon Ik-Hwan was a Protestant pastor, as well as a democratisation and unification activist. He proposed the neutral unification of the two Koreas driven by the *minjung*, rather than anti-communist or communist unification ideas. However, his activities, including his visit to North Korea, revealed a clear division between the unification ideas of the liberal and conservative churches and, ironically, it weakened the unification movement of the liberal churches which were drawn into controversy over the allegedly ‘communist’ attitudes of the NCKK and WCC.

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<sup>38</sup> “‘South and North Korean Governments Should Meet’: The Government Criticised the Meeting of Moon Ik-Hwan and Kim Il-Sung”, *Hankyora* 1989.3.30, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> Jeong, *A History of Unification Movements in Korean Churches*, p. 292.

### **4.3. Park Soon-Kyung and the Reworking of Korean Nationalism, Christian Socialism, and Feminist Theology into Unification Theology**

Park Soon-Kyung was born in Yeosu, a town of Gyeonggi Province, in 1923 and entered Severance Nursing School, Seoul, in 1942. In 1948, she started her theological education in the Methodist Theological University and entered the Department of Philosophy of Seoul National University in 1951. In 1955, she travelled to the United States to study at Emory University where she earned M.Div. and concomitantly earned a Ph.D. at Drew University in 1966. She wrote a thesis on Karl Barth, “Man in Karl Barth’s Doctrine of Election” supervised by John D. Godsey (1922-2010). Having earned her doctoral degree, she came back to Seoul and taught at Ewha Woman’s University for 22 years. During her academic career, the Joint Communiqué of the North and South Korean governments was signed in 1972 and this historical event made her aware that she was called to develop a theology for Korean people, which had the unification of Korea and liberation of Korean people at its core.<sup>40</sup> Park had a chance to study in West Germany in 1974 for her sabbatical year and researched particularly historical philosophy and Marxism. The main theme of her study was how to break down the anti-communism widely shared by South Korean Protestant churches as a prerequisite for the unification of Korea. From 1976, she studied the history of independence movements of Koreans during the Japanese occupation and the history of the division of the Korean peninsula. She discussed how Korean churches could formulate a nationalist theology for unification in various seminars of the graduate school of Ewha and continued to publish articles which argued that the anti-communism of the majority of South Korean churches was anti-biblical and anti-national.<sup>41</sup> Then Park became involved in the Scholars’ Committee for the Research of 6.15 Agreement of North and South Korea in 2000.

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<sup>40</sup> Soon-Kyung Park, “Women’s Theology and Transformation of Korean Churches and Korean Society”, *Korean Feminist Theology* 42 (2000), p. 61.

<sup>41</sup> Young-Min Ahn, “No Hope for the Unification of Korea Unless the Two Koreas Interact with Each Other”: Celebrating the Eightieth Birthday of Prof. Park Soon-Kyung”, *Minjok* 21, July (2003), pp. 75-76.

Ahn Kyo-Sung has studied two contributions of Park Soon-Kyung to the formation of unification theology in South Korea. First, she was the first theologian to articulate a theological reflection on the issues of nation and unification from the middle of the 1980s. Second, she was the first theologian to be arrested and put in jail specifically for presenting a unification theology while some other theologians were accused because they partook in urban industrial missions and democratic movements.<sup>42</sup> In particular, she tried to bridge the huge gap between the North Korean *Juche* Ideology and South Korean Christianity, an attempt which had not been previously made in South Korea. Park believed that the *Juche* ideology should not be entirely repudiated in South Korea since the ideology embraced the consciousness of Korean nationalism of the anti-Japanese independence movement.<sup>43</sup>

The basic themes of her theology were ‘nation,’ ‘unification,’ and ‘women’. She defined a nation as a social group who share life conditions which have been formulated by thousands of years’ history of religion, culture and family and regional relations. However, in the South Korean context there needed to be a new perspective on what made a nation. She claims that a nation means *minjung*, the oppressed, and the poor who have been marginalised.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the prime principle of the unification would be an embracing of the respective ideologies and governmental systems of the two Koreas within one nation-state and society.<sup>45</sup> She published her first book on unification theology in 1986 entitled *National Unification and Christianity*.<sup>46</sup> As the title of the book indicates, she tried to develop a Christian theology on the unification of Korea from various ideas and methodologies of unification in South Korean society. She defined her theology as ‘*Hanminjok* Theology (a theology for Korean people)’. Park has argued that her theology for the Korean people was grounded on the Bible. First, the prophetic faith of salvation in

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<sup>42</sup> Kyo-Seong Ahn, “A Study on the Development of 'Tongil (Unification) Theology'”, *Korean Journal of Christian Studies* 90, no. 1 (2013), p. 91.

<sup>43</sup> Soon-Kyung Park, “Special Report: My Travel Diary in Pyeongyang”, *Korean Feminist Theology* 44 (2000), p. 124.

<sup>44</sup> Soon-Kyung Park et al., “A Nation and the Church: A Panel Discussion”, *New Family*, no. March (1983), p. 46.

<sup>45</sup> Soon-Kyung Park, “A New Paradigm for National Reconciliation”, *The World and Theology* 42 (1999), p. 65.

<sup>46</sup> *National Unification and Christianity* (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1986).

the Old Testament is also a relevant issue for Korean people. A history from the Exodus through to the exile of Israel, and eschatological prophecies during the exile would reveal the accomplishment of the justice of God which would be also achieved in the Korean peninsula which had similarly been manipulated by foreign imperial powers. Second, Jesus Christ was proclaimed as the true subject of the history and ‘God’s revolution’ through his passion, death, and resurrection. He had called *minjung* to join in the revolution<sup>47</sup> aiming at the establishment of an equal and just human commonwealth and the fullness of humanity.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, she argued that the urgent theological issues in South Korea were to address the division of Korea and seek unification which would realise the wellbeing of *minjung* and God’s justice in Korea, as well as in the world. Christians needed a more progressive and realistic theology for those issues rather than being idealistic or theoretical.

Park Soon-Kyung proposed that the situation of division of the Korean peninsula was anti-national and anti-Christian. Due to the division of Korea and the Korean War that followed it, millions of people had lost their lives and the United States, which many believed to be a protector of democracy in South Korea, was in fact responsible for the division and the country’s authoritarian governments, as revealed by the Kwangju Democratisation Uprising in 1980. Therefore, the burden for unification and democratisation rested solely on the shoulders of Korean people and theological reflection on those issues was the most important role for Korean theologians.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, the theological tasks they should undertake should include a dialogue between politics and theology as well as with communism and the *Juche* ideology of North Korea. With this sentiment, she criticised *Minjung* theology because she believed that *Minjung* theology did not adequately bridge the gap between Christianity and communism for a new unification theology. As she indicated, the first generation of *Minjung* theologians were critical of communism.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 173-177.

<sup>48</sup> “Feminist Theology and a Reformation of Korean Churches and Society”, *Korean Feminist Theology*, no. 42 (2000), p. 61.

<sup>49</sup> “For a Foundation of an Unification Theology”, *The Christian Thought* 34, no. 2 (1990), pp. 105-106.

<sup>50</sup> Ahn Byung-Moo insists that *Minjung* theology should search for a way to restore the human rights of *minjung*. This task of *Minjung* theologians is the only way to disarm communists through reclaiming Christian virtues that communism manipulated. Ahn, “Nation, Minjung, and Church”, p.

Moreover, Park Soon-Kyung argued that *Minjung* theology differentiated between the nation and the *minjung*, and the *minjung* in *Minjung* theology is not clearly defined. For instance, Ahn Byung-Moo insisted that the proletariat is different from *minjung* and they have abused *minjung* for many years. Therefore, Park argued that Ahn's understanding of *minjung* was partly based on anti-communism, excluding the North Korean proletariat, and that therefore it could not be a theology for the unification of Korea which must embrace all people in the Korean peninsula as citizens.<sup>51</sup> Taking a stance that differed from that of *Minjung* theologians and the NCCCK, Park Soon-Kyung doubted the beneficial effect of the jubilee theology which was developed among NCCCK member denominations in the second half of the 1980s. She alleged that the jubilee theology and movement among the Korean Protestant churches had not succeeded because the main denominations of NCCCK had not joined in and the movement itself became fruitless. She argued that the jubilee theology should consider more deeply how it could apply biblical jubilee sentiments to the socio-political system of the unified Korea as well as to its ideological basis.<sup>52</sup>

Park Soon-Kyung wrote that Christianity and communism had been destined to talk with each other since the division of Korea in 1945. In her view, *minjung* is a term for describing a nation, which should include communists in North Korea. Therefore, *Minjung* theology for the oppressed and manipulated should be reoriented for the age of Korean unification in order to include all Koreans.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, communists in North Korea are also victims of the division of Korea and the Korean War and at the same time they are the subjects for the transformation and unification of Korea. Park tried to point out the danger of different approaches of South Koreans toward North Korean people. Park asserted that South Koreans should not differentiate North Korean commoners from those who are in governance. It was dangerous that many South Koreans hoped that North Korea would collapse from the

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28. Soon-Kyung Park, "Unification of Korea and an Issue of Feminist Theology", *The Christian Thought* 32, no. 8 (1988), p. 121.

<sup>51</sup> "Unification of Korea and an Issue of Feminist Theology", p. 121.

<sup>52</sup> Soon-Im Lee, "Interview with Park Soon-Kyung who has been always yearning for the Unification of Korea", *Korean Feminist Theology* 61 (2005), p. 49.

<sup>53</sup> Park, "For a Foundation of an Unification Theology", p. 103.

inside. Once North Korea collapsed, it would bring further tension between foreign powers, the United States and China in particular.<sup>54</sup>

Park argued that the first cause of the division was Japanese imperialism and the colonisation of Western powers such as the expansion of the Soviet Union and the United States of America. If the imperialistic cold war was an international cause of the division, Korean Protestant churches' preference toward the American influence was a domestic cause of the division.<sup>55</sup> Park insisted, "the 50 years of the division was a history of colonisation of Korea and Korean people by America and international powers." In addition to the political and military expansion of powerful countries, Park criticised Western capitalism as a cause of the division.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, anti-communism in South Korea aggravated hostility and the aftermath of the division. An aggressive and violent anti-communism blocked all kinds of dialogue between Christianity and communism even though there are some virtues they share with each other. At first, Marxism was concerned with a basic principle of Christianity, namely human equality. Marxists criticised capitalism as mammonism and Christians are also believed to oppose this material mammonism. However, in South Korea, it seems that churches had warped Christian values to advocate capitalism and attack Marxism. She continuously attacked Western churches and the majority of Korean churches which she claimed supported capitalism and benefited from the division of Korea.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, the vision of a free democratic South Korea, which was believed to be a national ideology, had in fact capitulated to imperialism, colonialism, and mammonism, and could not provide a vision and methodology of unification of Korea.<sup>58</sup> She wrote that God's just punishment would force the Korean churches to talk with Marxists and communists to realise a true commonwealth of all human beings and also the kingdom of God.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Lee, "Interview with Park Soon-Kyung who has been always yearning for the Unification of Korea", pp. 46-49.

<sup>55</sup> Soon-Kyung Park, "Korean People and Theology", *The Christian Thought* 33, no. 11 (1989), p. 117.

<sup>56</sup> "Turmoils of Korean People and a Jubilee of Unification Movement", *Korean Feminist Theology*, no. 22 (1995), p. 37.

<sup>57</sup> "Who is Jesus Christ?", *Creation and Criticism* 13, no. 3 (1978), p. 383.

<sup>58</sup> "Unification of Korea and an Issue of Feminist Theology", p. 121.

<sup>59</sup> "For a Foundation of an Unification Theology", p. 107.

As stated above, Park Soon-Kyung harshly criticised mammonistic capitalism and looked for its overthrow by Christianity. The death of Jeon Tae-II was a crucial example of an unjust social system and economy. His death was a salvific death yearning for an egalitarian society.<sup>60</sup> The achievement of an economically egalitarian society would be a measure of an independent nation that would be opposed to ‘the survival of the fittest,’ of Western capitalism. Therefore, Christianity should accept socialist principles which denounce selfish mammonism of capitalism and seek to achieve the liberty, love, justice, peace and equality of Christian teaching.<sup>61</sup> Park presented a terminology of “*Inmin* of God (people of God)” for peace and freedom of human beings. This term is not ideological but practical language. All ideologies and religions should be on placed on the table for a discussion for human freedom and equality. She argued,

[The] revolutionary ideologies such as socialism and *Juche* ideology of North Korea would have limitations. However, they could be theoretical catalysts for achievement of jubilee law of the Old Testament which would resolve the issues of land ownership of a capitalistic system.<sup>62</sup>

Korea is the best place where various ideologies can dialogue with each other and also the reconciliation of Korea can lead to a wider global reconciliation.<sup>63</sup> She argued that a dialogue between ideologies for human freedom had a prototype: the independence movements of Koreans against Japanese imperialism. A history of the independence movement that comprised left and right nationalists was a good historical example which Koreans could follow in order to become one national commonwealth in the future.

She believed that the governmental system and national ideology of the unified Korea in the future would be neither South Korean’s capitalist democracy nor the communist *Juche* ideology of North Korea. She strongly opposed any idea of absorption of North Korea by the South. She has articulated,

The first task of South Korean churches should be a confession of their sins of supporting the idea of absorption and should continuously speak for the

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<sup>60</sup> “Turmoils of Korean People and a Jubilee of Unification Movement”, p. 37.

<sup>61</sup> “Unification of Korea and an Issue of Feminist Theology”, pp. 123-124.

<sup>62</sup> “Turmoils of Korean People and a Jubilee of Unification Movement”, p. 41.

<sup>63</sup> *National Unification and Christianity*, p. 131.

unification of two Korean at an equal status of two Koreas...For an equal unification of two Koreas, the South and the North Korean governments have to drive for a reconciliation of two Koreas and open a door for a vigorous interaction of people in the South and the North. Also, there needs to be a confederate governmental system of two Koreas which would enable local governments have autonomy.<sup>64</sup>

There should be a third way which could compensate for the weakness of both ideologies and social systems for the unified Korean commonwealth and in so doing achieve a new kingdom of God on earth. There would be no discrimination between genders and between the rich and the poor in this Korean commonwealth which would be realised through a reconciliation of North and South Korea. Park specifically presented a methodology for a new Korean commonwealth:

An issue of national independence closely related to a transformation of national societies into equal nations and society. [Christians] should face the urgent issues of Korean people in the context of division and proclaim the coming of a kingdom of God. Also Korean people should make a step from the free Global trade capitalism in South Korea to a kind of socialist economic system.<sup>65</sup>

According to Park, the result of the unification of Korea would be a realisation of peace in Korea and egalitarian society. This is a goal of Koreans as well as of all the people in the world. She suggested the way of socialism as a middle way between communism and capitalism. In her article entitled, "The kingdom of God and Its Transformative Power for Social History,"<sup>66</sup> she wrote an outline history of Christian socialist movements in Europe and in South America. As she studied in West Germany, she emphasised the works of German-speaking scholars who were related to Christian socialist movements such as Johann Christoph Blumhardt (1805-1880) and his son, Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt (1842-1919), Leonhard Ragaz (1868-1945), Hermann Kutter (1863-1931), and Karl Barth (1868-1968). She asserted that the history of Christian socialist movements is very valuable for South

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<sup>64</sup> "The Prospect of the Unification of Korea in an Era of Nuclear Confrontation between North Korea and the United States", *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 38, no. 9 (1994), pp. 200-205.

<sup>65</sup> "A New Paradigm for Peace and Reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula", *The World and Theology*, no. 42 (1999), p. 77.

<sup>66</sup> "The Kingdom of God and its Transformative Power for Social History", *Korean Journal of Christian Studies* 41, no. 1 (2005).

Korea where anti-communism is still rife. The anti-communist and anti-North Korean sentiment in South Korea were deeply rooted in an imperialistic Western capitalism which South Korean churches have deemed as originated from the Christian gospel. However, an imperialistic Western capitalism gave birth to a distributive injustice, war, and terrorisms. If South Koreans do not refrain from anti-communism and anti-North Korean sentiment, they cannot achieve a new one-Korean nation-state for neither will move forward toward God's kingdom.<sup>67</sup> Hence, she has argued that South Korean churches should open their ears to the voice of Christian socialists in South America and Europe who would give a clue to South Koreans of how to overcome confrontations between communism and Christianity. This mutual dialogue between Marxism and Christianity would make a further step toward the kingdom of God:

The kingdom of God shall be incarnated in a human history through a just punishment over 'principles and powers' of the world and through a hope of the poor and the burdened for a new future. It also gives a chance to people to transform the world toward a definite future of the kingdom of God on the earth.<sup>68</sup>

For a transformation of the world toward a new future history, the unification of Korea would be a first step. Hence, the unification of Korea is not a matter of the divided Korean peninsula alone - it is also a question for a world dominated by unjust mammonism.

'Women' is another core subject of Park's unification theology. In particular, she represents the first generation of feminist theology in South Korea. She developed her feminist theology intertwined with a nationalist and unification theology. Women symbolised the pains of *minjung* who were suppressed and marginalised. In the Korean peninsula, women were the worst victims of the war in patriarchic Korean society, and they have not enjoyed complete freedom and equality. If *minjung* of Korea are oppressed and manipulated and at the same time have an ability to transform Korea, women in both Koreas have been the most oppressed and manipulated *minjung*, and yet can be subjects who can make a

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

pathway to a new future of Korea. Park argues “theologically, women’s claim to freedom and their rights should be a starting-point to overcome the patriarchic dominance and social structure and to create a new humanity of men and women, nation and *minjung*, and people in the world.”<sup>69</sup> Hence, women’s participation in democratisation and unification movements could create a new paradigm for movements which had previously been distorted by male dominance of the social and political structure.

For Park, women’s role in the unification movements was rooted in the biblical understanding of spirituality. She appealed to the feminine image of God in the Old Testament as all nature and materials were originated by God. God, the creator and bearer of the world and Jesus Christ who was crucified and resurrected to save the world are reflecting an image of ‘motherhood’ which is different from a traditional patriarchic images of man.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, the Holy Spirit is the fountain and the mother of human communities and the Church is a harbinger of a new kind of human beings and hence of a new world. The Church, as a visible and invisible fellowship of Christians, should have a spirituality of life and love for unifying all kinds of people as well as a power to transform the world.<sup>71</sup> However, South Korean churches and Western churches have lost their feminine spirituality. The spirituality of South Korean churches has become an illusory, selfish, and fortune-seeking spirituality rather than realistic, communal and concerning the issues of the Korean people. In a word, South Korean churches have lost their true spirituality and ability to transform the world and became a proponent for an unjust mammonism.<sup>72</sup> She has asserted, “A feminine spirituality transforms the unjust social and economic structure and the male dominating system of the world toward an eschatological salvation.”<sup>73</sup>

Park also argued that a Korean feminine spirituality could restore the national identity of Korea. Shin Chae-Ho, a prominent historian who lived under the Japanese

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<sup>69</sup> “Unification of Korea and an Issue of Feminist Theology”, p. 131.

<sup>70</sup> “The Spirituality of Korean Feminist Theology”, *Korean Journal of Christian Studies* 4, no. 1 (1988), p. 202.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 207-208.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

occupation, insisted that there are two realms of a national identity: physical and spiritual. He also defined the nation in spiritual terms as an entity which survives among people even though they have lost their home land and government.<sup>74</sup> Park Soon-Kyung thought that the independence movements of the Korean people against Japanese imperialism emanated from the spirituality of Korean people. Moreover, this spirituality was deeply rooted in the consciousness of Korean people who were yearning for the unification and restoration of one Korean nation.<sup>75</sup> However, the division of Korea had distorted the identity of one Korean nation. The divided status of two Koreas had been sustained by anti-communists of South Korea and the imperialists of Japan and the United States. Hence, it was urgent to restore one Korean nation through a revived Korean spirituality which would unify the land, people, and economic resources of Korea.<sup>76</sup>

Park also insisted that the spirituality that Koreans should seek is not illusionary but practical and material. It is different from a Marxist materialism but reinterpreted from biblical teachings. The spirituality should seek for real transformation of the world not just for fortune seeking or for entering an ethereal heaven. In a Korean context, the spirituality should concern the life of *minjung* who are manipulated, oppressed, and poor. Moreover, it will realise not only the unification of Korea but also overcome the dualistic perspective of the rival ideologies of Korea and pave a third way for Koreans. Hence, it is necessary to have dialogue between religions and ideologies.<sup>77</sup>

Unification cannot be realised by theological statements or political propaganda alone, but by practical participation of the churches. Park argued that even though *Minjung* theologians agreed with unification sentiments, they do not make alternative methodologies for unification. For instance, when the NCK did not present an appropriate methodology for unification, she supported it by means of confederate governments which was widely shared by opposition NGOs rather than

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<sup>74</sup> Chae-Ho Shin, "A Theory of Preservance of National Spirit", *Daehan Maeil Shinbo* 1908.8.12.

<sup>75</sup> Park, "The Spirituality of Korean Feminist Theology", p. 216.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

the governmental unification methodology of the Pan-Korean Commonwealth.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, she specifically suggested a mail exchange of separated families between North or South, and meetings between those families. To the Korean churches, she suggested a new interpretation of the Christian gospel with which Christians could challenge a culture of Western capitalism and the issues of the division of Korea. Furthermore, she strongly argued that unification movements should be led by the common people rather than being driven solely by the governments of North and South Korea.<sup>79</sup>

The unification theology of Park Soon-Kyung laid a foundation of unification theologies in South Korea which crucially assessed the contextual theologies such as *Minjung* theology and feminist theology from a viewpoint of unification. Park insisted that theologians should embrace communism and *Juche* ideology in order to achieve the freedom and economic equality of all Koreans. Her argument was highly unusual in South Korea where anti-communism was still powerful.

## Conclusion

As stated above, the first part of this chapter reviewed the development of various theological reflections on the unification of Korea based on the *Minjung* theology. As the Cold War era approached its end in the late 1980s and early 1990s, liberal theologians thought that the barrier between two Koreas should be broken down before the fiftieth year of the division of Korea. They proclaimed the year of 1995 as a jubilee year when God's justice would be realised in the Korean peninsula through the unification of Korea. Therefore, their theological reflections on the unification recalled the jubilee teachings of the Old Testament and also permeated the 88 Declaration of Korean Churches for the Promotion of the Peace and Unification of Korea. Moreover, observing the harsh confrontations between North

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<sup>78</sup> "Historical Study of a Democratic Unification Movement in Korea", *The Christian Thought* 35, no. 3 (1991), p. 70.

<sup>79</sup> "A New Paradigm for Peace and Reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula", p. 85.

Korea and the United States on the issue of nuclear weapons in 1993 when North Korea withdrew from the NPT (Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty), liberal theologians began to raise their voice in favour of a concrete peace in the Korean peninsula. However, these various theological reflections on the unification of Korea by liberal Christian scholars were not shared by the majority of South Korean Protestant churches. As stated above, the major denominations did not join in the ideas of liberal theologians neither partook in the unification movement of NCKK. Rather they founded another church organisation named CCK in 1989. CCK's initial idea of unification was to aim at an evangelisation of North Korea in an imagined situation in which the North Korean communist regime would collapse and South Korea would concomitantly absorb it.

This chapter has also described how the *minjung* sentiment after the Korean War triggered Christian involvement in unification movements particularly with Moon Ik-Hwan's activities. While Park Soon-Kyung developed her own unification theology, Moon worked with NGOs for the democratisation and unification of Korea as a social activist. The momentum which prompted him to leave his scholarly career as an Old Testament scholar was the death of Jang Joon-Ha, his dearest friend who protested against Park Chung-hee's authoritarian regime. He thought that the democratisation of Korea could not be realised without the unification of Korea, and the unification of Korea should be achieved by *minjung*. For the unification of Korea, therefore, he tried to draw people's interest to the unification issues and launched the "Seventy Million People's Campaign for the Unification" just before his death. In short, he made unification issues of Korea popular among South Koreans.<sup>80</sup> For instance, following his visit to North Korea, Im Soo-Kyung, a student of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, visited the North through East Germany on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, 1989 to participate in the 13<sup>th</sup> World Festival of Youth and Students in North Korea as a representative of National Association of College and University Students of South Korea. Even though their visits violated the National Security law of South

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<sup>80</sup> Lee, "A Prophet Who Has Broken a Cold Wall: Moon Ik-Hwan's Unification Principles and Heritage", p. 113.

Korea, they brought progress in dialogue between the governments of the two Koreas and made South Koreans concerned about unification issues of Korea.

As shown in part 3 of the chapter, Park Soon-Kyung's unification theology developed from nationalist and feminist agendas in South Korea. She defined her theology as 'A Theology of Korean Nation', a tool to fight for unification and well-being of the Korean nation and against capitalist imperialism. Even though, there have been criticisms that Korean nationalism would not be relevant for unification discourse, she tried to highlight nationalism in the Korean context from a Christian perspective. Her efforts are valuable as a foundation that could be developed into a new nationalist understanding which would aim for the common good of society in both Koreas, much as Doug Gay has argued from his Scottish perspective:

[Nationalism would contribute to promoting the Common Good] which affirms the dignity and value of each and all within society and finds in the doctrine of the imago Dei a radical presumption in favour of the equality of all people, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, health, ability to learn, wealth or status.<sup>81</sup>

Park also emphasised the motherness of Korean churches intertwined with her nationalist understanding for the unification and her theological enterprises for the unification of Korea were inherited by other feminist theologians such as Kim Ae-Young, a professor of Hanshin University. As a founding member of the Association of Korean Feminist Theology, Park made the unification of Korea into a primary agenda of Korean feminist theology, arguing that the liberation of women of Korea could not be achieved without the unification of Korea. Moreover, Park's Christian socialist ideas for an alternative ideology for the unified Korea were re-examined by Lee Deok-Joo, a professor of church history at the Methodist Theological University in Seoul, who introduced Son Jeong-Do's<sup>82</sup> socialist agendas for the unified Korea. Also, Yeon Gyu-Hong, a professor of church history at Hanshin University, has tried

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<sup>81</sup> Doug Gay, *Honey from the Lion: Christianity and the Ethics of Nationalism* (London: SCM Press, 2013), p. 153.

<sup>82</sup> Son was a Protestant pastor who ministered in Gilim province of China near to Manchuria and also worked for the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea in Shanghai. He tried to found a Christian socialist town in Gilim and support independent movements in Korea. Deok-Joo Lee, "Searching for a Korean Theology in the Unified Korea", *Theology and the World* 66 (2009).

to rediscover the Christian socialism of Yeo Un-Hyung<sup>83</sup> in order to mediate between the communism of North Korea and the capitalism of South Korea. Through historical studies on Christian socialists under Japanese occupation, Lee and Yeon have built on Park's work to make progress in a theological discussion that aims to overcome ideological confrontations between the two Koreas.

Moon and Park believed that the division of Korea worsened the social injustice such as suppression of freedom and economic injustice. They were confident that the unification of Korea would eventually solve these problems of Korean society. Both of them argued that anti-communism blocked all further steps toward unification and democratisation dialogues in South Korea and strongly attacked anti-communism. Park specifically criticised the majority of South Korean Protestant churches which she believed to be strongly wedded to mammonistic capitalism and American imperialism in order to enjoy their privileges under pro-American authoritarian governments. Agreeing with Park's criticism, Moon did not theoretically attack anti-communism but tried to find a practical way to overcome confrontations between the two Koreas and to spread unification sentiment among South Koreans. However, it was ironic that the more unification issues of Korea gained people's interest, the more anti-communism was rife among South Korean society, especially among the majority of South Korean Protestant churches. Even though they poured their energy into softening anti-communism and to restore one national identity of Korea through *minjung* and nationalist (*minjok*) sentiment, difference and hatred between South and North Koreans became more clearly apparent.

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<sup>83</sup> Yeo Un-Hyung was a Christian and a nationalist who also worked for the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea. He tried to mediate between North Korean communists and South Korean capitalists to pave the way for the unified Korea after the liberation of Korea from Japanese occupation. He argued that distributive justice should be the primary task of Korea and presented socialism as the ideology for the unified Korea. However, he was assassinated and his killer remains unidentified. Kyu-Hong Yeon, "An Analysis of Mong Yang Yeo Un-Hyung's Arguments About Reunified Independence", *Theological Studies* 62 (2013).

## Chapter 5

### **Critical Assessment of the Theological Approaches of Conservative Christian Thinkers and Activists to the Unification of Korea, Focusing on Han Kyung-Chik and Kim Young-Han**

Regarding the unification of Korea, conservative South Korean Christians insist that communism should not be a national ideology of a unified Korea and that this unified Korea should instead secure the social and economic system of South Korea, which they believe has proven better than that of North Korea. They argue that South Korea should be an advanced country and that South Korean churches should spread the Christian gospel into North Korea in order to stimulate the North Korean people to transform their country by themselves. The unification discourse of conservative Christian leaders therefore reflects the methodology involving the absorption of North Korea that was implicitly planned by the South Korean Government under Park Geun-Hye.

As this chapter examines the sources for the unification discourse of conservative Christian thinkers and activists, it is worth referencing historical studies on South Korean Christianity. Timothy Lee argues that one of the major reasons for the growth of the Korean Protestant churches is that evangelicalism became intertwined with Korean nationalism under the Japanese occupation and then with anti-communism after the division of Korea. From the early stages of Korean Protestantism, he states, “evangelicalism coalesced with collective interests of the larger society: first with Korean nationalism and then with South Korean anti-communism”.<sup>1</sup> Supporting Lee’s argument, church historians and theologians of South Korea, such as Park Myung-Woo and Kim Young-Han, have argued that South Korean anti-communism indeed contributed to the growth of South Korean churches and the development of South Korea.

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy S. Lee, “A Crucial Factor in Evangelicalism’s Success in (South) Korea: Coalescence with Nationalism and Anticommunism”, *Religion Compass* 5, no. 11 (2011), p. 646.

This chapter aims to present the unification ideas of Han Kyung-Chik, a conservative church leader, and Kim Young-Han, a conservative Christian theologian who has developed a conservative approach toward unification.

### **5.1. Han Kyung-Chik and his Hope for Unification**

Han Kyung-Chik (1902–2000) was a Protestant leader who reflects the rapid growth of the Korean Protestant churches through evangelicalism intertwined with Korean nationalism and anti-communism.<sup>2</sup> Having lived under the Japanese occupation, Han founded Younknak Church in Seoul in 1945, which then became the first Protestant “mega-church” in Korea with a membership of over 100,000 in the 1980s. He frequently delivered sermons about communism and its threat to Korea; hence, he was often criticised for his strong anti-communism, which fuelled people’s hatred for North Korea and caused Protestant churches difficulties in working for reconciliation and unity between the two Koreas.<sup>3</sup>

Han’s anti-communism was formed by his experience of the communist regime in North Korea and related to his vision of a new Christian nation after the liberation of Korea from Japan in 1945. He believed that the new country after the liberation should be a democratic nation that could secure the freedom of the Korean people, and that only Christianity could promote democracy in the nation. Han therefore viewed communism as an enemy of Christianity and democracy in Korea. However, with the rapid development of South Korean society from the 1970s through to the 1990s and concerned about the horrific famines that devastated North

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<sup>2</sup> Brian Stanley, *Christianity in the Twentieth Century: A World History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), pp. 46-47.

<sup>3</sup> Yang Hyun-Hae, a church historian who teaches at Ewha Women’s University in Seoul, claims that Han considered communism an enemy of Christianity in Korea and emphasised national security as a prime goal for South Korean Christians whose country was facing the threat of North Korean communism. Yang argues that Han’s strong emphasis on anti-communism and political collaboration with authoritarian governments to promote nationwide evangelical campaigns after the Korean War brought about ideological conflicts and hatred among South Korean Christians for North Koreans and even impeded South Korean Christians’ involvement in the unification movement. See: Hyun-Hea Yang, “The Faith of Rev. Kyung-Chik Han and Its Logical Structure”, *Studies in Religion (The Journal of the Korean Association for the History of Religions)* 46 (2007), p. 195.

Korea in the early 1990s, Han started to emphasise the need for peace in the Korean peninsula and promoted humanitarian work for North Koreans. The following section examines how Han developed and moderated his anti-communism, which the majority of South Korean Christians shared, and his thoughts on the unification of Korea.

### **5.1.1. Korean Nationalism under Japanese Occupation and Han Kyung-Chik's Vision of a State of Freedom**

Korean nationalism developed in opposition to Japanese imperialism during the Japanese occupation and it became the driving agenda for the March First Independence movement in 1919. Korean Protestants became widely involved in the movement and consequently faced harsh persecution by the Japanese administration.<sup>4</sup> Along with the nationwide independence campaign, Korean Protestant leaders founded schools to educate young students in order to instil Korean nationalism in the young generation, hoping they would work for the liberation of Korea.

Han Kyung-Chik, who was born in Pyeong-Won, a town near Pyongyang, in 1902, studied at a nationalist school, Osan High and Middle School. He entered Soongsil College to study chemistry with a belief that science would be a driving force in the development and liberation of Korea. However, in the summer of his second year of college, he came to believe that he was called to be a minister to serve the Korean people spiritually,<sup>5</sup> and he decided to go to the United States to study theology. He studied English at Emporia University in Kansas and then entered Princeton Theological Seminary in 1926. On the way to the US, he had the

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<sup>4</sup> It was reported that 3,804 Christians were imprisoned, 47 were killed and 12 churches were destroyed by the Japanese police. Compared to the Christian population at that time (less than 2% of the total population), the number of Christians who were accused by the Japanese administration of joining the uprising was very high (23% of the total number of the accused). See: Kyong-Bae Min, *A History of Christian Churches in Korea* (Seoul, Korea: Yonsei University Press, 2005), p. 307.

<sup>5</sup> Kyung-Chik Han, "My Gratitude: Autobiography", Kyung-Chik Han, *Kyung-Chik Han Collection*, ed. Eun-Seop Kim, 10 vols. (Seoul: Kyung-Chik Han Foundation, 2010), vol. 1, p. 102.

opportunity to stay in Hawaii for some hours and looked around Honolulu. There, he visited a building of the Korean National Association and found two Korean flags hung across the entrance. When he saw the flags, he said, he could not stop crying because he had not seen Korean flags in Korea since the March First Movement and in Korea it was still too risky to display or own Korean national flags. He often recalled this experience and said that nobody who hadn't experienced it could imagine how terrible it would be to live without their mother country.<sup>6</sup>

Upon returning to Korea in 1932, Han had three questions in mind: first, how they could evangelise and transform the Korean people to live by the word of God; second, how they could develop the economy of the rural areas and help people live better lives; and third, how they could achieve liberation from Japanese imperialism and initiate the holistic progress of the country toward a better Korea, guaranteeing freedom for all its people.<sup>7</sup> Han first worked as a teacher in Soongin Commercial School in Pyongyang. However, he taught for less than a year because the Japanese authorities prevented him from teaching students. In light of this, in 1933, he decided to move to Sinuiju to minister at the Second Church of Sinuiju. However, he became frustrated with his church ministry because of the heavy surveillance and pressure from the Japanese administration.<sup>8</sup> Finally, he was forced to resign from the church and founded an orphanage called Brinwon in 1939.

Upon the liberation of Korea in 1945, Han was asked to join the Sinuiju Self-Government Association, which took over authority from the Japanese administration before the arrival of the Allied armies. However, the Soviet army advanced into the northern part of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and the US army into the southern

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<sup>6</sup> He was also amazed by and admiring of the American people who enjoyed such freedoms as political and civic expression. After that, he considered the United States the model country that Korea should emulate. Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>8</sup> From the 1930s, Japan forcefully imposed imperial rule upon Koreans, manifested in such policies as the mandatory use of Japanese names and the Japanese language. They controlled all school systems and even religious organisations. Their pressure on Korean churches was at its peak when they required pastors and church members to worship at Shinto shrines. In spite of some pastors' protests, most denominations decided to follow the order of the Japanese administration. For instance, the Presbyterian Church in Korea adopted Shinto worship in 1938, stating that Shinto was not a religion and did not violate Christian beliefs and doctrine. See: Chung-Shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, Korean Studies of the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies (Seattle University of Washington Press, 2003), p. 155.

part. Han was worried that the communists would govern the North and so he organised an anti-communist political party in 1945 with Yun Ha-young, a pastor in Sinuiju. The name of the political party was originally the Christian Socialist Democratic Party, although soon afterwards they changed the name to the Socialist Democratic Party to make it more popular with secular society.<sup>9</sup> Soon after the communists organised regional governments, they started to persecute and arrest the members of the Socialist Democratic Party as they disbanded all opposing political parties.<sup>10</sup> Threatened by the communists in North Korea, Han then fled to the South and started to promote anti-communism there.

### **5.1.2. Han Kyung-Chik and his Anti-Communism**

After he arrived and settled in Seoul, Han founded Younknak Presbyterian Church with 27 other Koreans who had fled from the North. As soon as he arrived in Seoul, his preaching contained patriotic and anti-communist messages. He preached on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1945 that the Church should be “the spiritual shield and castle of a nation, the pillar of cloud that leads the people wandering in the desert...the shelter for the tired, and the refuge for the persecuted”.<sup>11</sup> In Korea, according to Han, the Church should provide spiritual and ideological guidance for Christians against materialism and communism. In his view, therefore, Christians ought to contribute to the foundation of a new Korean government after the liberation, to mitigate ideological conflict between political leftists and rightists. Han argued that Christians

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<sup>9</sup> In a television interview, he stated that he had decided to organise the Socialist Democratic Party firstly to stand against the Communist Party supported by the Soviet Union, and secondly to work for the poor population in Korea. Economic egalitarianism was a major part of the Communist Party’s propaganda that attracted the Korean population. It is apparent that Han was also concerned about the poverty of the Korean people as he ran an orphanage in Sinuiju and chose the name of the political party to put across his vision of humans flourishing through the Gospel and to attract the population in the northern part of Korea. KBS, “Living and Thinking”, (Seoul: Korean Broadcasting System 1989).

<sup>10</sup> H. Merrell Benninghoff, “The Political Adviser in Korea (Benninghoff) to the Secretary of State”, ed. US Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945. The British Commonwealth, the Far East, Korea (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1945), p. 1066.

<sup>11</sup> Kyung-Chik Han, “What is Church?”, sermon in 1945, Han, *Kyung-Chik Han Collection*, vol. 6, p. 131.

had to respect the government because governments are instituted to punish wrongdoers and establish order in society, as written in Romans 13:3a, which he quoted: “For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong”.<sup>12</sup> However, he believed that if the authority did not acknowledge God as its source of authority and in its functions, it would be corrupted and violent dictators would appear. Hence, it was important that Christianity was the foundation of a new South Korean Government. Han presented the United States as a model for the new South Korean Government, stating that, “amongst all the nations up to the present, the United States is the most blessed peaceful nation in the world”.<sup>13</sup> In Han’s view, Christians should promote what he saw as the democratic virtues of Christianity through evangelisation of the Korean population, which he viewed as the prime means of politically engaging people (presuming that Christians would be the best citizens for a new South Korean society).

Even though there had been conflicts between Christians and communists before the liberation, these did not cause severe problems because the two groups shared the common goal of defeating Japan and achieving the liberation of Korea. However, their antagonism surfaced when communists argued that Christianity was an import of Western imperialism and “an opiate of people”.<sup>14</sup> Christians, in turn, alleged that the communists were violent and only promoting a revolutionary uprising against Japanese rule in order to make Korea a communist country. The tension between Christians and communists in South Korea worsened after the division of the country because South Koreans, under the United States Army Military Government, intended to organise a new government in the South. Rightists and leftists both tried to take power through national campaigns, but violence and terrorism drove the nation into chaos. In this deteriorating situation, the United States

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<sup>12</sup> New International Version.

<sup>13</sup> Kyung-Chik Han, “Christianity and Politics”, sermon in 1946, Han, *Kyung-Chik Han Collection*, vol. 4, p. 412.

<sup>14</sup> Lee, “A Crucial Factor in Evangelicalism's Success in (South) Korea: Coalescence with Nationalism and Anticommunism”, p. 652.

Army Military Government was anti-communist, favouring rightist politicians like Rhee Syng-Man and supporting evangelical Christians against leftists.<sup>15</sup>

As a leading evangelical, Han saw communism as an enemy of Christianity and the new democratic nation because, he believed, communists did not believe in a supreme spiritual being and were only concerned with conquering the whole country. He attacked the communists' materialism, insisting that they were ignorant about "religion, morals, and art" and even that they disparaged Korean nationalism because they only emphasised social class and an international network of labouring classes. Hence, Han claimed that, for communists, "liberation of oppressed classes is sufficient, even above national independence".<sup>16</sup> One of the communists' goals was distribution of goods equally among the masses, but Han asserted that a strong, if not dominant, authority was essential for such equal distribution of goods to take place and that this would eventually lead to authoritarian governments, or even dictatorships. In a communist nation, therefore, people's freedom would be negated.<sup>17</sup> Han believed that even though Korea had achieved its liberation from Japanese occupation, there would be no difference if the country fell under a communist regime.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of June 1950, the Korean War broke out and violence devastated the Korean peninsula and the Korean churches. Over 400 ministers and elders were killed and over 900 churches were completely or partially destroyed.<sup>18</sup> In addition to casualties and the loss of infrastructure, the war caused a militant backlash in both Koreas and engulfed the two countries in mutual enmity. North Korean communists attacked South Koreans as forerunners of American imperialism, while South Korea was rife with militant anti-communism. In South Korea, the majority of churches became centres for an anti-communist message. Han of course wanted Korean

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<sup>15</sup> For a detailed historical trajectory of the anti-communism of the Korean evangelical churches and their relationship with the USAMG, see: Dae-young Ryu, "Understanding Conservative Christians' Pro-American and Anti-Communist Activities in the Early Twenty-First Century", *Economy and Society* 62 (2004).

<sup>16</sup> Kyung-Chik Han, "Christianity and Communism", sermon in 1947, Han, *Kyung-Chik Han Collection*, vol. 4, p. 429.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 433.

<sup>18</sup> Min, *A History of Christian Churches in Korea*, p. 542.

churches to be a stronghold of democracy and anti-communism and believed that the evangelisation of South Korea would bring about economic and political development, as well as aiding the unification of the two countries.

### 5.1.3. Han Kyung-Chik's Thoughts on the Unification of Korea

During the Korean War of 1950–1953, vast numbers of North Koreans fled to the South. In particular, 40% of church adherents in North Korea, up to 80,000 in number, were among the refugees.<sup>19</sup> The churches founded by Christians who had emigrated to the South from the North became centres for these North Korean refugees. Younnaek Church was among these and Han insisted that churches should be shelters for people who had lost their homes and come to the South with nothing. Marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Younnaek Church, Han told church members that God had blessed the church because they had helped North Korean refugees to find family members from whom they had been separated during the war, and to settle in South Korea.<sup>20</sup> Younnaek Church exemplifies the phenomenon of North Korean refugees gathering in churches founded by Christians from the North and these churches becoming centres of the anti-communist movement. Non-Christian refugees also took refuge in churches because they were relief agents that distributed aid goods sent by American churches and they were seen as centres of “solace and social association”.<sup>21</sup> The Presbyterian Church, in particular, grew rapidly between 1952 and 1957 by almost 300%, increasing its number of baptised members from 231,473 to 599,111.<sup>22</sup> The growing number of North Korean refugees and churches founded by North Korean Christians meant that the majority of Protestant churches tended to

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<sup>19</sup> Lee, “A Crucial Factor in Evangelicalism's Success in (South) Korea: Coalescence with Nationalism and Anticommunism”, p. 653.

<sup>20</sup> Kyung-Chik Han, “10 years' Blessing of God”, (sermon, 4 December 1955), Kyung-Chik Han, *Han Kyung-Chik Moksa Solgyo Chonjip (Collected Sermons of Kyung-Chik Han)*, ed. Eun-Seop Kim, 18 vols. (Seoul: Kyung-Chik Han Foundation, 2009), vol. 2, p. 115.

<sup>21</sup> Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, p. 43.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

become more anti-communist; their anti-communism favoured the South Korean Government led by Rhee Syng-Man, and evangelical churches in the US.<sup>23</sup>

After the Korean War, both North and South Korea poured all their energies into economic reconstruction with the help of international networks through the USSR and US respectively. While North Korea had a large amount of natural resources, power plants and factories, South Korea suffered from shortages of food, manufacturing, power and natural resources. Therefore, the GNP of North Korea was higher than that of South Korea until the middle of the 1970s.<sup>24</sup> North Korea was richer and stronger than South Korea for two decades after the Korean War and many South Koreans feared that the North would invade the South again. However, Rhee's fundamentally anti-communist government manipulated South Koreans' anti-communism and enmity against the North and succeeded in establishing a dictatorship. Moreover, Rhee's government officially proclaimed that the South Korean and the US army should engage in military acts to absorb North Korea.<sup>25</sup>

Like other evangelical leaders, Han supported unification through the takeover of North Korea. He insisted that South Korea needed to be a stronger nation in order to absorb the North. In 1955, he preached:

Is there someone like Achan among us? Then we should confess our sins and be transformed. Then we can march to the North and achieve the unification. Are you hoping for the unification of Korea? Is the unification possible only through words?<sup>26</sup>

He argued that South Koreans should confess their sins and shed their selfish desires in order to become sincere Christians who could transform the country and engender

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<sup>23</sup> Ryu, "Understanding Conservative Christians' Pro-American and Anti-Communist Activities in the Early Twenty-First Century", p. 68. Even though the major religious bodies, such as Catholics and Buddhists, upheld anti-communism before and after the Korean War, the South Korean churches were mostly favoured by the Rhee government and the evangelical churches in the US for promoting anti-communism among South Korean Christians and South Korean society.

<sup>24</sup> Seok-Ryul Hong, "North Korea's Proposal of Economic Cooperation with South Korea around the Time of the 4.19 Revolution in 1960 and the Current Situation of Economic Cooperation of the Two Koreas", *Journal of Unification Study* (2000), p. 124.

<sup>25</sup> Seok-Ryul Hong and Chang-Hyun Jeong, "Marking the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Liberation of Korea: A History of Division and the Unification Movement", *Quarterly Review of Korean History* 16 (1995), p. 48.

<sup>26</sup> Kyung-Chik Han, "Open the Door of Hope!" (sermon, 9 January, 1955), Han, *Han Kyung-Chik Moksa Solgyo Chonjip (Collected Sermons of Kyung-Chik Han)*, vol. 1, p. 430.

national development and prosperity. South Korea would then be strong enough to protect itself and to take over North Korea. His dualistic and militant approach toward unification can be seen in his sermon entitled “Jehovah or Baal?” Referring to 1 Kings 18:20-24, he argued that the three groups in the biblical story of Elijah’s fight at Mount Carmel against the pagan prophets of Baal exemplified the groups of the Korean population.

Tracing the human history of ideology, there are people who contributed to secure human freedom and democracy. However, many people acknowledged themselves as slaves of social hierarchy and of communism in a modern history. Moreover, there are still many people who are hesitant to make the choice between these two groups... We have to make our own decision: Baal or Jehovah? Free human beings or slaves? I proclaim that we have to stand for human freedom and our God!<sup>27</sup>

Acknowledging the Cold War era, he suggested it was time for South Koreans to choose whether they would belong to a capitalist or a communist country. Of course, for Han, choosing democratic governance and freedom for all Koreans meant serving God, and choosing communist governance meant serving Baal. Hence, South Korean Christians ought to work towards unification and one free democratic government, fighting communism.<sup>28</sup>

Han suggested that South Korea should prepare for unification by securing economic development, a high moral standard and an established system of democratic governance and these developments could only be realised through Christianity. Hence, national evangelisation became a critical condition for the unification of Korea. Even after the 5.16 military coup that took place in 1961 and overthrew the South Korean Government led by Yun Bo-Seon, Han emphasised the necessity of national security under a strong leadership. He preached:

First of all, South Korean people have to stop street demonstrations against the government. The government and South Korean people should cooperate with each other to secure freedom and democracy in South Korea... Second, the government should try to develop the economy so that all people have

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<sup>27</sup> The dualistic view of Baal and Jehovah was extensively used in the sermons of Han Kyung-Chik, such as: “Serving the World or God”, “Cultic Religions or Christianity” and ‘South Korean Democracy or North Korean Juche Ideology’. In the sermon “Jehovah? Baal?”, he contrasted communism and Christianity, as well as dictatorship and democracy. Kyung-Chik Han, “Jehovah? Baal?” (sermon, 27 November 1960), *ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 67-71.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

their own jobs... Third, the government have to rebuild the nation and secure the national ideology against North Korean communism...<sup>29</sup>

Han thus clearly stated that South Korea should have strong leadership in order that it wasn't threatened by North Korean communists. He believed that domestic political conflicts might benefit the Northern communists. In the era of political turmoil of South Korea following the military coup by Park Chung-hee and his dictatorship, Han argued that an authoritarian government or even a dictatorship would be better for South Koreans than living under a communist regime, and he continuously encouraged politicians to make South Korea richer and better to live in than the North:

Politicians should work hard and earnestly, and manage the economy effectively so that no one in the country suffer hunger, kill themselves, and all people are happy to live in this country...<sup>30</sup>

[The] only way to unify the two countries is to overcome communism; making South Korea superior to North Korea in every aspect of people's lives...<sup>31</sup>

Han's vision of unification was not a peaceful unification acknowledging the equal status of the two countries, but rather a non-aggressive takeover of North Korea by the South through the exercise of overwhelming power. Han's vision for unification did not alter, even when the governments of the North and South signed the 7.4 Joint Communiqué in 1972. At first, he welcomed the agreement between the two governments for its progress toward a unification discourse, but at the same time he warned that there was a possibility that communists might cheat South Koreans by instilling in them the delusion that communism was acceptable. He also emphasised that "the unification without any interference of foreign powers" should not mean that the UN was excluded from discourse and negotiations in the process of the unification of the two Koreas. He asserted that it might be difficult to overcome the

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>30</sup> Kyung-Chik Han, "When the River Jordan Overflows" (sermon, 15 November 1964), *ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 62.

<sup>31</sup> Kyung-Chik Han, "Emptied House" (sermon, 6 September 1970), *ibid.*, vol. 12, p. 178.

“ideological, social, and political differences” of the two countries in the unification process, but, nevertheless, only a free democratic political culture and state should be the foundation of a unified government. Re-emphasising his strong anti-communism, Han encouraged his congregation to promote democratic values and virtues through education, to evangelise people in order to instil hope for the eternal, to transform South Korean society in order to reduce corruption and the gap between rich and poor, and to always pray for the unification of Korea.<sup>32</sup> He believed that if South Korea became a stronger country than the North, then the North Korean communist regime would collapse and the countries would be unified.

From 1971, when the South Korean economy began to grow rapidly, Han proposed South Korean missions to the North. He argued that if North Koreans were evangelised, the communist regime could be broken down from within by North Korean Christians. For practical applications of North Korean missions, he suggested that South Korean churches use broadcasting networks near the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel line and build huge cross structures that were visible across the frontier to send the message of the gospel to North Korea.<sup>33</sup> For his entire life, he emphasised that Christianity was incompatible with communism and he believed that only Christianity could transform South and North Korea and bring about the unification of the two countries. After the 1980s, there was some change in Han’s approach to unification, however. He started emphasising peace in the Korean peninsula, rather than a militant unification effort through overcoming the communist regime in the North. In a television interview in 1989, he insisted:

We should not regard the relationship between the two Koreas as confrontational... Rather, we have to develop a peaceful relationship with North Korea through dialogue and cooperation with each other. In a word, we have to be confident in a peaceful unification of the Korean peninsula.<sup>34</sup>

He also argued that even communists could be accepted, but only when they repented of their sins and, indeed, only then could the countries truly unify.<sup>35</sup> He

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<sup>32</sup> Kyung-Chik Han, “New Era and Christians’ Responsibility”, (sermon, 16 July 1972), Han, *Han Kyung-Chik Moksa Solgyo Chonjip (Collected Sermons of Kyung-Chik Han)*, vol. 13, pp. 229-232.

<sup>33</sup> Kyung-Chik Han, “Prayer for Nation and Korean People”, (sermon, August 1972), *ibid.*, p. 270.

<sup>34</sup> KBS, “Living and Thinking”.

<sup>35</sup> Kyung-Chik Han, “New Year’s Message”, (sermon, 6 January 1985), Han, *Han Kyung-Chik Moksa Solgyo Chonjip (Collected Sermons of Kyung-Chik Han)*, vol. 17, p. 399.

further began to insist that peace was more important than the unification of the Korean peninsula and that the most powerful peace movement would be the evangelisation of South Korea. In 1992 Han's approach to the peace movement included evangelism and humanitarian work for North Koreans, such as the "Drive for Sharing Rice of Love" and promoting human rights issues for North Koreans.

#### 5.1.4. Evaluation

Han's approach to unification based on anti-communism represents the ideas and beliefs of the majority of South Korean Protestants after the Korean War. As Timothy Lee has analysed, South Korean evangelical churches grew rapidly, coalescing with anti-communism, and their approaches to unification consistently presupposed a victory over the communist regime in the North. For decades, the anti-communism of evangelical churches and their criticism of liberal Protestants who worked for unification in a social and political realm deepened conflicts among Protestant churches and gave the impression that evangelical churches were impeding the unification movement among non-government organisations. Han's anti-communist messages in the pulpit influenced evangelical Christians to view North Korean 'communists' as enemies of God and failed to heal their painful experiences and memories of the North, meaning that they occasionally expressed their hatred of communists in a violent way.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, Han's approach to unification raises some points worthy of remark. First, even though he strongly attacked communism, he did not have a full understanding of socialism and did not fully agree with it, he did think that a socialist

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<sup>36</sup> Some young Christians who fled from the North just after the division of the Korean peninsula organised *Seobuk Cheong-nyon dan* (Northwest Young Adult Association) to attack leftist politicians and they killed Korean civilians they suspected of being communists. See: Lee, "A Crucial Factor in Evangelicalism's Success in (South) Korea: Coalescence with Nationalism and Anticommunism", p. 653. It is still debatable how Han influenced the militant anti-communist Christians. However, Han confessed that he contributed to the foundation of *Seobuk Cheong-nyon dan* as it was organised in Youngnak Church and the members advanced to the social and political hierarchy under the Park Chung-hee government. See: Jeong-Ran Yoon, *Korean War and Protestantism in South Korea* (Paju: Han-Ul Academy, 2015).

agenda was compatible with Christianity, organising a political party in the North called the Christian Socialist Democratic Party. Han also later emphasised economic egalitarianism.<sup>37</sup> His favouring of a socialist agenda might propose a way for communism and Christianity to be reconciled in Korea as a middle way for the unified Korea. Second, his emphasis on the human rights issues of North Koreans and his encouragement of humanitarian work on their behalf brought about a broader concern among South Koreans for those in the North. As a result, many evangelical churches took part in North Korean missions that included various humanitarian works for North Koreans and North Korean defectors, and in educational programmes on unification for South Korean Christians. Third, Han's more recent argument that South Koreans should be spiritually transformed in order to bring about social, political and economic peace and prosperity in South Korea as a prerequisite for unification, rather than an emphasis on pushing for an enforced unification with North Korea, is certainly relevant in the current context of South Korea, where many people still suffer from memories of war and anti-communism. His ideas about unification through the evangelical and humanitarian endeavours of South Korean churches were widely shared by evangelical theologians and church leaders in South Korea.

## **5.2. Kim Young-Han's Approaches toward Unification by an Advanced Country**

One of the common characteristics of the conservative Christian leaders of South Korea was their strong hatred for communism, which they defined as anti-biblical. Further, regarding the relationship between church and state, they argued that the church should not uphold a political agenda and it should not participate in anti-state movements. The unification movement, they continuously insisted, should not be driven by the embracing of North Korean communists. Instead, they emphasised that South Korea needed to surpass North Korea politically,

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<sup>37</sup> Kyung-Chik Han, "Faith and Doubt", (sermon, 8 March 1947), Han, *Han Kyung-Chik Moksa Solgyo Chonjip (Collected Sermons of Kyung-Chik Han)*, vol. 1, p. 62.

economically and militarily. The North Koreans should also be enlightened in order that they could transform their society into a more democratic state, which would ultimately lead to the unification of Korea. However, the transformation of North Korea and the subsequent unification of Korea would not be possible without God's providence. Believing that the Japanese occupation and the Korean War was a result of the sins of Koreans, they argued that Koreans should confess their sins against God and pray for his interference in Korean history for the unification of Korea.

Kim Young-Han was born in 1946 in Busan, a metropolitan city in the southern part of South Korea. He studied philosophy at Seoul National University and moved to West Germany in 1971 to continue his studies in philosophy at the University of Heidelberg. He wrote a thesis about Husser and Natorp and attained a doctoral degree in philosophy in 1974. In 1984, he earned a doctor of theology degree from the same university, wrote a thesis about phenomenology and theology and started his teaching career at Soongsil University. He was ordained as a pastor by the Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Tonghap*) in 1980 and worked with various research organisations for Reformed theologies in South Korea. He also worked for the Committee of Unification Policies of the CCK from 1994 to 1998. Like Han, he developed a conservative theological approach to the unification of Korea.

The following section aims to explain how Kim Young-Han's theology for the unification of Korea developed and what its background was.

### **5.2.1. Reformed Theology and Unification**

Kim's theological ideas about the unification of Korea are based on a Reformed theology,<sup>38</sup> in particular his understanding of Calvinism. He summarised

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<sup>38</sup> Kim acknowledged that the Reformed theology includes a variety of Protestant traditions when it allies with evangelical traditions: "The Reformed theology can be narrowly identified with Calvinist tradition but would include the theological tradition of Martin Luther and even the Methodist Church, the Holiness Church, the Salvation Army and some Pentecostal churches..." Young-Han Kim, *A Reformed Theology for a Peaceful Unification of Korea: Free Democratic Unification Discourse for an Advanced Society* (Seoul: Soongsil University Press, 2012), p. 77. Hence, the reformed theology Kim defines tends to be identical to evangelical Protestant theology.

the characteristics of Calvinism as God's sovereignty, God's providence and human history under God's control, human sinfulness and powerlessness to achieve their salvation, a positive attitude toward human culture, faith in God's calling, freedom of Christians, acknowledgment of God's creation and the natural order, and understanding the Christian faith as a transformative power for human society. He argued that, "All creatures are under God's control and God interferes in every activity of God's creatures. God's providence is so sensitive that it influences the whole realm of human life".<sup>39</sup>

Kim strongly emphasised God's providence in human history and also tried to describe the positive aspects of God's creatures. God's creation is good and all creatures are created to reveal His goodness. Kim further argued that the authority and the governments of human society are also under God's providence and thus they should be respected. Governmental authority was ordained by God and civilians ought to obey authority. Christians have to achieve goodness in cooperation with governmental authorities. However, Christians' involvement in politics should be limited to religious activities, such as praying for governmental leaders and officers, so that God might lead them to make a better state to ensure His justice. Kim's understanding of Christian involvement in politics was closely linked to the attitudes of conservative Christian leaders toward democratic uprisings during dictatorships in South Korea, such as the Rhee Syng-Man government and Park Chung-hee government. They criticised the protests for democracy, insisting that the participants did not acknowledge God's ordinance of human authorities and that this meant they violated His law. Conservative Christian leaders, including Kim, argued that democratic movements might create disorder in South Korean society and give North Korean communists the opportunity to infiltrate South Korean society.

Kim defined "a better political theology" that would stop Christianity from having a preference for human ideologies. He argued that,

A political theology prevents Christianity from being identified with ruling ideologies, such as socialism, capitalism and even anti-communism. An

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<sup>39</sup> "The Cultural and Ideological Characteristics of Calvinist Theology", *Studies in Systematic Theology* 19 (2013), p. 10.

evangelical approach is to apply the gospel messages to political situations using a political theology witnessing God's interference in human politics...<sup>40</sup>

He thus clearly argued that Christians should not confuse Christianity with political ideologies, and they should not involve themselves in political movements. He continuously criticised the political theology of liberal South Korean Christians such as *Minjung* theologians. Kim further criticised a political interpretation of the cross and articulated his own political attitude towards Christians borrowing the theological idea of the crucifixion, as shown below:

A theology of crucifixion does not encourage Christians to engage in political activities for a purpose of the realisation of a kingdom of God. Rather than political movements, Christians are called to proclaim God's sovereignty in political and social realms to achieve a shalom of God in this world... Simply, Christians should not work to gain political power, but should follow the teaching of the cross.<sup>41</sup>

The cross of Jesus therefore does not symbolise a stimulation of political movements against the rulers of Jewish society or the colonial powers of the Roman Empire. Jesus shared their suffering, and the crucifixion was the climax of this suffering. The crucifixion and the death of Jesus brought about a revolution against the power structure and the virtues of Jewish society. The cross of Jesus represented the suffering of the Jewish people and, at the same time, it revealed God's love for all human beings.<sup>42</sup> Just as Jesus represented the suffering of the Jewish people, Korean churches should reflect the suffering Korean people. Kim insisted that, "Korean churches should be national churches that share the suffering and conflict of the Korean peninsula... Korean churches have to regard the divided land and its aftermath as a cross for Korean Christians..."<sup>43</sup> The unification of Korea could be understood in the same way. The unification would not be achieved by political engagement, but instead through the faith of Korean people who would accept their

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<sup>40</sup> *A Reformed Theology for a Peaceful Unification of Korea: Free Democratic Unification Discourse for an Advanced Society*, p. 51.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>42</sup> "Today's Anthropocentric Theological Thoughts and Reformed Thought", *Presbyterian Theological Quarterly*, no. 345 (June, 2013), p. 416.

<sup>43</sup> "Christianity and an Ideology of National Unification", *Churches and Social Issues* 1 (1989), p. 21.

suffering as God's providence and be willing to share in this suffering.<sup>44</sup> Just as Jesus accepted the crucifixion as his duty for human salvation, the Korean churches should bear the cross for the sake of the shalom of Korean people.

### 5.2.2. God's Providence in the History of the Korean People

Kim argued that the history and historical accidents of Korea fell under the control of God's providence. Therefore, the horrific history of South Korea under the Japanese occupation and the Korean War, which occurred five years after the liberation of Korea from Japan, were also under God's providence, meaning that God was punishing the Korean people. Kim argued that the suffering as a colony of Japan was caused by the sin of the Joseon people and that the division of the Korean peninsula was also the result of the sinfulness of the Korean people, who fought each other and divided into two ideologies after liberation. Thus, the division and the war were punishments from God.

The annexation of Joseon to Japan and the following 36 years' colonial period, the division of the Korean peninsula after the liberation, and the tragic Korean War were the result of the sins of the Korean people. The fall of the Joseon dynasty was the result of the fraction of political leaders and their bloody purges. Moreover, the corruption of society and the depravity of social leaders weakened the foundation of the dynasty. The division of Korea was the result of the sins of Korean people, such as those who collaborated with the Japanese administration and those who passionately followed the Japanese policy of worshipping at Japanese shrines (*Shinsa*). Those sins are the reasons for the tragic history of Korea.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *A Reformed Theology for a Peaceful Unification of Korea: Free Democratic Unification Discourse for an Advanced Society*, p. 37.

<sup>45</sup> *The Peaceful Unification and Christianity* (Seoul: Poong-Man, 1990), p. 34. The argument that the horrific history of Korea, including the Japanese occupation and the Korean War, was designed by God has led to harsh debates in South Korean society, especially in 2014 when Park Geun-Hye appointed Moon Chang-Geuk, a Christian journalist, to be the prime minister of the South Korean government. Before the appointment, he delivered a symbolic speech at a conservative mega-church in Seoul, which hints at the way conservative Christians understood the general history of Korea. In his speech, he argued that the suffering of the Joseon people was God's will, in order to discipline and use them for a better cause. He continued, "Joseon deserved occupation by Japan because the Joseon people were lazy and tended to depend on others' efforts. It was the DNA of Joseon people that would be in accordance with communism... God divided the Korean peninsula to protect the South from communists' influence using the United States as a tool for Koreans" (*Hankook Ilbo*, 13 June 2014). His speech caused anger

However, this tragedy of the Koreans was not the end of their history. Following the suffering of the Japanese occupation and the Korean War, South Koreans were able to achieve significant economic growth and the development of a democracy. This is another aspect of God's providence for Koreans. Therefore, Kim argued that it is inappropriate to explain the division of Korea as a result of the structural sin of Korean society. Koreans, he continued, ought to understand the history of Korea on the basis of faith in God's providence and to appreciate His guidance. They should not blame other countries around the Korean peninsula for the division and the war in the Korean peninsula. Rather, they should reflect themselves whether they lived in accordance with God's guidance for Korean society.<sup>46</sup>

Kim believed that neither anti-communism nor the Cold War system in the Korean peninsula was responsible for the division of the Korean peninsula and the Korean War. As stated above, he argued that the Japanese occupation and division were God's punishments for the leading elites of the Joseon Dynasty, who exploited the people, and for the Korean people, who became divided and fought each other for ideological reasons even though God had graciously liberated them from the Japanese occupation. Therefore, the churches were responsible for speaking about the sins of the Korean people and encouraging them to confess.<sup>47</sup> He insisted:

We should confess that the division of the Korean peninsula was God's presence with suffering Koreans through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. God intervenes in the history of Korea and the destiny and the future of Korean people is in God's hand.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, the cause of the division of the Korean peninsula and the Korean War was not the ideological factions of Koreans or the Cold War. The Korean people should understand the cause of the division based on an understanding of God's providence for the Korean people. Therefore, unification would be realised when the Korean people confessed their sins before God and believed in God's providence. Moreover, South Korean churches should proclaim that the current situation of the Korean

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among some South Korean people, especially non-Christians, while conservative church leaders agreed with his arguments.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 36-38.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

peninsula was a tool of God's interference in human history in order to realise His peace in the world.<sup>49</sup>

### **5.2.3. Ideologies in the Korean Peninsula and the Search for the Third Way: the Gospel of God**

Kim Young-Han criticised ideologies in the Korean peninsula because he believed that ideologies had caused factions and conflicts in South Korea since the Japanese occupation. Even the Korean churches had been unable to refrain from ideological conflicts from the 1920s onwards, when communism became influential among Korean Christians. The North and the South Koreans divided into two different ideologies, which were used as a cause for the Korean War and the militant confrontations between the two Koreas. In North Korea, communism became a national ideology and was developed into *Juche* ideology, which enabled the life-long dictatorship and even the 'divinisation' of Kim Il-Sung. Meanwhile, capitalism became the grounds for the economic structure of South Korea and strengthened materialism and secularism, which caused economic injustice and corruption. Kim Young-Han argued that the Korean people needed a third way to ensure the unity of the Korean people, overcoming the current ideologies of the two Koreas that caused conflict among Koreans. He insisted that the third way was the word of God, upon which South Koreans should depend. Then, "human dignity, mutual reliance and understanding, human freedom and egalitarianism, social justice and welfare, and democracy" would be realised in Korea.<sup>50</sup> This idea of the state seems to be a utopia, impossible by human efforts, but possible by God's providence. The ideologies of North and South Korea had failed to achieve the wellbeing of Koreans, but God's words would realise this. The theological approach of Kim Young-Han toward the unification and the role of the South Korean churches was similar to that of Han Kyung-Chik. Kim and Han both criticised the communism as well as materialism of

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

South Korea, which had worsened economic injustice. Kim insisted that the gospel of God reveals the defectiveness of socialism as well as capitalism. While socialism exploits human dignity for political parties and the state, capitalism advocates materialism, which generates human inequality and injustice in human societies.<sup>51</sup>

According to his book, written in 1990, Kim was proposing a methodology of unification based on the *Seung-gong* idea of South Korea that was popular among conservative South Korean Christians. The idea of *Seung-gong* suggested that South Korea should take over North Korea so that the social and political system of South Korea could continue as the basic foundation for a unified Korea. Rather than *Seung-gong*, however, Kim proposed *Cho-gong*, a Korean word that literally means “transcending communism”. He defined it thus:

For many years South Korean conservative churches militantly fought against communism and made South Korean civilians tired of these conflicts... *Cho-gong* means overcoming communism by the gospel of God and the free democratic ideology of Korea... We need endurance to achieve *Cho-gong*...<sup>52</sup>

Kim argued that the ideological difference between the two Koreas would be demonstrated by whether people were satisfied with their living conditions. He insisted that South Korean society should emphasise a just distribution of earnings, which would strengthen the democratic structure of South Korea. He further argued that South Korea needed to exercise ideological tolerance by guaranteeing freedom to engage in various political activities, even for communist parties. Even though the South Korean Government should allow communist parties in South Korea, they would not last long because it would be seen that communism had failed. Behind the *Seung-gong* idea, as mentioned in the previous chapter, was the South Korean confidence that South Korean capitalism was successfully rooted in its society and it had brought surprising economic growth to the country. Based on this confidence, from the 1990s South Korea started to develop diplomatic relationships with former communist countries in Eastern Europe, and even China.

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<sup>51</sup> *A Reformed Theology for a Peaceful Unification of Korea: Free Democratic Unification Discourse for an Advanced Society*, p. 71.

<sup>52</sup> “Christianity and an Ideology of National Unification”, p. 23.

However, Kim's tolerant attitude toward communism in South Korea disappeared with the emergence of the Kim Dae-Jung government in 1998 and the Rho Moo-Hyun government in 2003, which propelled more liberal agendas and policies in South Korea. He now argued that even though the two Koreas would be unified in the future, communism would not be acceptable in the Korean peninsula. Furthermore, he upheld anti-communism, insisting that the Sunshine Policy would strengthen the rulers of North Korea and fail to bring about the unification of Korea. He strongly criticised the North Korean *Juche* ideology and the North Korean regime, stating that they hindered the unification of Korea. He insisted that the gospel message should be spread to North Korea in order to achieve the abolishment of the idolatry of Kim's leadership.<sup>53</sup> An effective methodology for the unification was to stimulate North Koreans to acquire a political voice for the transformation of North Korean society and international interactions with other countries. The unification of Korea would then be realised.

#### **5.2.4. The Unification Led by Educated Citizens**

Kim argued that the unification movement led by the *minjung* would fail because the methodology of the movement did not include the 'majority' of the South Korean population who had been educated and come to enjoy a prosperous life through the economic and social development of South Korea. Instead, he continuously argued that South Korean citizens should take part in the unification discourse. He also claimed that unification discourse should be led by the civil societies of North and South Korea. The governments of the North and South should consider the needs of Koreans and promote discussions between organisations. Kim argued that the South Korean Government should first concern itself with the human rights of the North Korean people, as well as the North Korean defectors. He insisted that, "The unification policy of South Korea should focus on supporting the North

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<sup>53</sup> *A Reformed Theology for a Peaceful Unification of Korea: Free Democratic Unification Discourse for an Advanced Society*, p. 65.

Korean defectors. The wellbeing of North Korean defectors would be a strong message for North Koreans.”<sup>54</sup> Moreover, the unification of Korea should aim to create progress for South Korean society, which he defined as “a unification discourse for an advanced society”. According to Kim’s definition of an advanced society, people would have the opportunity to develop their abilities, meaning they could work in various positions based on their abilities and characteristics and they could thus make society just and peaceful.<sup>55</sup>

Kim insisted that the unification of Korea would be realised when South Korean society was strongly ruled by concrete principles and law and when education and the economy were adequately developed. He considered Singapore a relevant example of *Seonjin Sahoe* (an advanced society). As he believed that the development of South Korean society would be the grounds for the unification of Korea, he tried to advocate South Korean anti-communism as a source of development. He argued that anti-communism was a historical product of South Korean society and that it had helped the South Korean society to be a more democratic and economically developed country.<sup>56</sup> Kim also related the anti-communism of South Korea to the Calvinist idea of culture upheld and represented by South Korean Presbyterian churches. Kim argued:

A Calvinist approach toward human culture enlightened Korean Christians – the majority of early Korean Christians were Presbyterian – under Japanese occupation and stimulated Christians to be involved in the March 1 Independence Movement. The Christians in Korea fought against North Korean communists who started the Korean War, and they have developed anti-communism with which they contributed to the modernisation of South Korea.<sup>57</sup>

For this reason, anti-communism was not to be blamed, but instead it should be regarded as a plausible basis for the development of South Korea. North Korean communism, meanwhile, was not acceptable within the unification of Korea as it was a hindrance to the development of Korean society. His idea of the unification of

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>55</sup> “A Theological Reflection on the Political Participation of the Korean Church”, *Studies in Systematic Theology* 16 (2012), p. 59.

<sup>56</sup> *The Peaceful Unification and Christianity*, p. 39.

<sup>57</sup> “The Cultural and Ideological Characteristics of Calvinist Theology”, p. 34.

Korea represented a widely held view among South Korean people. As shown in the previous chapter, more than half the population of South Korea agreed that North Korean communism would not be acceptable in a unified Korea and that the political and the economic systems of South Korea should continue after unification.<sup>58</sup>

Therefore, what should be the direction for the unification of Korea according to Kim? Unification would not involve the restoration of the one nation-state that existed before the Japanese occupation, but rather the creation of a new state through economic growth and social transformation.<sup>59</sup> First, Kim, like other theologians, argued that the unification would be a realisation of shalom.<sup>60</sup> The idea of shalom that he promoted was not critically different from that of liberal theologians. Shalom is a restoration of relationships: between God and human beings, individual human beings and nature. He argued that these relationships would be restored through the coming of Jesus Christ. The restoration of relationships and peace should be achieved by love.

[The] peace of Christ is different from the peace of the Roman Empire, which oppressed the opponents using their powers. Peace through political and military powers generates mutual distrust and anxiety. However, peace through love would generate mutual trust and reliance.<sup>61</sup>

He emphasised shalom as the wellbeing of people and as a realisation of justice. He argued that, “Shalom should be the rewards of God’s grace for the deficiency of wealth and mental despair.”<sup>62</sup> Further, in accordance with the order of creation, justice should “increase the wealth of the poor and make equal distributions”<sup>63</sup> and this justice would be grounds for the peace of love. According to his understanding of shalom, Kim argued that the restoration of human relationships could lead to mutual generosity and reliance that would be realised by the laws and rules of human society. Thus, governmental organisations and state law could be used for justice and

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<sup>58</sup> “On the Idea of Advanced Societal, Free Democratic Unification in Korean Peninsula,” *The Journal of Christian Philosophy* 13 (2011), p. 192.

<sup>59</sup> “Peaceful Unification and Spirituality,” *Studies in Systematic Theology* 18 (2013), p. 35.

<sup>60</sup> *A Reformed Theology for a Peaceful Unification of Korea: Free Democratic Unification Discourse for an Advanced Society*, p. 56.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>62</sup> *The Peaceful Unification and Christianity*, p. 48.

<sup>63</sup> *A Reformed Theology for a Peaceful Unification of Korea: Free Democratic Unification Discourse for an Advanced Society*, p. 62.

peace and so, for justice and peace, people should respect the authorities and the laws of states.

Regarding unification, Kim argued that the Korean people should emphasise humanitarian aspects in unification discourse rather than the ideological identities of the two Koreas. They should prioritise people's wellbeing and the restoration of one identity for the Korean people. Christians should proclaim this unified Korea as "an example of a kingdom of God in this world".<sup>64</sup> Shalom in the Korean peninsula, being based on peace, would require the "mutual confidence and reliance" of the two Koreas:

First, hatred and conflicts are existential phenomena of individual, social, political and even religious lives. Second, we have to understand the conflicts not from our sides but from others. Third, the two Koreas should promote mutual exchanges and understanding to relieve militant and political confrontations...<sup>65</sup>

For the realisation of shalom in the Korean peninsula, Kim presented some practical solutions. North and South Korea should sign a peace treaty and disarm their nuclear weapons. Christians in the Korean peninsula should proclaim Jesus Christ in order to promote unification through shalom.<sup>66</sup> Churches should pray for the reconciliation and forgiveness of the two Koreas and play the role of healer and reconciliatory agent. Christians should in this regard be voices for justice and even argue for the human rights of the North Korean people. They should be guarantors and work for the peaceful unification of Korea.<sup>67</sup> Kim criticised liberal theologians, particularly *Minjung* theologians, because they were advocating churches for the *minjung* only. *Minjung* theology was an example of the way churches could be taken advantage of by ideologies, he claimed. Churches should represent Christ in this world, meaning they should serve not only the *minjung*, but all people. Churches should constitute hope for North Koreans and insist that North and South Korean society secure human dignity and rights.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *The Peaceful Unification and Christianity*, p. 61.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

This discourse of unification for an advanced society represents the unification discourse of conservative Christians, which explicitly involves the absorption of North Korea through the political and economic development of South Korea. In the early stages of the unification movements led by South Korean NGO activists in the 1980s, mention of unification through absorption of North Korea led to heavy criticism in South Korean society. However, a recent survey of the attitudes of the South Korean people to unification indicated a strong abhorrence of the North Korean Government led by Kim Jung-Eun and a preference for the unification policy of the South Korean Government under Park Geun-Hye. The unification policy of former president Park Geun-Hye promoted unification through the absorption of North Korea.<sup>69</sup> Kim's unification discourse for an advanced society was implicitly based on the idea of absorption of North Korea.<sup>70</sup> However, without the resolution of the hatred and conflict among Koreans, a peaceful unification and a one-nation Korea will not be possible. Further, the recent unification discourses about the absorption of North Korea are grounded on the assumption that the North Korean "democratic people's republic" system would not be compatible with the South Korean "democratic republic" system and, therefore, absorption of North Korea is inevitable in the case of unification. Likewise, South Korean conservative churches recently launched programmes for North Korean missions, targeting South Korean Christians who want to take part in missionary work in North Korea. These programmes are regarded as preparatory programmes for the imminent collapse of

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<sup>69</sup> In the Dresden Address, Park Geun-Hye proposed three policies to the North Korean government: a resolution of the humanitarian issues of North and South Koreans, establishing a humanitarian infrastructure and the restoration of a national identity for the two Koreas. Even though the South Korean government denied that the address was inclined towards the absorption of North Korea, scholars of unification studies generally regard the address as promoting unification through the absorption of North Korea. Moreover, after the address, according to a survey by the Korean Broadcasting System, 70% of respondents stated that they agreed with the unification policy of the South Korean government. Seok-Choon Shon, "An Essay on Substructure of the Unification Idea of South and North Korea Focusing on the Ideas of Unification through Absorption and the Development of National Economy", *The Journal of the Humanities for Unification* 59 (2014), pp. 238-239.

<sup>70</sup> Kim argues that the South Korean churches would not disregard unification through the absorption of North Korea because "there is nothing good in North Korean society for the unified Korea". Just as West Germany absorbed East Germany on unification, South Korea would be better to seek unification through the absorption of North Korea. Young-Han Kim, "Critics and Evaluation of the 3.1 Declaration from the Perspective of a Theology of God's Kingdom", *Christianity and Unification of Korea* 3 (2009), p. 42.

the North Korean Government and the absorption of North Korea by South Korea, and they aim to proselytise North Koreans.<sup>71</sup>

### 5.2.5. Evaluation

Kim's theological ideas about the unification of Korea epitomise the unification thoughts of conservative Christians in South Korea regardless of their denominational backgrounds. His political theology was a counterpart to the political ethic of American evangelicals toward political issues in the US, who valued the priority of inward spiritual development dominant over political action, of personal morality over public policy".<sup>72</sup> Unsurprisingly, Kim argued that the cross of Jesus had not been intended to create political upheaval, but nonetheless it resulted in the political transformation of Jewish society and later the Roman Empire. Hence, he continuously insisted that spiritual transformation, which would be achieved by nationwide evangelism, should occur prior to political movements in Korea or unification movements by South Korean Christians. On the basis of this understanding, he suggested that the modern tragedies of the Korean people, including Japanese occupation and the Korean War, were caused by the failure to achieve the spiritual transformation of the Korean people. He also pointed out that the economic and social development of Korea from the 1970s through to the 1990s coincided with significant growth in the Christian population and, therefore, spiritual transformation should be prioritised over the political engagement of Christians in achieving the unification of Korea. However, historically, South Korean Christians have contributed to the democratisation and improvement of human rights in South Korea through their political involvement. After the unification movements by liberal Christians in South Korea triggered the unification discourse in broader civil society,

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<sup>71</sup> Hyeok-Ryul Kwon, "The Controversy of Closing the Gye-Seong Industrial Complex and Possibility of Unification through the Absorption of North Korea", *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)*, no. 689 (2016), p. 240.

<sup>72</sup> Mark R. Amstutz, *Evangelicals and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 72.

conservative Christians became more aware of the influence of politically engaged Christians and they built alliances with the politically conservative parties of South Korea. Hence, Kim's political arguments in fact contradict the actual political practices of conservative Christian groups in the country.

Kim argued that the overwhelming anti-communism among South Korean churches was a result of the Calvinistic beliefs of South Korean Christians that originated from the era of Protestant reformation in the 16th century. However, he did not explain how this anti-communism is related to Calvinist theology. It can be assumed that he only looked at the fact that the majority of South Korean churches were Presbyterian and became centres of anti-communism. Moreover, some Presbyterian churches in South Korea, such as *Kijang*, do not agree with the anti-communism of the mainline Presbyterian churches, while other non-Calvinist denominations, such as the full gospel churches and holiness churches in South Korea, generally uphold anti-communism. The anti-communism of South Korean churches has been closely related to the history of Korean Christianity since 1932, when the conflicts between communist Christians and others came to the surface and resulted in the harsh confrontations between the two Koreas. Thus, the degree of anti-communism of South Korean churches is more closely related to the religious spectrum of liberals and conservatives than to their denominational origins.

Kim argued that the unification of Korea should be led by citizens rather than *minjung*, defining "citizens" as "educated middle-class people".<sup>73</sup> Recent studies on the unification of Korea have a tendency to emphasise the role of civil organisations and the participation of citizens rather than *minjung*. However, they generally acknowledge the various aspects of citizenship in South Korea<sup>74</sup> in order to emphasise the conscientisation of the common population and the movements towards the commonwealth of Korean society, including the peace and unification of Korea. Further, surveys in South Korea indicate that the older generation, those over 60, are a mostly economically marginalised and academically uneducated

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<sup>73</sup> Kim, "The Evangelical Approach to the Unification of Korea".

<sup>74</sup> See: Tae-Seok Jeong, "The Civil Society of South Korea after 'the Democratisation': Where are the Citizens?", *Hwanghae Review* 49 (2005).

population.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, Kim's definition of citizenship risks excluding the older population, the living victims of the division of Korea, from the unification discourse and movement.

## Conclusion

As stated above, Kim Young-Han's theological approach to unification was representative of the conservative South Korean Christians' thoughts on unification. In particular, his belief that the incidents of Korean history were the result of God's providence was widely shared by conservative Christian leaders. For instance, the Communion of Churches in Korea made an official comment on the issue of Moon Chang-Geuk in 2014 that they agreed with Moon's argument about God's providence in the tragic history of Korea, and Lee Jong-Yun, a pastor emeritus of Seoul Presbyterian Church, argued that Moon's speech was based on a biblical understanding of God's will.<sup>76</sup> Hence, rather than criticising the political powers and the international Cold War, Christians ought to reflect on whether they lived according to God's justice and to spread God's word to other Korean people. This historiography of Kim and other conservative Christian leaders disregarded the political reformation of the Joseon people, such as the *Dong-Hak* Peasant Revolt and the liberation movements of Christians under the Japanese occupation. They were also discomfited by the political engagement of Christians in the democratisation movement and insisted that unification would not be realised by human effort, but instead by God's providence. For instance, Min Kyung-Bae insisted that:

The only thing South Korean churches can do for the unification is pray. We should pray to God to resolve the difficult issues between the two Koreas

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<sup>75</sup> The rate of poverty among the elderly population is 53.1%, which is four times higher than the OECD average. See: Hyun-Yun Cho and Cheong-Seok Kim, "Elderly Poverty and Korean Politics in an Aging Society", [Elderly poverty and Korean politics in an aging society] *Democratic Society and Policy Studies* 30 (2016), p. 12.

<sup>76</sup> Jin-Young Kim, "Interview with Rev. Lee Jong-Yun; 'the Speech of Moon Chang-Geuk was Truly Biblical'", *Christian Today* 13 June, 2014.

and also lead them to the unification of Korea. We should pray that God's providence will stimulate governmental officers to have creative and wise ideas for peace and unification of the Korean peninsula...<sup>77</sup>

A strong belief in God's providence and in the vacuity of human endeavours for the unification process was grounded on anti-communism and distrust of the North Korean Government generated by the nuclear debates and military threat of North Korean armies.<sup>78</sup> However, it has been proven that the conservative Christian leaders did not pay attention to ideological reconciliation and healing the hatred between North and South Koreans. Rather, they tried to emphasise that communism was anti-Christian<sup>79</sup> and that Christians should be warriors in order to defeat the North Korean communists.

Believing in God's providence in the history of the Korean people and that their horrific history was a punishment from God for their sins against his justice, Kim argued that the Korean people, especially South Korean Christians, should confess their sins and live in accordance with God's word. Kim argued that an important aspect of Christian life was respecting civil law and the authorities, which would aid South Korea to become a developed country like Singapore and lead North Korea to unification with South Korea. South Korea, as a developed country, would stimulate the North Korean people to take their rights back and make North Korea a democratic country. However, it is questionable how the Gospel could reach the North Korean people and stimulate a desire for national transformation in them in a

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<sup>77</sup> Kyong-Bae Min, "The Issues of the Unification of Korea Marking the 70th Anniversary of the Liberation of Korea: A Historical Approach to the Relationship between Christianity and Communism", *Korean Reformed Journal* 36 (2015), p. 30.

<sup>78</sup> Kim Young-Han and Min Kyong-Bae heavily criticised the Sunshine Policy of the former governments of Kim Dae-Jung and Rho Moo-Hyun, pointing out that the policy stimulated the North Korean government to develop nuclear weapons and a missile system. They argued that the policy deluded Korean people into thinking that the North Korean government would work for the peace of the Korean peninsula. Kim, "Peaceful Unification and Spirituality", p. 11; Min, "The Issues of the Unification of Korea Marking the 70th Anniversary of the Liberation of Korea: A Historical Approach to the Relationship between Christianity and Communism", p. 25.

<sup>79</sup> Kim Young-Han and Min Kyong-Bae did not agree that the North Korean Christians were real Christians. They argued that the churches in North Korea were a governmental tool to fake religious freedom in North Korea because Christianity cannot coexist with North Korean communism. Kim, "The Evangelical Approach to the Unification of Korea"; Min, "The Issues of the Unification of Korea Marking the 70th Anniversary of the Liberation of Korea: A Historical Approach to the Relationship between Christianity and Communism", pp. 22-23.

situation where North Korea is strongly controlled and manipulated by the dictatorship of the Kim family. Kim Young-Han simply said that this was beyond human imagination, but God would make it true.<sup>80</sup>

Kim, like Han, argued that South Korea should be developed sufficiently to support the expense of the unification of Korea, such as developing infrastructure for North Korea. Kim also argued that in order to be an advanced country, which would bring about the unification of Korea, the Korean people should respect law and authority and even uphold anti-communism. However, anti-communist discourse in South Korean society has been widely used to criticise people who have participated in human rights movements and even the unification movements of the liberal groups. Thus, anti-communism has been used by authoritarian governments to suppress human rights in South Korea. Moreover, it has not been reasonably proven that anti-communism has contributed to the economic growth and social development of South Korea.

As stated above, the unification discourse of conservative Christian leaders advocated a unification methodology involving absorbing North Korea in accordance with the governmental unification policy that was officially proposed by Park Geun-Hye in 2014. Facing the nuclear and missile threats of North Korea, many South Koreans came to believe that the unification of Korea should be led by South Korea, adapting the South Korean political, social and economic system. However, the methodology of absorption of North Korea for the unification generated strong criticism from the North Korean Government in 2014 and might cause a series of conflicts and confrontations among Koreans unless people in both countries achieve reconciliation and heal embittered memories that have endured since the division of the Korean peninsula.

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<sup>80</sup> Kim, "The Evangelical Approach to the Unification of Korea".

## Chapter 6

### **New Christian Perspectives on the Problems of Divided Korea: From *Minjok* and *Minjung* to *Simin* in Search for More Practical and Public Discourses of Peace in the Korean Peninsula**

The unification discussions based on *minjung* discourse and nationalism became transformed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as South Korean scholars came to doubt the possibility of both imminent unification of the Korean peninsula as a one-nation-state and the various approaches toward the citizenry and citizen participation in social issues as an alternative subjectivity for South Korean society. South Korean society had achieved economic development and democratisation, in particular through the June Democratic Protest in 1987, through which South Koreans procured the right to vote directly in the presidential election. Therefore, many scholars now believed that South Korean people were experiencing political and social transformation regardless of their economic background and so they attempted to find a broader term to replace *minjung*, which refers to people who are economically oppressed and exploited. As Kim Young-Han articulated and as noted in the previous chapter, discourse about the South Korean *simin* (citizen) is now replacing that of *minjung*, which previously dominated the democratic and unification discourse during the political turmoil in South Korea, from the Rhee Syng-Man government through to the Jeon Doo-Hwan government. Now, even liberal theologians, especially scholars of Christian ethics, have a tendency to emphasise Christians' role as citizens of the country in various social issues, including the unification of Korea.

South Korean scholars have also become aware of the practical difficulties involved in the unification movement if it is driven by nationalist discourse, for the one-nation-state in particular. Kang Ryang, a senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Strategy, has argued that unification discourses based on Korean nationalism should be reined in for a practical unification process, stating, “[W]e have to escape from the bondage of nationalism for making a practical unification

policy”.<sup>1</sup> Other scholars have agreed that the two Koreas would be better off in peaceful coexistence rather than unification, as the latter would cause conflicts and even militant confrontations insofar as the two countries would uphold their own unification policies for the one-nation-state in order to guarantee their own socio-political systems.<sup>2</sup> This discourse of “postponing unification” or “peaceful coexistence”<sup>3</sup> has been widely disseminated within the academic sphere in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, generally because of the nuclear issues with North Korea and the conflicts among South Koreans regarding their different attitudes toward North Korea. Advocates of post-nationalist unification discourse are “searching for the peaceful coexistence of two Koreas rather than the unification of the one-nation-state and [they] propose researching how Koreans would overcome the aftermath caused by the division of the Korean peninsula”,<sup>4</sup> which has been causing socio-political problems in both Koreas.

For instance, Paik Nak-Cheong has argued that South Koreans do not need imminent unification into a one-nation-state. Instead, he has insisted that a peace treaty should be signed by the governments of North Korea, South Korea, the US and China, and then the two Koreas should develop interactions with each other, acknowledging and respecting each other’s governmental systems. This would be similar to the National Community Unification Formulas suggested by the Rho Tae-Woo government in 1989, which pursued unification through the peaceful coexistence of the two countries preserving a one-nation identity. Paik insisted that true unification would only be possible when the North and South Korean populations could live together without hatred, discrimination or alienation. Hence, it is inappropriate to maintain that the unification would be a single event, happening over a short period and creating a one-nation-state in the peninsula. Rather, the

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<sup>1</sup> Ryang Kang, “Political and Theological Understandings of the South-South Conflicts Problem in South Korean Society”, *Journal of Korean Political Science Society* 23, no. 2 (2015), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Jang-Jib Choi, *Democracy after Democratisation* (Seoul: Humanitas, 2006), p. 217, re-citing Jong-Seok Na, “Democracy, Nationalism, and the Future of Nation-State in the Korean Peninsula”, *Society and Philosophy*, no. 22 (2011), p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Gee-Dong Lee, “The Change of Unification Environment and 『National Community Unification Formulas』”, *Journal of the Korean Association of Northeast Asia Studies* 19, no. 2 (2014), p. 190.

<sup>4</sup> Byung-Soo Lee, “Reflective Introspection on the Relationship between North and South Korea: Focusing on Nation and System”, *The Journal of the Humanities for Unification*, no. 48 (2009), p. 21.

unification of Korea may require a long period of time during which both Koreas make progress in human rights, economic justice and various living conditions.<sup>5</sup> Practically, Paik pointed out that the most important cause for the unification movement is “how to guarantee the prosperity of the Korean population” and therefore the “declaration of a one-nation-state will be subservient to the improvement of the living conditions of the people”.<sup>6</sup> South Koreans are still struggling to ascertain how to bridge the differences between people in the two Koreas and they have become sceptical about imminent one-nation-state unification in Korea. For instance, North Korean defectors still have difficulties integrating into South Korean society and the South Korean population. Therefore, rather than unification itself, Christian theologians are now focused on achieving peace in the Korean peninsula through the harmonious coexistence of the two Koreas. It is thus generally recognised that unification theology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been weakened and diverted to alternative channels. In summary, the recent approaches to the unification of Korea seem to declare that the conventional unification discourse for a one-nation-state in the Korean peninsula is ending.

In this chapter, I will first present the missional understanding of unification discourse, in particular emphasising the diaconal mission of local churches for the peace and unification of Korea. Second, I will discuss the development of the discourse of citizenry in South Korea in relation to socio-political issues, as well as the unification of Korea. This chapter will also examine the Christian approaches toward the unification of Korea from the perspective of securing peace in the peninsula based on the idea of citizenry. Lastly, I will present the recent approaches toward the unification discourse; these have challenged the conventional unification discourse, which was based on Korean nationalism and pursued a homogenous ethnic identity among the North and South Korean population.

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<sup>5</sup> Nak-Cheong Paik, *The Unification of Korea is on-going: A New Way for the Korean Peninsula* (Paju: Changbi, 2006), pp. 76-77.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

## **6.1. Locally-driven Christian Mission for Peace and the Unification of Korea**

The unification discourse of conservative churches has broadened to the realms of local communities and civil organisations. Evangelical Christians began to build a discourse about social responsibility in the 1990s, when Christian bodies organised a number of NGOs, including the Christian Ethics Movement of Korea, which emphasised social responsibility on the part of Christians following the Lausanne Covenant. Facing the new momentum of the evangelical approach to the mission, theologians, especially those in the field of mission studies, argued that the missional methodology of the South Korean evangelical churches was a type of integral, holistic, or diaconal mission that emphasised the churches' servitude of broader society, as well as their responsibility for various social issues.

Some theologians of mission studies, regardless of their denominational backgrounds, tried to apply this missional discourse to the discourse of the unification of Korea in two directions: for South and North Koreans. At first, this servitude was directed toward North Koreans, who had suffered from a shortage of food as well as natural disasters; this led to major unification activities on the part of evangelical Christian groups from the early 1990s, despite suspicion from other conservative Christians who thought that humanitarian aid for the North Korean people would strengthen the communist regime in the North. Later, these groups tried to find a pathway to access the local community in order to promote their unification discourse based on holistic missional thinking. As unification discourse came to include various aspects of individual life within society, some theologians understood the unification movement as closely relating to Christian life in South Korean society. However, the ideas of holistic mission were generally applied to the local ministry rather than the national level of the church ministry.

Yim Hee-Mo, a professor emeritus of mission studies at Hanil University and Presbyterian Theological Seminary, presented a holistic mission approach to unification that specifically emphasised the life-giving work of South Korean

Christians. This life-giving mission would realise the world of shalom where “God, human beings and nature shall live in harmony and blessing.”<sup>7</sup> He insisted:

The division of the Korean peninsula has caused horrendous pain for Korean people in the North as well as in the South, and, therefore, Christian missions should aim for the unification of Korea through reconciliation and healing of those who have been suffering. These missions can be started from the churches’ holistic mission for local communities.<sup>8</sup>

In order to work in local communities for the unification of Korea, South Korean churches should first earn the trust of the South Korean people. There is criticism that the South Korean mainstream conservative churches, coinciding with the industrialisation of Korea, have emphasised earthly blessings and growth of church membership, rather than working for marginalised people. Even worse, news about sex scandals and inappropriate behaviours of some church leaders have frequently appeared in the mass media. Therefore, if South Korean churches want to be influential among local citizens, they have to regain their trust. The primary way to gain the trust of South Koreans is through servitude or a diaconal mission for the local and national community, which would promote shalom through the entire peninsula. Churches should also cooperate with other NGOs to promote peace and wellbeing among the Korean people, as well as all human beings. Yim has argued, “For the holistic mission, churches should make prophetic voices against injustice in society and search for a pathway to work with civil organisations for the common good.”<sup>9</sup> Churches should be spaces of peace and reconciliation in the Korean peninsula, and thus they should invite local residents to work together for this peace and reconciliation, especially when trying to reconcile with those who are still experiencing extreme anti-communism.<sup>10</sup>

Yim Hee-Mo and Cho Eun-Sik, a professor of Soongsil University, have argued that the church should pioneer and promote unification education in South

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<sup>7</sup> Hee-Mo Yim, “Mission as Peaceful Unification Movement in the Division Regime of North and South Korea”, *Mission and Theology*, no. 35 (2015), p. 123.

<sup>8</sup> “The Lifegiving Holistic Mission and Strategy for the Community”, *Theology for Mission* 31 (2014), p. 234.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>10</sup> “Mission as Peaceful Unification Movement in the Division Regime of North and South Korea”, p. 152.

Korean society. Churches have a significant potential to promote peace, reconciliation and the unification of Korea through education in local communities, such as through “preaching, biblical studies, seminars, summer and winter prayer retreat[s], and so on”.<sup>11</sup> Cho has insisted:

Christian churches can initiate an education of forgiveness and reconciliation based on the biblical teachings of peace... [The peace education] of Christian churches would aim to restore the relationship between human beings and God, as well as with neighbours, and eventually contribute to the unification of Korea.<sup>12</sup>

According to Cho, peace education in South Korean churches should be locally- and congregationally-based, teaching Christians how to live peacefully in their environment from an early age in order to create a culture that emphasises peace.

The bottom-up approach to the peace movement in South Korean churches, as promoted by Yim and Cho, highlights the cooperation of churches and NGOs for the peace and unification of Korea. First, focusing on humanitarian aid for the North Korean people, the evangelical churches have struggled to overcome their conflicting position between anti-communism and missions toward North Koreans, which is facilitated and accentuated by a good relationship with the North Korean Government. Second, facing the tension and conflicts between denominations that are involved in North Korean missions and humanitarian aid, some church leaders and scholars have argued that the NGOs should take charge of humanitarian work, based on a belief that specialised NGOs are better than churches, and that churches should focus on evangelism aimed at North Korean defectors and cooperation with North Korean churches. Park Young-Hwan has argued:

[In working for unification] individual churches should cooperate with NGOs, and their cooperation could expand to the denominational level to invite the laity who have a specialty in humanitarian work and currently work for NGOs... While the NGOs’ humanitarian work for North Korean people would shorten the route to unification, the churches would be able to prepare for evangelising work in North Korea.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Eun-Sik Cho, “Unification Education as Peace Education”, *Journal of Korea Reformed Theology Society*, no. 15 (2004), p. 168.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 174-175.

<sup>13</sup> Young-Hwan Park, “The Nation's Christianisation Reform and Reunion”, *Theology for Mission*, no. 13 (2006), p. 230.

Still, there are some theologians and church leaders who argue that South Korean churches should only concern themselves with direct evangelism toward the North Korean people and who view humanitarian work as a pathway to reach and evangelise the North Korean population. They believe that unification movements are denominational or congregational issues, rather than an individual concern. The locally-driven unification discourse has drawn attention to the notion that unification and peace in Korea should be an indispensable concern for all individual Christians, as citizens of South Korean society, and that local churches should work with NGOs to promote Christian peace for South and North Koreans.

## **6.2. From *Minjung* to Citizens: The Changing Subjectivity of Unification Discourse and Christians' Responsibility for Peace and the Unification of Korea as Citizens**

In the modern history of South Korea, various different terms have been used by the government, *jaeya* groups and scholars to describe the common people. Traditionally in Korea, *kukmin* was widely and generally used to refer to people who have lived in the country since pre-modern Korea. However, the term *kukmin* does not suggest that people have political responsibility or rights.<sup>14</sup> When the South Korean Government was established in 1948 and a new constitution was drawn up, *kukmin* appeared in the first chapter, article 1 (2), which states, “The sovereignty of the Republic of Korea shall reside with the people (*kukmin*), and all state authority shall emanate from the people (*kukmin*)”.<sup>15</sup> Based on the constitution, *kukmin* therefore came to indicate people who simply reside in South Korean territory, rather than South Koreans with political rights and responsibilities. Thereafter, under the authoritarian government, *kukmin* was used to highlight the responsibility of South Koreans to serve the state with all their possessions, even their lives, and to

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<sup>14</sup> Myung-Gyu Park, *Kukmin, Inmin, and Simin: The Political Subjectivity of South Korea from the Perspective of a History of Terminology* (Seoul: Soha, 2014), p. 61.

<sup>15</sup> Korea Legislation Research Institute, “Constitution of the Republic of Korea”, (National Law Information Center, 1988).

implicitly emphasise that the individuals of South Korea belonged to their mother country, against the *inmin* in North Korea. During the period of authoritarian governments, instead of the Korean term *kukmin*, *jaeya* scholars and activists preferred to use *minjung*, *minjok* and *simin* (citizen) because they insisted that the use of *kukmin* in South Korea implicitly reflected an anti-communist and anti-North Korea meaning. During the democratisation of South Korea in the late 1980s and early 1990s, these groups began to use the term ‘citizen’ to emphasise citizens’ roles in the issues within their society, country and world. ‘Citizen’ generally meant a political and social entity who voluntarily “protest[ed] against the oppression of the authority of the state and work[ed] for public cause.”<sup>16</sup>

In general, South Korean sociologists have argued that *simin sahoi* (the citizenry) and related movements began with the fall of the authoritarian government in 1987 and they became engaged with various aspects of the South Korean population and their diverse concerns.<sup>17</sup> Kim Ho-Ki has argued that the years following 1987 can be identified as an era of explosion of the establishment’s civil organisations.<sup>18</sup> Before then, public movements within the South Korean population had supported democratisation against the authoritarian government, but after 1987 the South Korean people organised themselves according to their political and social interests and expanded their influence over South Korean society. The notable organisations voluntarily founded by citizens were the Citizens’ Coalition for Economic Justice and the Korean Federation of Environmental Movements.<sup>19</sup> The founding statement of the Citizens’ Coalition for Economic Justice stated:

We cannot leave the task of economic justice on the shoulders of politicians in the National Assembly as well as those in governmental offices. It is us

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<sup>16</sup> Park, *Nation, People, and Citizen: The Political Subjectivity of South Korea from the Perspective of a History of Terminology*, p. 240.

<sup>17</sup> Some scholars in the fields of South Korean politics and sociology disagree with the statement that civil movements began with the diminishing of the power of the militant government in the second half of 1980. Park Young-Shin has argued that the civil movements of South Korean people can be traced to the 4.19 Revolution against the Rhee government and have played a powerful role in the history of South Korea, with dynamic power able to overthrow the political authorities. Young-Shin Park, “The Forgotten Story: Civil Society and Civil Religion”, *Phenomena and Cognition: The Korean Journal of Humanities and the Social Sciences* 24, no. 1-2 (2000), p. 69.

<sup>18</sup> Ho-Ki Kim, “The Structure and Change of Civil Society, 1987-2000”, *The Korean Society* 3 (2000), p. 71.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

the citizens' task...we will start the movement for economic justice and equity. The movement is for the *simin* (citizens), by the *simin* and of the *simin*. Some people might ask why not *minjung*. We would respond that those we encourage to join in our cause are not only the oppressed *minjung* but also all individuals who have good intentions for our cause.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, rather than the terminology of *minjung*, which highlighted the economic inequality in South Korea, or *minjok*, which was used to emphasise the homogeneity of Koreans, these groups emphasised the meaning of *simin*, especially voluntary participation in social and political issues and the possibility of a global network for the unification of Korea in particular.<sup>21</sup> Jeong Tae-Seok, a professor of Chonbuk National University, argued:

While the *minjung* movement's agendas were long-term issues such as neo-liberalism, economic injustice, labour and unification of Korea, the civil movements emphasised a wider range of issues regarding women's rights, ecology, the marginalised, education and social welfare...<sup>22</sup>

Regarding the unification movement, it was an important task for social activists and scholars who were studying the unification of Korea to spread the unification discourse among the South Korean population and to interpret the division and unification of Korea from a different perspective from the conventional theory, which regarded the division of Korea as a product of the Cold War and ideological conflicts among Koreans after their liberation from Japanese occupation. For instance, in a book published in 2006, Paik Nak-Cheong, a professor emeritus at Seoul National University, disagreed that the division of Korea was a result of the Cold War and that it primarily created harsh confrontations between the new North Korea and South Korea. Rather, he translated the division and its aftermath as a backlash against the expansion of the global economy, especially capitalism. Thus, the division of Korea and its aftermath were paradoxical consequences of the

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<sup>20</sup> Park, *Nation, People, and Citizen: The Political Subjectivity of South Korea from a Perspective of a History of Terminology*, pp. 242-243.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289.

<sup>22</sup> Jeong, "The Civil Society of South Korea after 'the Democratisation': Where Are the Citizens?", p. 139.

expansion of capitalism in the world. Therefore, Paik argued that we need a new perspective on the division of Korea:

[Rather than] viewing the division of Korea as North Korea versus South Korea...it is important to view the division as a polarising system of the specific groups who have benefited from the division of Korea and the mass population who are oppressed and manipulated under the division system of the Korean peninsula.<sup>23</sup>

Hence, the North Korean people are not the enemy of South Koreans, but instead a potential ally against a small group of people and a system that manipulates the entire Korean population.

Along with these endeavours on the part of South Korean activists, Paik also tried to find a way to expand the unification discourse among the South Korean population after the democratisation of Korea. Like other scholars of sociology, such as Kim Ho-Gi, he tended to use the terminology of *simin* rather than *minjung* from the mid-1990s, saying that he could not find notable differences between *minjung* and citizens after the democratisation of Korea. Therefore, he insisted that all citizens should be involved in the unification dialogue and movement since the division of Korea had a negative impact upon South Korean society. Although some were critical of his arguments, he maintained that social issues, such as gender equality, economic injustice, ecological exploitation and even democratic development itself, are closely related to the division system of the Korean peninsula.<sup>24</sup> He argued, “[T]he South Korean society is still hungry for democracy... As long as the division of Korea continues as a governing phenomenon in the Korean peninsula, neither North Korea nor South Korea can accomplish democracy in their countries.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Paik, *The Unification of Korea Is on-Going: A New Way for the Korean Peninsula*, p. 81.

<sup>24</sup> Paik and other scholars argue that the division system of the Korean peninsula has been influencing the social system of South Korea. First, facing militant confrontation with North Korea, it has been mandatory for South Korean young men to complete military service for two or three years, based on which they will get extra points when they apply for governmental jobs. This policy has raised gender equality issues and the Constitutional Court has announced that the policy violates the South Korean constitution. Second, as stated in previous chapters, South Koreans were forced to stay silent on political and economic injustice for the sake of national security against North Korea. Third, competing with North Korean communism, the South Korean governments have driven economic development plans that have brought about rapid economic growth, but also created *chaebol* and economic inequality. Similarly, the democratisation of South Korea has been delayed under authoritarian governments that have suppressed the movement in favour of national security against North Korean communists.

<sup>25</sup> Paik, *The Unification of Korea is on-going: A New Way for the Korean Peninsula*, pp. 64-65.

Therefore, the unification of Korea is essential for resolving the social issues in South Korea, as well as in North Korea. However, it is clear that the unification of Korea will not take place in the near future; therefore, it would be dangerous to put aside all social issues until unification is accomplished. Moreover, as the social issues in both North and South Korea were created by a global system grounded on capitalism, Paik has insisted that unification should be regarded as a process that begins to transform the global economic system. He has argued:

The unification is the middle way between the short-term task of Koreans to develop their living conditions in each other's country and the long-term task to transform the global governance, which would guarantee well-being of the global population. Therefore, the human rights movements, anti-depravity movement, preserving nature movement, and gender and economic equity movements can be seen as the elements of the "relevant unification of Korea".<sup>26</sup>

On the basis of this understanding that the unification movement consists of all discourses on the development of the living conditions and daily life of the South Korean population, Paik encouraged more citizens to participate in the unification dialogue and movement. As he pointed out, the Sunshine Policy and the 6.15 Presidential Meeting between Kim Dae-Jung, the president of Korea, and Kim Jeong-Il, the leader of North Korea, created the momentum for South Korean civil society to organise a variety of NGOs for the unification of Korea. The most popular agenda for the form of unification discourse suggested by civic organisations was the discourse on peace in the Korean peninsula and northeastern Asia, as well as the anti-nuclear movement. With the military threat of North Korea and the development of its nuclear weapons programme, as well as the militant confrontations between North Korea and the US that began when the North Korean regime started its nuclear weapons program, social activists insist that securing peace in the Korean peninsula is a more pressing agenda to pursue in Korea than unification itself. Therefore, since the mid-1990s, the peace movement of South Korean civil organisations has been

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

replacing the conventional unification movement that aimed to establish a one-nation-state in the peninsula.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, from the mid-1990s, some South Korean theologians argued that peace in the Korean peninsula was the primary and imminent task of the South Korean churches. Rather than viewing the unification of Korea as an end in itself, they regarded the unification of Korea as the final and essential condition for peace in the peninsula and believed that peace should be an urgent call for Korean churches in the context of the Korean peninsula. Lee Moon-Sik, a director of the South-North Korean Sharing Movement, emphasised:

[P]eace is more important than unification of Korea... We are the people of God yearning for the realisation of God's kingdom on Earth, therefore we should proclaim peace rather than the unification of Korea.<sup>28</sup>

This was indicative of a notable shift in theological discourse about the unification of Korea. The unification theology proposed and developed by the theologians of South Korea was becoming a theology for peace and unification that added 'peace' to the conventional 'unification theology'. Shin Ok-Soo, a professor of systematic theology at the Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary, insisted:

Today's unification theology aims at theology for peace and unification of Korea because peace is a prerequisite and a method for the unification of Korea, as well as the final purpose of the unification of Korea. Moreover, the theology of the peace and unification of Korea is searching for a way to realise a true peace in the daily lives of human beings in addition to the abolition of the division of Korea.<sup>29</sup>

Kim Jeong-Hyeong, a visiting professor at the Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary in Seoul, insisted that the South Korean churches should develop a new theological approach to the unification of Korea, regarding it as a condition for peace in northeast Asia, as well as the world. He defined this new

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<sup>27</sup> Jae-Chul Lee, "Globalisation and Civil Society - Peace Movement in Korea", *Daam-Ron* 10, no. 3 (2007), p. 134.

<sup>28</sup> Moon-Sik Lee, "God's Kingdom and Peace of the Korean Peninsula", in *A Christian Perspective on the Unification of Korea: Transformation from Hatred and Exclusion toward Embrace and Reconciliation*, ed. Woo-Taek Jeon, Research Series of Korea Peace Institute (Seoul: Holy Waver Plus Publication, 2014), pp. 82-84.

<sup>29</sup> Ok-Su Shin, "A Study on the Theology of Peaceful Unification in Light of Kingdom of God Theology", *Mission and Theology* 35, no. Spring (2015), p. 17.

theological approach to peace and unification as a contextual peace theology for the divided Korea.<sup>30</sup> Just as Paik argued that the division of the Korean peninsula was extensively related to the life of Korean people, ideas about peace in the Korean peninsula included various aspects of South Korean society, particularly the social justice issues of South Korea. For instance, Kim Jeong-Hyeong, sharing the theology of shalom with other theologians, argued that true peace means not only a state without a war, but also one that is without personal, societal or cultural violence and that requires restorative justice, as expounded by the Hebrew prophets in Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:1-5.<sup>31</sup>

A notable example among the theologians pioneering the theology of peace in South Korea is Yoo Kyung-Dong, who has spoken about the Christian realism of Reinhold Niebuhr, Christian peace and the unification of Korea. Yoo Kyung-Dong earned a PhD from Vanderbilt University in 2000 and wrote a thesis on the Christian realism of Reinhold Niebuhr as theological grounds for the unification of Korea. In his thesis, he argued that human nature is replete with sinfulness and that “ideals and actions frequently conceal selfish interests, and the pursuit of justice may mask a ruthless application of power”.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, human beings need a realistic moral guideline that emphasises the selfless love of God and human obedience to God’s love, humbleness and tolerance of others. He saw Niebuhr’s theology as providing an opportunity in the Korean context that would encourage Koreans in both the North and South to acknowledge the limitations in their politics that were influenced by selfish interests, to criticise their tragic history of division and the Korean War and to

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<sup>30</sup> Kim argued that the traditional theology of the mainline South Korean churches, such as the theology emphasising personal salvation and the total depravity of human nature that has hindered the social movement of Christians, can be categorised as a theology against peace and should be overcome by a theology of peace and the unification of Korea. Jeong-Hyeong Kim, *A Peace Theology for the Divided Korea*, ed. Kyo-Seong Ahn, Research Series of the Institute of Shalom Theology for South and North Korea (Seoul: Nanumsa, 2015), p. 60, p. 166.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 152-153. In particular, Isaiah 2:4 notes, “He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore”, and Micah 4:3 reads, “He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore” (New International Version).

<sup>32</sup> Kyung-Dong Yoo, “Re-Visioning Reinhold Niebuhr’s Christian Realism on the Road to Korean Unification” (Ph.D. Vanderbilt University, 2000), p. 18.

pursue “ideological tolerance” and a deeper knowledge of God’s providence in the peninsula.<sup>33</sup> From his early years studying Christian ethics, he has developed the pessimistic view that the politics of the North and South Korean governments, or the ideologies of each country which will be unable to reconcile sufficiently to result in the unification of Korea. Rather, he believes that the selfless love and generous spirit of Christianity must be essential grounds for peace and the unification of Korea. Therefore, Christians in both Koreas, as disciples of Christ, as well as citizens of both countries, must play a responsible role in this process. Hence, citizenship, peace and Christian responsibility are critical ideas in his theology for the peace and unification of Korea.

Firstly, Yoo has criticised the traditional Christian theologies of the ‘just war’, as they have also been used to justify wars begun by ostensibly Christian countries, such as the Iraq War started by the US. Christian theologians have acknowledged the necessity of a government protecting its inhabitants and harmonising individual interests through the exercise of governmental authority, which is believed to be granted by God. Further, according to just war theory, the leaders of states have the right to launch wars against external threats under strict conditions. Yoo, however, has argued that even though just war theories provide strict guidelines for engaging in wars, they were actually intended to prevent wars in the belief that justice in the world would never be achieved without peace. Yet these theories are abused, even by Christian states, to justify wars against “so-called evil” enemies.<sup>34</sup> Behind the notion of the ‘just war’ is human nature: human beings are born yearning for power. Yoo has articulated this based on an understanding of Christian realism:

The tradition of realism was based on the pessimistic belief that human beings are naturally selfish and greedy for power. This human nature emanated into international relationships; therefore powerful and wealthy countries are regarded as the most important grounds for building up

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<sup>33</sup> *The Unification of Korea and the Christian Peace*, ed. Young-Sang Rho, Research Series of the Institute of Shalom Theology for South and North Korea (Seoul: Nanumsa, 2012), p. 234.

<sup>34</sup> “Peace and War, and the Responsibility of the Christian Ethics in the Post-Modern Era,” *Theology and the World* 62 (2008), p. 260.

international relationships. Moreover, all countries are pouring their energies into creating national power and wealth.<sup>35</sup>

Creation of national wealth and power as the primary objective of countries has caused conflicts and even wars in human history. Even in the post-modern world, people are seeing that governments of countries both explicitly and implicitly fight each other in order to possess more power and wealth. The international organisations represented by the United Nations have been unable to control conflicts in the world because of the interference of powerful countries such as the US, Russia and China.<sup>36</sup> Under these conditions, who can be the agents to bring peace to the world?

Yoo maintained that citizens of the world should work together “regardless of their citizenship, religions and ethnicity”<sup>37</sup> for peace in the world, and that Christians should actively engage in peace movements, overcoming their national and ethnic boundaries. He also suggested that Christians should redefine the role of the state and the relationship between the church and the state. In this, he borrowed Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s idea of “orders of preservation”, which he explained as the idea that the church and the state should be partners in preserving world peace and the new possibilities of God’s providence in this world for the wellbeing of all creatures. Hence, the state should exist insofar as it contributes to “prevent[ing] the divisions and conflicts, the destruction of God’s creatures in this world”.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to political conflicts, globalisation and the global market system are also causing serious problems. Neoliberalism is overwhelming the world with the growth of global markets, which in some cases exploits labourers and the natural environment of underdeveloped countries. In this, Yoo presented peace as more than the mere dormancy of war and conflict. He argued that peace in the modern world should be redefined to ensure the wellbeing of individuals. It should be a

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>36</sup> “The Contemporary Peace Movement and the Responsibility of the Global Community”, *Theology and the World* 69 (2010), p. 233.

<sup>37</sup> “Peace and War, and the Responsibility of Christian Ethics in the Post-Modern Era”, p. 281.

<sup>38</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “Thy Kingdom Come: The Prayer of the Church for the Kingdom of God on Earth”, in *A Testament to Freedom*, ed. Geoffrey Kelly (San Francisco Harper Collins, 1990) p. 96, cited in Kyoung-Dong Yoo, “Ethics of Dietrich Bonhöffer and Peace in North-East Asia”, *Theology and the World* 49 (2004), pp. 244-245.

“humanitarian peace” that enhances the rights of individuals that have been manipulated by statist authorities and the international market system. Hence, Yoo emphasised “civil peace”: a peace movement initiated and driven by civil society. He insisted, “The peace strategy by civil society is for grassroots peace, which would be achieved by the alliance of individual citizens around the world rather than international diplomacy and national politics”,<sup>39</sup> which are controlled by governments and global companies.

According to Yoo, in the global context, which is full of injustice, violence and manipulation, Christian pacifism should not be ideological, but instead it should yearn for realistic change in the world through the holistic life of individuals. The peace and unification of Korea is not only a calling, but also a responsibility of individual citizens. Christians should be apostles of peace and take action to protect peace in the world. In particular, “the freedom of Christians is the freedom of service, and the true Christian equity should be measured by God”.<sup>40</sup> Thus, churches have to work to advance Christian peace in the world, especially in Korea, through their service to improving human rights in South Korean society, because Christian faith and life should not be separated from each other, but should instead transform the society to which Christians belong.

Yoo Kyung-Dong has argued that South Korean churches should take part in civic movements because Christian theology encourages human beings to “have existential transformations by engaging God in trinity to live ethical lives”.<sup>41</sup> Yoo summarised that “churches are part of society and their movements should emphasise realistic practices”.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, South Korean churches, he insisted, “should be responsible for critically and practically analysing the history of Korea and Korean Christianity and acknowledge their responsibility to restore their holistic social ethics for Korean society”.<sup>43</sup> From this perspective, he criticised indigenous South Korean

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<sup>39</sup> “The Contemporary Peace Movement and the Responsibility of the Global Community.”, pp. 258-259.

<sup>40</sup> *The Unification of Korea and the Christian Peace*, p. 212.

<sup>41</sup> “Civil Society Movement in South Korea and Christian Social Ethics”, *Phenomena and Cognition: The Korean Journal of Humanities and the Social Sciences* 26, no. 4 (2002), p. 112.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

theology for failing to overcome the barrier of a literalistic interpretation of the Bible and for favouring church growth rather than social justice. Yoo insisted that South Korean Christian theology has not appropriately presented practical solutions to the socio-political issues of South Korea. Similarly, the *Minjung* theology of South Korea could not overcome the terminological boundaries of *minjung* or theologically embrace the non-*minjung* class of South Korea. Moreover, the majority of South Korean churches have had a tendency to favour personal salvation and holiness and to withhold from public responsibility. South Korean churches have not developed a theology for social ethics; they have instead tended to adopt traditional Confucian ethics in churches and generated ethical issues such as “sexual discrimination, hierarchical church governance, hypocrisy, excessive emphasis on patriotism and veneration for old people”.<sup>44</sup> As a result, they have been unable to move beyond a missiological approach toward the North Korean population and build a more practical and appropriate theology.

Yoo emphasised realistic approaches toward the unification of Korea and issues regarding power dynamics in particular. He argued:

Even if the civil societies allied for peace, their influence would be closely related to power issues on the global stage, as well as the power of civil societies. Just authorities practice just power. Therefore, the peace would be improved by just global authorities sustained by moral states, which would be legitimised by their citizens. Therefore, citizens are expected to have political sensitivity.<sup>45</sup>

He insisted that unification and peace in the Korean peninsula realistically depend upon the power dynamics between countries that have an influence on Korean issues, such as the US, Japan, Russia, China and the Koreas, as well as their diplomatic sensitivity. However, the citizens of these countries have the right to select or protest against their authorities, as well as to require their political leaders to make just and moral decisions; therefore, these citizens are expected to have the ability to discern who should be their leaders. Citizens are conscious of political and social issues and

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>45</sup> *The Unification of Korea and the Christian Peace*, pp. 53-54.

have the ability to organise their power to transform their society through legitimate civil rights.

Therefore, Yoo suggested that the *simin*,<sup>46</sup> rather than the *minjung*, would be able to achieve unification for a state that would improve human rights, freedom and democracy more than the divided Korea. To energise these democratic discourses and movements among Korean people and lead a unification of the people of two countries, rather than a political unification, Yoo insisted that the people of both countries need to organise their influence over the state. This, he argued, is the power and role of the Korean *simin*.<sup>47</sup> He continued, “[T]he civil societies can be an outstanding facilitator in the peaceful unification of Korea and achievement of grassroots peace in the world...”.<sup>48</sup> This global network of citizens in various countries would be the best solution to addressing the limited role of the UN and diplomatic confrontations between countries at various stages. He defined the action of civil society as “civil peace movements”,<sup>49</sup> which would be an alternative to the diplomatic and political engagement of states that has caused regional and global tension.

The unification of Korea, Yoo insisted, should focus on the restoration of true humanity and human rights by establishing a commonwealth for desperate people through the loving relationship of the inter-trinitarian life of God. This means the unified Korea should be a commonwealth active in achieving mutual respect between individuals and ethnic and cultural groups and mutual reliance through the political engagement of citizens.<sup>50</sup> Regarding the postponement of unification discourse in South Korea, Yoo has insisted that it would be too late to start building such a commonwealth after the unification of Korea. Hence, South Koreans, especially South Korean Christians, should act as seeds for the commonwealth of

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<sup>46</sup> Yoo insisted that the “citizens of Korea are responsible for organizing their influence to re-evaluate the importance of human labour, to tolerate differences of social groups and to improve ethical code in South Korean society”. “God’s Kingdom and *Minjung*, Citizens, and Multitude”, *Theology and the World*, no. 55 (2006), p. 218.

<sup>47</sup> *The Unification of Korea and the Christian Peace*, p. 117.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>49</sup> “The Contemporary Peace Movement and the Responsibility of Global Community.”, pp. 233-234.

<sup>50</sup> *The Unification of Korea and the Christian Peace*, p. 309.

“life and love” for the unification of Korea and they should develop a culture “where people respect life and freedom in the public sphere of Korea”.<sup>51</sup> As stated above, building a commonwealth of “life and love” should take place prior to the unification of Korea, and South Korean Christians should work towards this task as citizens of South Korea and yearn for the realisation of this commonwealth in North Korea as well.

### **6.3. Christian Anti-nuclear Discourse – Chang Yoon-Jae and Noh Jong-Sun**

During the Cold War era, when the US army brought nuclear weapons to South Korea for potential use against the USSR, China and North Korea, social activists in South Korea argued that the nuclear weapons of the US would threaten peace in northeast Asia and insisted that they should be withdrawn from the Korean peninsula. At that time, they were only concerned about the nuclear weapons of the USSR and the US and their activities resulted in the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from South Korea; the South Korean Government, in 1992, proclaimed that they would never obtain nuclear weapons. The South Korean Government also suggested that the North Korean Government should join in this policy.<sup>52</sup> In spite of the proclamation of the South Korean Government and the joint denuclearisation declaration of the two Koreas in the same year, however, the North Korean Government restarted nuclear weapons testing in 1994.

With the development of the North Korean nuclear weapons programme and military tension between the countries in northeast Asia and the US, some theologians began to speak out about the nuclear issues in Korea. Lee Man-Yeol posited that nuclear issues in the Korean peninsula were not rooted in the national policy of North Korea to occupy the South and make the peninsula a communist state; rather, the nuclear issues were the result of the policy of countries that already

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>52</sup> “The North Korean Assembly Approved the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula”, *Hankyora* 6 February, 1992.

possessed nuclear weapons, such as the US, China and Russia, which prevents other countries from developing nuclear weapons. Lee insisted:

I am offended by the nuclear weapons in North Korea simply because they are nuclear weapons, not because the weapons are possessed by North Korean communists. Likewise, I do not agree that South Korea needs to possess nuclear weapons against North Korea. For the same reason, I would argue that the US, the UK, Russia and China should abandon their nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons will cause the extinction of human beings and nature on Earth.<sup>53</sup>

Similarly, some liberal theologians have appealed for nuclear weapons to be removed from the Korean peninsula and the world in order to achieve peace. Their recent arguments can be summarised as calling for the imminent abolition of nuclear weapons and nuclear plants throughout the world, especially in South Korea, where nuclear plants are located within highly populated areas. Chang Yoon-Jae, a Professor of Christian Ethics at Ewha Women's University in Seoul, is regarded as the leading theologian speaking about the Christian perspective on nuclear issues in Korea through a Christian theology of peace and ecology. He studied at Union Theological Seminary in New York City and wrote his doctoral dissertation about late 20<sup>th</sup> century Christian theologies regarding the issues of capitalism, socialism and ecology in 2003. He studied the liberation theology of South America, which, he argued, is still relevant in the post-modern world in which neoliberal capitalism is rife: “[the] theology of liberation [liberation theology] is now more urgent than ever, as the so-called ‘triumphant capitalism’ aggravates poverty, oppression, and suffering around the globe”.<sup>54</sup>

Having argued for the importance of liberation theology in recent years, Chang emphasises a meaning of “liberation” that refers to the story of exodus in the Old Testament. After his studies in the US, he continuously researched peace and nuclear and ecological issues in South Korea, and suggested there should be three kinds of exodus for South Koreans: an exodus from pseudo-peace towards a new

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<sup>53</sup> Man-Yeol Lee, “Issues of Nuclear Weapons and Rockets and Ideologies”, in *Peace Columns 2013*, ed. The Publication Committee of the Christian Network for Peace and Unification (Seoul: Christian Network for Peace and Unification, 2013), p. 12.

<sup>54</sup> Yoon-Jae Chang, “God and Political Economy: A Critical Appraisal of the Late Twentieth-Century Theological Responses to Capitalism, Socialism, and Ecology” (PhD, Union Theological Seminary, 2003), p. 40.

peace; an exodus from a world threatened by nuclear weapons and plants to a world of new light; and an exodus from a world of destruction to a new Earth. He argued:

The Cold War continues in the Korean peninsula with a risk of a war which would cause over one million casualties within a day, and six million in a week... We have lived in a state of pseudo peace... we have to join in an exodus from the status of suspended war toward an eternal peace... Secondly, we have to depart from the threats of nuclear plants and weapons... Once we consider nuclear weapons a problem, we should also avoid nuclear power plants. They cannot coexist with Christian faith... Thirdly, we are facing the challenges of climate change caused by “carbonate civilisation”... Churches should try to find answers to how human beings can coexist with each other and even with other creatures on this Earth... The civilisations built on carbonate energy and nuclear energy will continue to destroy nature with human greed. They are not to be justified!<sup>55</sup>

Chang’s criticism continues in his article evaluating the preliminary conference for the WCC assembly in Pusan in 2014. In this, he posits that even though the Ecumenical Call to Just Peace was proposed by the participants to balance justice and peace in order to overcome the traditional just war theologies of Christian churches, it did not clearly embed criticism of the sins of the global powers and their neoliberalism, which have exploited the weak in the world. Moreover, the document did not include a relevant theology for human flourishing in the era of “climate collapse”. Although the WCC opposes nuclear weapons, they acknowledge the need for nuclear plants as a peaceful use of new technology. However, Chang is certain that nuclear energy and weapons cannot coexist with the Christian faith<sup>56</sup> because they are the fruits of human greed and the selfishness of global powers.

Chang argued that fraudulent pacifism deceives people in the post-modern world, where global capitalism and liberalism are overwhelming. Even though there are no global wars and people call this peace, it is not peace according to biblical teachings. Shalom in the Bible means an active peace based on God’s justice, where the weak, such as widows and orphans, are preferentially provided with care. Shalom

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<sup>55</sup> “Three Exoduses for Peace”, *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)*, no. 660 (2013), pp. 250-253.

<sup>56</sup> “On “Just Peace”: A Critique of WCC's New Peace Initiative”, *Theological Studies*, no. 167 (2014), p. 171.

ensures “social integrity where all individuals feel happy”.<sup>57</sup> Christians are responsible for implementing God’s justice in the world, even when such movements include protests against the global system or powers that create a “peace” through oppressing the cries of the poor.

Jesus calls us to the fight for realising peace in this world. He calls us to be trouble makers in the place where fraudulent peace dominates and encourages us to engage good fights for making peace... It is a fight for the peace of shalom: the just peace based on economic justice.<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, the peace and unification of Korea should be based first on economic justice for all Koreans, as we can learn from the case of the unification of Germany. The German people who lived in what was East Germany during the Cold War era arguably still suffer from economic inequity compared to people in the former West Germany. This example, therefore, is a fraudulent peace and unification that benefits only a small population who have significant control of the world economy. The unification of Korea, however, should be achieved for the peace of the world. It is thus necessary for Christians in the world to work together through “international alliance and ecumenical cooperation, and even discuss and work together with people of different religions”.<sup>59</sup>

Like Chang Yoon-Jae, Noh Jong-Sun, a former Christian Ethics professor at Yonsei University, directly addressed the nuclear issues relating to the Korean peninsula, arguing that the problem of nuclear weapons should be solved sooner than any other issues in the peninsula:

Nuclear issues are not more important than the issues related to the *minjung*’s life and the economy of North and South Korea. The daily lives of the Korean population of both Koreas are more important than nuclear weapon[s]... Hence, we should be cautious even about the possibility that nuclear problems might result in a war and destruction of Korean society...<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> “For Pax Christi”, in *The Symposium of the Christian Institute of the Unification of Korea* ed. In-Seop Ahn (Seoul: The Christian Institute of the Unification of Korea, 2010), p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> “Mission of Life and Peace in the Age of Globalisation”, *University and Mission*, no. 8 (2005), p. 107.

<sup>59</sup> “For Pax Christi.”, p. 10.

<sup>60</sup> Jong-Sun Noh, *Sustainable Peace and Reunification Strategy: Policy on North Korea and Peace in Korea from the Reunification Theological Perspective* (Paju City: Han-ul M Plus 2016), p. 20.

He insisted that the security of the people in both Koreas is far more important than having nuclear weapons in the peninsula. Hence, the governments of both Koreas and of the US should seriously consider the security of the common population of both Koreas rather than overemphasising nuclear issues of North Korea. First of all, South Koreans should acknowledge that North and South Koreans share the same destiny and therefore South Koreans should embrace North Koreans, even though the North Korean regime is continuing its nuclear tests and developing missile technology, and they should search for a way to unify the North and South Korean economies.<sup>61</sup> The US should also sign a peace treaty with North Korea, develop a diplomatic relationship with the North Korean regime and then move towards the withdrawal of all kinds of nuclear weapons from the Korean peninsula and the wider world.<sup>62</sup>

However, Noh does not agree with Chang in the sense that he believes that nuclear energy can be used for peace in the Korean peninsula. His doctoral dissertation was about the Donghak Peasant Revolution against Japanese colonisation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and he maintains that the violence against unjust and “unbearable oppression both by the ruling class and the colonial powers”<sup>63</sup> is acknowledged in the Bible, especially Joel 3:10, which states, “Beat your ploughshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, ‘I am strong!’”<sup>64</sup> According to Noh’s understanding of just revolution against an unjust ruling class and colonial power in the current situation of the Korean peninsula, the South Korean and North Korean people are not enemies, and they should instead achieve a peaceful economic commonwealth against two unjust colonial powers: America, which through various military-industrial complexes profits from the military tensions between the two Koreas; and Japan, which is trying to expand its influence over the Korean peninsula with a resurgence of Japanese patriotism. In relation to nuclear energy, the security and peace of the country can be

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<sup>61</sup> Noh, *Sustainable Peace and Reunification Strategy: Policy on North Korea and Peace in Korea from the Reunification Theological Perspective*, pp. 26-29.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>63</sup> *Religion and Just Revolution* (Seoul: Voice Publishing House, 1987), p. 153.

<sup>64</sup> (New International Version): *ibid.*, p. 154.

maintained through energy security, as well as military security, particularly against Japan, which has sufficient plutonium stored for nuclear weapons and missile technology. Therefore, according to Noh, for practical purposes, rather than abolishing all nuclear energy plants in South Korea, South Koreans should find a peaceful way to use nuclear energy against the potential colonial power, Japan,<sup>65</sup> and the unification of Korea should be realised by peaceful processes through the independent power of Koreans.

## Conclusion

As described above, the recent unification discourse emphasises the roles of citizens and the subjectivity of socio-political changes in national as well as global realms. Against the authoritarian government, which propagated a state-centred national identity among the South Korean population against the North Korean regime, the *jaeya* people tried to discover the subjectivity of *minjung* and *minjok* who were able to bring about changes in the social and political system of South Korea, as well as the continued division of the Korean peninsula where harsh confrontations between the two Koreas continue. Liberal Christians of South Korea developed *minjung* theology and maintained that God's justice requires peace (*shalom*) for *minjung*, and that the unification of Korea should build momentum to ensure *minjung*'s prosperity in the Korean peninsula. However, after the June Democratisation Protest, scholars of politics and sociology advocated the possibility of the *simin* exercising their own agency in South Korean political and social realms. As a result, many NGOs were founded in the early 1990s for direct engagement in social and political issues, as well as unification movements. Christian groups in turn searched for ways to illuminate the public role of Christian citizens in South Korea regardless of their theological background. Yoo argued that Christian citizens in Korea and the countries relating to the division of Korea, China, Russia, Japan and

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<sup>65</sup> *Sustainable Peace and Reunification Strategy: Policy on North Korea and Peace in Korea from the Reunification Theological Perspective*, pp. 13-15.

the US, should engage practically and politically in the unification discourse by influencing authorities to ameliorate the harsh confrontations of the Korean peninsula and bring peace to the land. However, it is still uncertain how the Christian citizens of these countries could persuade the common citizens to pursue peace in the peninsula for reasons other than the national interest of their home countries. Moreover, the potential for North Korean people to become subjective citizens who ally and work with South Korean citizens and citizens of the wider world must be doubted.

As the military tensions in the Korean peninsula have become aggravated and North Korea has developed its nuclear weapons, the conventional unification discourse has been eroded and a discourse that focuses on achieving peace in the peninsula is now replacing the unification discourse in South Korea. Hence, it is generally recognised that the traditional unification discourse is now in decline. Scholars have been losing interest in the unification of Korea, and therefore it is now difficult to find a relevant and effective unification theology among South Korean theologians. Scholars have argued that peace in the peninsula, as well as in northeastern Asia, is the most important and urgent factor, and Christian citizens are required to work for peace in the peninsula and the world using practical methods such as political engagement. While Yoo Kyung-Dong emphasised Christian citizens' role in the peace and unification of Korea, Chang and Noh asserted that all nuclear weapons should be withdrawn from the peninsula and the world. From an ecological perspective, Chang argued that the division of Korea was due to the greed of human beings and it now runs alongside a critical risk of the destruction of human beings and nature. Chang further criticised global capitalism and neoliberalism for creating economic injustice and fraudulent peace. He pointed out that unification and peace should be based on God's justice, which preferentially takes care of the poor in the world. Agreeing with Chang, Noh argued that nuclear weapons should be abolished throughout the world, but also asserted that nuclear energy and plants should be maintained for the security of the Korean people against the potential expansion of Japan. Chang and Noh strongly criticised global capitalism and neoliberalism, which they insisted were manipulating North and South Koreans. It could be presupposed that they preferred a socialist system to capitalism. However, it

is debatable how they would persuade South Korean commoners of this as they still believe socialism is equivalent to communism.

Searching for a middle way between the strong discourse of missions to North Korea that neglect the North Korean regime and religion and humanitarian aid for North Korean population, NGOs are regarded as surrogates for humanitarian aid for the North Korean population. To broaden the unification discourse to reach the laity, theologians and church leaders have combined holistic mission and unification issues, arguing that Christians, as citizens of South Korean society, should promote peace and reconciliation in the daily context and that local churches can work with NGOs for the common good, including the peace and reconciliation of Korea. The bottom-up unification and peace discourse of South Korean churches has evolved with the development of civil society in South Korea. It suggests that Christians, especially the population who migrated from Northern Korea before and after the Korean War, are prepared to work for the unification of Korea in their local community, softening their militant hatred against North Korean communists.

Due to the noticeable differences between the North and South Korean population, South Koreans have become sceptical about pursuing unification through establishing a single nation-state in the Korean peninsula. The unification discourses that emphasise peace and diversity among the two Korean populations therefore suggest that the unification of Korea should be put aside until these differences are overcome and the two countries can achieve economic and political development; this is a realistic approach toward unification given the current situation of the Korean peninsula. However, it is debatable whether these approaches toward unification can sustain the necessity of unification. They depend upon the supposition that the development of the two countries and an acknowledgment and overcoming of the differences in the Korean population are likely to eventually lead to the peaceful unification of Korea.

## Chapter 7

### Memory, Justice and Reconciliation in the Divided Land

The church discourses about the peace, reconciliation and unification of Korea have emphasised, first, who is responsible for the division of Korea and the Korean War; second, who would arguably be able to lead these discourses and movement in South Korea; and third how to achieve the peace and unification of Korea through either political socio-political methods or evangelical approaches. However, I have argued that these theological approaches by South Korean Protestant churches have not provided an effectual theological basis for changing the landscape of South Korean society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As has been suggested, the conservative camp in the South Korean churches still strongly uphold anti-communism and they argue that the North Korean communist regime will collapse as a result of the evangelisation of North Korea. However, the unification they seek is territorial and political assimilation, rather than a unification of the populations of the two Koreas, and a unification that is achieved by defeating the North Korean communist regime, for which conservatives yearn, might cause conflict and even terrorism in the peninsula since the core population of North Korea are also hostile to South Korea.

For the above reasons, many liberal theologians, especially those representing NCKK, have been pursuing peace and reconciliation for the two Koreas, as stated in the 88 Declaration. However, as assessed in chapter 2, their unification movement has raised a question relating to justice and ideological issues in South Korea, mostly with regard to the evangelical sector of the South Korean churches. The problem is that anti-communism, strengthened and propagated by authoritarian governments after the division, and implicitly reinstated by conservative governments in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, was grounded on the fabrication and manipulation of people's memory in the Cold War era and developed into anti-North Korean sentiment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. South Korean anti-communism has also caused a fabricated identity of the South

Korean people to be developed, as well as a fabricated Christian identity of South Korean churches.

Based on the above, any endeavour to search for truthful memory and reconciliation can be considered a Christian duty and it must be preliminary to the peace and unification of Korea. Ironically, unification discourse has also primarily come to be an internal rather than an inter-relational issue with North Korea. Here, I will argue that reconciliation is a process that would lead to unification by establishing a more truthful memory for South Koreans, who have been manipulated by an authoritarian government to express anti-communism and anti-North Korean sentiment. The people who lived through the Korean War and the harsh militant confrontation of the two Koreas were victims as well as victimisers of North Koreans during the Korean War and their South Korean neighbours under authoritarian governments. The churches have failed to protect them from the traumatic memory of horrible violation, and from becoming transgressors who yearned for retributive justice against North Korean communists, both during the Korean War and under the authoritarian governments in South Korea.

This chapter will first outline the manipulation of memory and its influence on the unification of Korea, and it will then explain how reconciliation would proceed in South Korea, from a Christian perspective, to create grounds for the unification of Korea by focusing on the theological approach of Miroslav Volf.

## **7.1. Memories of the Korean War and the Division of the Korean Peninsula**

I was in a taxi on my way to church in Seoul in September 2016 when the taxi driver, who was about 60 years old, shouted when he heard the news of the nuclear test by North Korea: “The evil North Korean scumbags should be eliminated and the regime brought down! Why don’t the US and South Korean armies strike the North Korean nuclear facilities? The North Korean communists never change!” As I sat in the passenger seat, many questions arose in my mind: why did he define North

Koreans as evil; did he fight against North Korean soldiers during the Korean War? Impossible. He appeared to be in his early 60s and so the Korean War began either when he was a baby or before he was even born. So how did he come to hate North Koreans? His idea of the North Korean people and their regime could not be based on personal experience as he was not supposed to meet North Koreans due to the National Security Law of South Korea. Instead, this image will have mostly developed from education and mass media, which has been controlled by the South Korean government for many years. Unsurprisingly, his negative and hostile attitude toward North Korea is common among the older generations of South Korea, who still believe that anti-communism is the national ideology of South Korea and the essence of South Korean identity.

### **7. 1. 1. Anti-communism: Manipulating the Memory of the South Korean People**

Anti-communism was used as a measure to define the true identity of South Korean people in the political realm, beginning with the establishment of the South Korean government in 1948. The authoritarian government divided South Koreans into “pure *kukmin*” and “impure *kukmin*” for the purpose of oppressing people who opposed the political right and the Korean War; this justified the government propaganda that communists were betrayers of the nation of Korea and could not be legitimate members of the state of South Korea.<sup>1</sup> As stated in chapter 1, the state propaganda about anti-communism was rife in South Korea after the division of the peninsula, and it became a tool by which to manipulate the memory of the South Korean population. For instance, families of the victims and the surviving victims of the genocide during the Korean War, especially those who were killed by the South Korean army, police and armed gangsters who worked for the South Korean rightists

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<sup>1</sup> Ha-Na Lee, “Anti-Communist Discourse and Politics of Affect”, *Society and History* 95 (2012), pp. 207-208.

and even by the US troops, tried to overcome their trauma by “forgetting the memories” of the genocide. As Noh Young-Seok has argued:

The families of the victims of genocide performed by the armies and police of their mother country tried to survive by standing on the side of the state of the South Korean regime who killed their family... Because anti-communism dominated the country and it was impossible to resist the ideology or escape from it, the survivors of the genocide and their families, as well as the families of the killed, erased the traumatic memory and adjusted their understanding to accept the official ideology and memory of their state. Even worse, they tried to believe and officially testified that their fathers and sons were killed by North Korean armies...<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the survivors and families of the genocide carried out by the South Korean army and police during the Korean War struggled to “purify their identity” by fiercely fighting against North Korean armies for the remainder of the war and working for South Korean authoritarian governments after the war ended.<sup>3</sup>

After the Korean War, the authoritarian government in South Korea began to closely monitor the mass media. They kept social activists and even college students under strong and constant surveillance in order to find the *Bbal-gaeng-i* (a Korean term used to disparage communists). Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the governments of Lee Myeong-Bak and Park Geun-Hye attempted to divide South Koreans into “pure *kukmin*” and “impure *kukmin*”, undertaking surveillance of social activists who worked against the government and attacking liberal politicians from rival parties through online posting activities and social media. For instance, the ROK Cyber Command and National Intelligence Service operated special teams with a focus on posting negative comments and fake news about liberal politicians during the general elections of 2012 and 2016, as well as the presidential election of 2012.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Yong-Seok Noh, “Study of the Mechanism of Local Population's Recognition of State and Its Power Focusing on Genocides” (YOUNGSEOK NOH, 2005), p. 196, cited in Dong-Choon Kim, “War and Violence of State and the Social Trauma of South Korea,” in *A Historiography of Social Trauma of South Korea: From the Korean War to the Labourers' Uprising in Ssang-Yong Motor Company*, ed. Dong-Choon Kim and Myung-Hee Kim (Seoul: Critical Review of History, 2014), p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.; Jung-Gi Choi, “The Civilian's Suffering in the Period of Korean War and the Demarcation between Citizen and Non-Citizen: In Regard to the Survey Report About Regional Civilian Victims in the Period of Korean War,” *Journal of Modern Social Science* 14 (2010), p. 94.

<sup>4</sup> According to an official report by the ROK Department of Defence to the president's office before the general election in 2012, they claimed they would prevent the influence of *Jongbuk* and contamination of “pure citizens” by liberals through social media and online media, and they would publish positive comments and news about the ruling party and the government, comprising more than

Conservative governments and their supporters, who are mostly over 50, are still prone to considering political liberals equivalent to North Korean communists who will harm the national identity because they resist conservative governments and are pursuing dialogue with the North Korean regime.

As the authoritarian government promoted anti-communism, this state propaganda became rife in various areas of South Korean society. Lee Ha-Na, a HK research fellow at the Institute of Korean Studies of Yonsei University, has argued that the governmental propaganda of anti-communism presented communism as an evil that threatened humanity, capitalism, democracy, economic growth and the unification of Korea. She has pointed out, for instance, that 1950s and 1960s films related to the Korea War and ideological conflicts between communism and capitalism mostly portray North Korean communists as inhumane “bastards”.

A North Korean sergeant in the film, *Unidentified Warriors* (1966), tortures and kills his father. Moreover, in a movie entitled *The Third Area* (1968), a young North Korean immigrant who works for the Association of North Korean Immigrants in Japan denied his mother and tortured her for his own safety... Both films were exemplary anti-communist movies and were successful in South Korea.<sup>5</sup>

In a society like Korea, which has a strong sense of family bonds, Lee has argued that such films highlight the hatred of North Koreans.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to anti-communist discourse in politics and mass media, the government in South Korea also put in place and enacted an anti-communist education programme, through which they manipulated the history of South Korea and instilled anti-communism in the minds of students. This educational programme of anti-communism was officially initiated with the establishment of the South Korean government in 1948. From 1955 Rhee’s government intensified the educational programme through the Department of Culture and Education, which supervised education, athletics and all realms of culture, such as arts and music.

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60% of their total comments on social media and online news websites. Soo-Hyung Kim, “Official Documents Released, “Kim Gwan-Jin Led Cyber Command to Interrupt the General Election”,” *MBN* 28 December, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Lee, “Anti-Communist Discourse and Politics of Affect”. p. 212.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

Anti-communist textbooks were widely used in classrooms and anti-communism was the main subject of ethics classes.<sup>7</sup> Through this anti-communist education, young students in South Korea came to develop a hostile and negative view of North Koreans. One church member of Younknak Church explained how he was educated in anti-communism during the years of the military regime in South Korea:

For me, nothing but evil existed in North Korea. While I was at primary school, disastrous scenes of North Korea were painted. Those made the strongest impression on my mind. North Koreans were embedded in my perception as monsters and I believed that human qualities did not exist in the Communist Party.<sup>8</sup>

The South Korean government officially instructed public schools to show films and documentaries in order to educate school children about the “brutality” of North Korean communists. Likewise, when I was in primary school in the mid-1980s, the school frequently showed the students anti-communist films about the Korean War and the civil war between communist armies led by Mao Zedong’s Chinese Communist Party and the armies of Chiang Kai-shek’s Kuomintang. I was struck by the bloody scenes and the brutality of the communist armies, who were shown to kill Korean and Chinese civilians indiscriminately, even those who were completely unrelated to either army.

The authoritarian governments also taught the dangers of anti-governmental demonstrations led by students at South Korean universities and colleges. The authoritarian governments indicated that such movements would be beneficial to North Korean communists, who would invade the South and communise the entire peninsula. One example of the anti-communist media sources used in primary schools was the death of Lee Seung-Bok, a child who was killed along with his family by a North Korean special forces team that had infiltrated the South on special duties. In a film re-enactment, the soldiers brutally kill Lee’s mother and siblings, and then the small child screams, “I hate communists!” before he is stoned to death by the soldiers. The only established fact is that Lee and his family were killed by

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<sup>7</sup> Gun Cho, “The Organisation of Ministry of Culture and Education and Anti-Communist Policy in the Era of Establishing the First Curriculum,” *History and Education* 22 (2016), p. 179.

<sup>8</sup> Chung Yoube Ha, “Migration Old and New : Accepting Diversity in Creating a Catholic Community in Younknak Presbyterian Church” (PhD, University of Edinburgh, 2009), p. 81.

North Korean soldiers; the details of the story are arguably invented.<sup>9</sup> However, the story was propagated by the media under the instruction of the government and it was reproduced in various formats such as books, cartoons, television documentaries and even films.

As human memory is reconstructed by each rememberer, who will include his or her emotions, as well as those of other members of society, and because anti-communism has been broadly developed within the emotional realm of the South Korean people,<sup>10</sup> it can be argued that the anti-communism instilled by the authoritarian government of South Korea has been manipulating the memory of the people, especially relating to their identity and that of the neighbouring North Koreans. The issue of negative emotions and attitudes toward North Korea has recently arisen among the younger generation who, with the end of authoritarian governments, were not taught anti-communism at school. For the last ten years, there have been various issues with North Korea: nuclear issues, the ICBM programme and several attacks on South Korean soldiers and civilians, such as the Yeon-Pyeong incident. Furthermore, the governments of Lee Myung-Bak and Park Geun-Hye intensified people's hatred for North Korea by defining the North Korean regime as a "primal enemy of South Korea" (*Ju-jeok*), and mass media exaggerated the conflict between the two Koreas. Exposed to mass media and cared for by an older generation who were educated in anti-communism, the younger generations of South Korea now regard North Korea as an "annoying" neighbour state rather than a state of the same ethnic identity as South Korea,<sup>11</sup> one with which they could unify, as the table below indicates.

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<sup>9</sup> The incident was first reported by the Chosun Newspaper; the reporter wrote that Lee said, "I hate communists" before he was killed by North Korean soldiers. Jong-Dae Kim, "The Epilogue of the Coverage of Kim Jong-Dae, a Reporter of Media Today: There Was Not Chosun Newspaper Reporter at the House of Lee Seung-Bok on 10 December, 1968," *MAL*, November 1998,

<sup>10</sup> Lee, "Anti-Communist Discourse and Politics of Affect", p. 234.

<sup>11</sup> The most recent national survey reported that only 20% of respondents in their 20s answered that North and South Koreans are one nation, while 47.2% answered negatively. Ju-Hwa Park, Min-Kyu Lee and Won-Bin Cho, *2017 the National Survey of the Opinions of South Korean People Regarding Unification of Korea*. Research Paper of Korea Institute of National Unification. Edited by Ki-Woong Son Vol. 17-03 (Seoul: Korea Institute of National Unification, 2017), p. 41.

Ages	Affirmative to Same Ethnicity of Two Koreas (%)	Neutral (%)	Negative (%)
19-29	20.5	32.4	47.2
30-39	25.1	30.7	44.1
40-49	29.8	35.1	35.1
50-59	36.2	34.7	29.1
Over 60	47.3	26.1	26.6

<Table 7-1>

### 7. 1. 2. Manipulation of the Memory of North Korean Defectors

As memory is related to identity and legitimacy to live in a community, North Korean defectors are prone to manipulating their memory of what they experienced in North Korea when they first encounter anti-communism as a “consensus on the identity of South Korean citizens”<sup>12</sup> and anti-North Korean sentiment among the South Korean population. The research of Lee Hyeon-Ju into the internal and external conflicts faced by North Korean defectors in South Korea highlights the anti-communist sentiment of South Koreans toward North Korean defectors. On interviewing South Korean workers at facilities engaging with North Korean defectors, Lee discovered that all the interviewees were influenced by their anti-communist education and this continues to have a significant impact on their personal relationships with North Korean defectors. For example, she related an interview with a South Korean counsellor at Hanawon, a governmental facility helping North Korean defectors settle in South Korea:

Although she spent the most time and proximity with *talbukja* (referring to North Korean defectors) out of all the interviewees, she showed the strongest resistance to considering *talbukja* her friends and colleagues. She related in an interview that she was also educated in anti-communist rhetoric, and the aversive behaviour to North Korean identity seemed to have been intensified during the time she spent as a counsellor at Hanawon.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Hyeon-Ju Lee, “May I Call You North Korean? Negotiating Differences and Imagining the Nation in South Korea,” (PhD, University of Hawaii, 2012). p. 70.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-66.

The prejudice of South Koreans toward North Koreans is intensified by the mass media, which portray North Korea negatively and depict North Korean defectors as desperate and helpless. Yoon Hwan-Cheol, the director of the Future Foundation of Korea, has said that North Korean students who have escaped the North will not talk about their home in North Korea. It seems that they try to forget the good memories they have of their time in North Korea because if anyone says good things about the North, he or she will be presumed to favour North Korea and be accused of being *Jongbuk* (a collaborator with the North Korean communist regime). Yoon has explained that North Korean defector students try to portray North Korea as negatively as possible and to condemn the North Korean communist party.<sup>14</sup> When I worked for Youngnak Church, which has a fellowship of North Korean defectors, I met some of them; I felt that they were unwilling to talk about North Korea and portrayed their home in the North very negatively. South Koreans want them to testify that North Korea is a kind of hell where human beings cannot enjoy basic rights or even survive.<sup>15</sup> Even though these people escaped from North Korea seeking freedom and human rights in South Korea, they may still be nostalgic for their hometown where their families continue to live, and they may indeed hope that one day they will return to their hometown to live with their families. However, South Koreans do not understand such nostalgia. The North Korean defectors that Lee interviewed insisted that South Koreans do not know or do not want to know that North Korea is “a place where people live everyday lives just like in South Korea”.<sup>16</sup> Rather than urging North Korean defectors to assimilate to South Korean culture by manipulating or forgetting their memories of their homes in North Korea, Lee argued that South Koreans need to be educated about the “North Korean culture and society”

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<sup>14</sup> Yoon, “Unification and North Korean Defectors.”

<sup>15</sup> In South Korea, it can be risky to positively represent the North or even insist that the North is suitable for living. In 2014, Shin Eun-Mi, a Korean-American freelance writer who published a book about her travels in North Korea, was deported by the South Korean government because she presented an interview with a North Korean who said that they were happy with Kim Jung-Eun’s governance at a free discussion event. The prosecutors’ office claimed that she violated the national security law, which prohibits exaltation of the North Korean regime. Jung-Yun Kim, “Coverage Note: Should Shin Eun-Mi Be Deported from South Korea?,” Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS), [http://news.sbs.co.kr/news/endPage.do?news\\_id=N1002776369&plink=ORI&cooper=NAVER](http://news.sbs.co.kr/news/endPage.do?news_id=N1002776369&plink=ORI&cooper=NAVER).

<sup>16</sup> Lee, “May I Call You North Korean? Negotiating Differences and Imagining the Nation in South Korea.”, p. 178.

by North Korean defectors in order to achieve the common goal of the unification of Korea.<sup>17</sup>

Encountering the negative sentiment toward North Koreans and the segregating attitude of South Koreans toward North Korean defectors, some North Korean defectors also conform to the hostile attitude toward North Korea and anti-communism of South Korea by manipulating their memory of the North. They become passionate advocates of anti-communism and anti-North Korean sentiment. Many actively engage in political activities for the conservative government and criticise citizens who protest against the conservative government's policies on social issues.<sup>18</sup> Some North Korean defectors manipulate their personal history so as to intensify the anti-North Korean sentiment of South Koreans and people around the world. For instance, Shin Dong-Hyuk escaped a North Korean prison camp in 2005; his dramatic story was told in a book, *Escape from Camp 14*,<sup>19</sup> published in 2012. However, he recently admitted that his central life stories in the book were untrue. He fabricated the stories in order to dramatise his escape from North Korea and to trigger human rights movements against the North Korean regime.<sup>20</sup> When challenged by difficulties settling into South Korean society and tested in order to identify their nation-state identity, some North Korean defectors choose to become warriors for anti-communism and to collaborate with the conservative government and NGOs against South Korean liberals who seek peace and reconciliation with the North Korean regime.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>18</sup> For instance, the Companion of North Korean Female Defectors participated in demonstrations and condemned the families of the victims of the Sewol incident who had criticised the government for failing to engage in appropriate rescue activities, which resulted in over 300 casualties. The female defectors argued that the families were *Jongbuk* and that their "anti-state" demonstrations would benefit the North Korean regime. Woo-Hyun Sun, "North Korean Defectors as Another Source of (South-North and) South-South Conflicts: In Connection with Political Technological Views Regarding North Korean Defectors as Objects of Political Manipulation," *Studies in Philosophy East-West* 78, no. September (2015), p. 30.

<sup>19</sup> Blaine Harden, *Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West* (Penguin Books: New York, 2012).

<sup>20</sup> Sang-Hun Chae, "Prominent North Korean Defector Recants Parts of His Story of Captivity," *The New York Times*, Jan. 18, 2015. Cited in: [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/19/world/asia/prominent-north-korean-defector-shin-dong-hyuk-recants-parts-of-his-story.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/19/world/asia/prominent-north-korean-defector-shin-dong-hyuk-recants-parts-of-his-story.html?_r=0).

## 7. 2. Truthful Memory and Justice in the Korean Peninsula

As explained in chapter 1 and the above section, human memory is constructed based on the circumstances and even the emotions of the rememberers and their collective memory, leading to a strong possibility that it doesn't so much reflect the truth as the political influence of the community. Hence, the question of just remembrance becomes important to collective and even personal memory. Miroslav Volf has argued that memory should be faithful so that it can lead to reconciliation and forgiveness, while Ricœur has insisted that memory should emphasise the voices of victims in order to bring justice to a community. Yoo Kyung-Dong has focused on the importance of "a just social structure with which the members can correct false memory and share the memory equally",<sup>21</sup> which will take place when civilians support just governments to seek the truth hidden in the past that is protecting some privileged groups of people, including the authoritarian regimes. Therefore, remembering is not only a matter of cognitive activity, but also of the just behaviour of individuals and the community to which they belong. Hence, our memory of wrongs leads us to possible behaviours for justice: retributive justice which aims to punish our trespassers and restorative justice to search for new relationship with our trespassers. If we have a confidence that the latter is in accordance with Christian imperatives, we should ask why and how we can reach restorative justice through reframing our memories.

Volf has argued that our journey to eternal rejoicing with God and even our transgressors will begin with "remembering trustworthily". In his book, *End of Memory*,<sup>22</sup> he presented a theological approach to memory, in particular the memory of wrongs, by referring to his personal experience in the former Yugoslavian army where he was persecuted. He noted that we are obliged to truthfully remember in

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<sup>21</sup> Kyoung-Dong Yoo, "Collective Memory and Christian Ethics," *Korean Journal of Christian Studies* 106 (2017), p. 222.

<sup>22</sup> Miroslav Volf, *The End of Memory : Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006).

order to forgive by God's grace and eventually forget the memory of the wronged with an eschatological vision of God's final judgement. As he articulated, we should all acknowledge that our memory is vulnerable and hence easily distorted, and that even the past can be "imagined" rather than reconstructed. In a violent world or society on a small scale, people are constantly attempting to remember bad experiences. These bad memories or traumatic memories of individuals and the state can lead to "ideological manipulation" and even "the distortion of reality".<sup>23</sup> When I was a child at primary school, I often sang with other schoolchildren on the 25<sup>th</sup> June, the anniversary of the day the Korean War broke out:

Alas, how in the world can we forget the day when enemies of our state invaded our land? Our land was covered with our blood shed by our bare hands! Now, we shall take revenge on our enemies! We will chase our enemies to the end of the earth and exterminate them all. Glory to our nation and our people!

By singing this militant song, we tried to remember the Korean War in the hope that such a terrible war would not break out again. In this way, the following generations were taught not to forget what former generations experienced because we want to protect our children from the repetition of war with the enemy state: North Korea. Since we believe that the inhumane war was instigated by North Korea and the genocide and economic devastation that followed the war were caused by North Korean communists, the memory of the war is reconstructed into various violent behaviours and hostile attitudes toward North Korea; these behaviours and attitudes were intensified and encouraged by the South Korean authoritarian governments and even the conservative churches to emphasise retributive justice against North Koreans.

Miroslav Volf asserts that, "There can be no forgiveness without remembering rightly [truthfully], and there certainly cannot be reconciliation without remembering well."<sup>24</sup> Memory in such cases is not simply a matter of a single

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<sup>23</sup> Esteban Lythgoe, "Social Imagination, Abused Memory, and the Political Place of History in Memory, History, Forgetting," *Ricœur Studies* 5, no. 2 (2014) p. 39.

<sup>24</sup> Miroslav Volf, "Remembering Well in a Violent World". Keynote speech at *The Kyung-Chik Han International Conference on Peace and Reconciliation*, 2010, Seoul.

person's clarity of mind and recollections, but also of the community and even the state influences on remembering – what we may call collective or national memory. However, as with the cases presented above, memory is distorted and abused for personal and communal purposes. Volf states that "...the memory of their own persecution...led them (the persecuted) to exaggerate dangers that do exist and overreact with excessive violence or inappropriate preventive measures so as to ensure their own safety."<sup>25</sup> In many cases, such exaggerations and deepened hatred toward the "transgressors" took place when the victims believed that the violation was carried out only by said "transgressors", who were also held responsible for every incident during the violation. This is exemplified by the victims of the genocide carried out by South Korean troops and police during the Korean War, where the survivors tried to believe that it had actually been carried out by North Korean communists. Even after the Korean War, South Koreans believed that anti-government movements during the era of the authoritarian government were led by North Korean communists who wanted to invade the South and unify the peninsula as a communist country. Even the movements to secure labourers' rights in South Korea were regarded as collaborating with North Korean communists. Fake news about these incidents was created and distributed by the authoritarian government to secure their regime. Hence, our memory should be truthful because only truthful memory can be just and provide the grounds by which to achieve justice. As Volf stated, "[R]emembering is now a matter of doing something rather than simply being affected."<sup>26</sup>

Desmond Tutu has acknowledged that truthful memory could lead to forgiveness and reconciliation in South Africa, where the black people suffered apartheid. The Truth and Reconciliation Committee's role has been to unearth perpetrators' violations of human rights – not to punish them but to forgive them for the purpose of restorative justice.<sup>27</sup> For Volf, truthful memory is a "redemption of the

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<sup>25</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory : Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, p. 33.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>27</sup> Steven Gish, *Desmond Tutu : A Biography*, Greenwood Biographies (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2004), p. 149.

past”<sup>28</sup> through which a victim can reach healing and the perpetrator can find a way to repent. A truthful memory can also pave the way to reconciliation between parties and unity of a community. In the case of North Korea, South Koreans blame North Korea for what they did during the Korean War and for the militant conflict between the two Koreas.

In the memory of the majority of the South Korean population, there is nothing good about North Korea, and this negative sentiment towards the North puts pressure on North Korean defectors to relinquish their nostalgia for their home. However, North Koreans are also victims of the wars and confrontations between the two Koreas. Kim Yong-Bok pointed out that approximately three million North Koreans were killed by US bomb attacks and they still suffer trauma from the war.<sup>29</sup> Applying the ninth commandment, which prohibits false witness against our neighbours, Volf argued, “[T]hough truthful memory is vitally important in its own right, remembering truthfully is part of the larger obligation to speak well of our neighbours and thereby to sustain and heal relationships between people.”<sup>30</sup>

As Volf argued, remembering is not a matter for the past, but for the future; he noted that we should consider “what we do in our memories, how we see ourselves in the present and how we project ourselves into the future”.<sup>31</sup> Referring to Tzvetan Todorov’s idea of the exemplary value of memory, Ricœur and Volf have argued that memory of a traumatic past will not continuously hurt us, but it should contribute to our wellbeing. Volf insists that, “[E]xemplary memory pushes us beyond the concern for our own well-being by helping us learn lessons from the past so as to apply them in new situations,”<sup>32</sup> and Ricœur wrote that the major concern of exemplary memory suggested by Todorov was not seeking truth. Rather it seeks for the good for future, as he explained, “...[E]xtract from traumatic memories the exemplary value that can become pertinent only when memory has been turned into a project... If the trauma refers to the past, the exemplary value is directed toward the

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<sup>28</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory : Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, p. 33.

<sup>29</sup> Yong-Bok Kim, interview by Hoon Song, 20 December, 2015, 2015.

<sup>30</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory : Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, p. 63.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

future.”<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, Volf and Ricœur have maintained that Todorov’s ideas are unable to provide frames of “justice and injustice” or “victims and victimizers” in this world of complexity.

Ricœur argues that, “the duty of memory is the duty to do justice...[and it is] justice that turns memory into project”; he presented three points on the work of memory as it relates to justice: first, justice through memory is to “an other more than self”; second, the duty of memory is to maintain the feeling that “we are indebted to those who have gone before us for part of what we are”; and third, the “moral priority belongs to the victims”.<sup>34</sup> During the manipulation of memory conducted by the South Korean government after the Korean War, the moral priority of war mourning and memory was aimed at commemorating the South Korean and UN soldiers who were killed in action during the war. The stories of “heroes” of the Korean War were disseminated through mass media that was printed and distributed in schools. In this regard, however, there might arise a question: who were the victims of the war? Therefore, the first step in the use of memory for justice is to listen and speak for the victims of the war and the division of Korea. As Ricœur maintained:

To be sure, there are no longer manipulation[s] in the sense defined in terms of the ideological relation of the discourse of power, but in a more subtle manner in the sense of an appeal to conscience that proclaims itself to be speaking for the victim’s demand for justice.<sup>35</sup>

Who were the victims of the war? Generally, South Koreans have long believed that the South Koreans were victims of the war and the North Korean communists were war criminals. Even South Korean Christians have insisted that churches were destroyed and a vast number of Christians were killed or kidnapped by the North Korean army during the war.

Nonetheless, South Koreans should recognise that North Koreans were also victims of the Korean War. Kim Byung-Ro researched North Korean sources on the aftermath of the Korean War and analysed the number of war victims. He concluded

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<sup>33</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 86.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

that 1.2 to 1.3 million North Korean people were killed or went missing during the Korean War, and the total number of casualties in the war constituted 13-14% of the total population of North Korea at that time. The ratio of war casualties to total population in North Korea was three times higher than in South Korea.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, after the Korean War, social classification in the North was changed so as to give higher social status to war victims; consequently, the war victims and their families constituted the higher middle class of North Korean society. This means that the core and ruling population of North Korea have a strong hatred for South Korea and the US, and therefore most of them have never withdrawn support from the North Korean regime in spite of the devastating famine in the early 1990s.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, the voices of the war victims and their families in North Korea should be considered in building truthful memory, justice and reconciliation. Kim has noted that:

It is understandable that some people in South Korea want to punish the people who were responsible for the Korean War as war criminals. However, it would be very dangerous to provoke serious confrontations and conflicts between the two Koreas. Therefore, the issue of the responsibility for the Korean War should be left in the hands of future historians as we prepare for the reconciliation of the two Koreas.<sup>38</sup>

In the sense that reconciliation is projected for the future, North and South Koreans should acknowledge that they are both victims of the Korean War and the division of Korea, and that their common enemy is war and violation.

For many years, the fact that North and South Koreans were all victims of the war has been concealed or downplayed in South Korea. After the Korean War and through the political turmoil, the authoritarian governments tried to hide the truth of the genocides conducted by the South American military and police and even the US armies, insisting that the genocides were simply an operation to annihilate communists in the peninsula and the victims of genocides were not “innocent” civilians, but communists and their collaborators. Therefore, under the authoritarian governments, the surviving victims and their families could not speak out or even ask

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<sup>36</sup> Byung-Ro Kim, *North Korea: Another Name of Chosun- Social Analysis of the Hidden Society in the North* (Seoul: Seoul University Publication, 2016), p. 79.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

the governments to re-investigate their cases, worrying that their families and decedents might be considered *Bbal-gaeng-i* and discriminated against in schools, offices and even in social communities.

There have been many commissions established to investigate a truthful history of unjust violations by South Korean governments since the inauguration of democratic governments in 1994, such as the Kwangju Democratic Uprising in 1980. In particular, in 2004, the South Korean government under president Roh Moo-Hyun inaugurated the Commission for Investigations of Past History for Truth and Reconciliation, which was intended to discover a truth of crimes by the state against innocent civilians.<sup>39</sup> The committee investigated cases involving individuals, such as the case of Cho Bong-Am, a politician who was sentenced to death under the Rhee Syng-Man government for advocating unification through peaceful methods. It also investigated genocides like the 4.3 Incident in Jeju and the Nogunri Bombing Attack by US aircraft against South Korean civilians. The commission found witnesses in the form of surviving victims and governmental documents and concluded that the South Korean military, police and even right wing ‘gangsters’ massacred innocent civilians before and during the Korean War. In spite of the official report from the commission and accounts from the surviving victims and their families, however, many South Korean people, especially those who support the conservative political parties, insist that the massacres and genocides were a military operation and even some of the surviving victims are not innocent civilians but *Bbal-gaeng-i*. As they remember it, the South Korean state was always right and the state protected South Koreans from the attacks of North Korean communists; therefore, the crimes of the authoritarian governments can be justified by anti-communism. The surviving victims and their families still suffer discrimination by people who continue to strongly believe in anti-communism.

Anti-communism is an ideology that has long been manipulating people’s memory and their sense of morality relating to various types of violence of their

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<sup>39</sup> For a detailed history of the various commissions of South Korean governments to discover the truth of history, see Chan-Ho Eom, “Settlement of Past History and Healing of History,” *Studies in Humanities* 33 (2012).

state, led by authoritarian governments against their neighbours. Governments and civil society should continuously investigate state actions against innocent civilians in the name of anti-communism and try to collect the memories of surviving victims and their families for an authentic modern history of Korea. The current South Korean government has suggested legislation that enables the government to prohibit any kind of undermining of the honest history of the violations in the name of anti-communism and discrimination towards the surviving victims and their families. These efforts would certify that the truth of history and people's memory should not be fabricated or manipulated by ideologies, and encourage South Korean populace to realise that the restorative justice can be sought by right remembering: first, both South Koreans and North Koreans are the victims of the war and backlashes during the division of the peninsula, and second, the common enemy is war and violation which distorted their daily lives, and third, end of the Korean war and militant confrontations between two Koreas will be a ground for restorative justice for people live in the peninsula.

### **7. 3. Seeking for Reconciliation in the Divided Korea**

Truth and memory have been distorted by mass media, education and governmental propaganda; added to which the older population does not want peace between the two Koreas, instead hoping that the North Korean communist regime will collapse and the South will take over the North. Due to economic difficulties, the younger generation of South Koreans are also becoming less interested in the unification of Korea and they believe that North Koreans are enemies, not friends. Therefore, in order to promote the recovery of truthful memory regarding North Korea, South Korean Christians should be encouraged to build a reconciliatory attitude toward North Koreans, and to find the best way to encourage the younger generations in South Korea to engage in a new movement for the reconciliation and unification of Korea.

### 7. 3. 1. Theology of Reconciliation in Modern Christianity and the South Korean Context

One of the major teachings of the Christian Bible is reconciliation; this is particularly prevalent in the New Testament. The classical Christian understanding of reconciliation refers to reconciliation between God and human beings, as well as reconciliation between human beings. Using the biblical understanding of the Catholic Church, Daniel Philpott insists that reconciliation is “a concept of justice that involves a restoration of right relationship, animated by mercy and a resulting state of right relationship, characterized by peace”.<sup>40</sup> In general, Philpott’s definition of reconciliation includes the consideration of relationship, mercy, peace, justice and forgiveness for the process and finalisation of reconciliation. Reconciliation highlights the biblical teaching of love and justice, which are regarded as being contrary to one other. Nicholas Wolterstorff insists that justice cannot be separated from love; rather, “justice requires love”.<sup>41</sup> This love is “agapic” or universal, divine, presented by God through Jesus Christ; it honours the inner glory of all human beings made in the image of God and is exemplified by us carrying out acts of justice.<sup>42</sup> Volf has also suggested that we could achieve justice and reconciliation through communal memory: “Communities of sacred memory are, at their best, schools of right remembering – remembering that is truthful and just, that heals individuals without injuring others, that allows the past to motivate a just struggle for justice and the grace-filled work of reconciliation.”<sup>43</sup>

Reconciliation also involves various dimensions: reconciliation in political realms or wider communities, such as states or ethnicities; reconciliation in social dimensions that aims to establish just social structures and relationships; and

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<sup>40</sup> Daniel Philpott, “Reconciliation: A Catholic Ethic for Peacebuilding in the Political Order,” in *Peacebuilding : Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*, ed. Robert J. Schreiter, R. Scott Appleby, and Gerard F. Powers (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2010), p. 98.

<sup>41</sup> Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*, Emory University Studies in Law and Religion (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2011), p. 24.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

reconciliation through individual transformation in wider collective communities.<sup>44</sup> Ada María Isasi-Díaz outlines the religious, social and civic virtues of reconciliation, arguing that, “virtues involve the disposition and actual competence to accomplish moral good: the virtue of reconciliation leads to actual reconciling behaviour”<sup>45</sup> in religious, societal and civic realms, including for citizens around the world.<sup>46</sup>

Assessing the different approaches of theologians to reconciliation, Leah Robinson argues that it is generally maintained that searching for truth, justice, repentance and forgiveness should be preceded by reconciliation, even though such virtues would be applied according to the context. She maintains:

The overall result of the contextual nature of the ideas of truth, justice, forgiveness, and repentance place the idea of the theology of reconciliation on a sliding scale, which moves between the poles of liberating tendencies (truth and justice) and reconciling tendencies (forgiveness and repentance).<sup>47</sup>

She places NCKK’s unification movement in the category of movements that have a reconciling tendency, which emphasises forgiveness and repentance to achieve peace.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the unification movement of the NCKK has been strongly criticised and challenged by the evangelical churches of South Korea, partly because of the pronounced anti-communism of South Korean society and partly because the NCKK emphasises the repentance of South Korean churches for their hostile behaviour toward North Korea and vice versa. The majority of South Korean Christians believe that North Koreans are the villains behind the division and the Korean War, and that just punishment should be made to the North Korean communist regime; they want to exclude “North Koreanness” from the unification discourse.

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<sup>44</sup> David Tombs, “Public Theology and Reconciliation,” in *A Companion to Public Theology*, ed. Sebastian C. H. Kim and Katie Day (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017), pp. 120-122.

<sup>45</sup> Ada María Isasi-Díaz, “Reconciliation: An Intrinsic Element of Justice,” in *Explorations in Reconciliation : New Directions for Theology*, ed. David Tombs and Joseph Liechty (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 76.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>47</sup> Leah Robinson, “Influence of Social Context on a Theology of Reconciliation: Case Studies in Northern Ireland,” (PhD, University of Edinburgh, 2011). p. 60; Leah E. Robinson, *Embodied Peacebuilding Reconciliation as Practical Theology* (Oxford : Peter Lang, 2015), p. 60.

<sup>48</sup> Robinson, “Influence of Social Context on a Theology of Reconciliation: Case Studies in Northern Ireland.”, p. 74.

In general, however, North Koreans and South Koreans are both victims and victimisers of the war and the militant conflicts between the two countries, except in the case of the apparent instigators of genocides that took place after the division and during the Korean War. Unlike apartheid in South Africa, where there was a clear violation by the government and the white population against the black population, it is difficult to define the wronged and the wrongdoers in the Korean context.

Assessing modern history in South Korea, there have been many cases where victims of war became victimisers in later conflicts between the two countries due to a belief that their actions were best for the state. For instance, some of the South Korean soldiers sent to Vietnam killed civilians there without question because they believed that the civilians were communists, and later, in 1980, they killed South Korean civilians in Kwangju for the same reason. South Korean Christians were no different. The *Seobuk-Cheongyeondan* (North West Young Adult Union) was organised by young adults who escaped from the north-western part of North Korea after the division of the Korean peninsula; many of them were Christians. Their property had been seized by the new communist government in the North and they had to escape North Korea. Most of the members of the Union escaped North Korea and became extreme anti-communists. They were recruited by the South Korean anti-communist government after the peninsula's division and placed in the South Korean police and military. More than 500 *Seobuk-Cheongyeondan* members were sent to Jeju Island in 1948, where communist parties were organising and preparing a military revolt.<sup>49</sup> These *Seobuk-Cheongyeondan* members sent to Jeju Island killed not only the communist rebels, but also Jeju citizens. The brutality of the Union was revealed about 60 years later, but they insisted they had been working for the democracy of South Korea and that their actions were just, contrary to all the available evidence.

### **7. 3. 2. Miroslav Volf's Memory for Reconciliation through the Lens of Christian Tradition**

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<sup>49</sup> The National Committee for Investigation of the Truth about the Jeju April 3 Incident, *The Jeju 4.3 Incident Investigation Report* (Jeju 4.3 Peace Foundation: Jeju, 2003), p. 338.

Volf has argued that the Christian tradition could provide a lens through which we can remember appropriately to ensure the redemption of our past memory, which will eventually pave the way to forgiveness and reconciliation with transgressors. According to him, the lens of Christian belief could also contribute to Christians yearning for reconciliation in the Korean peninsula where hatred and manipulated sentiment is rife. As he argues, memory is not only an issue of the past, but also one that will influence our future: the more important challenge for us in remembering our past is not what we remember, but what we do with our memories that will impact the future. The basic Christian convictions, from which Volf builds up the final redemption of memories of transgressions, forgiveness and reconciliation are summarised as follows:<sup>50</sup>

- God created the world and human beings with God's love;
- God might want human beings to live together in God's justice and love, not only for individual pleasure or prosperity;
- God reconciled with human beings through the blood of Jesus on the cross and God wants human beings to also reconcile with each other through the sacrifice of Jesus;
- Human beings will have eternal life after their life on Earth;
- Time is irreversible and God will reveal the truth of transgressions and accomplish God's justice;
- God might want to save the transgressors who confess their sins and yearn for salvation, and the transgressed, to make them reconcile with each other and with God.

Volf, as a theologian, referred to the biblical traditions of Christianity for the purpose of the internal healing of memory.<sup>51</sup> First, he explained that the memory of transgressions could be integrated into our lives, which means that we can attribute meaningful aspects of memory to our lives. In accordance with an eschatological belief in the end of history, the new world begins and we will be delivered from evil. Secondly, we believe that we will be given a new identity, new hope and possibility and a new relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Third, we confirm a new

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<sup>50</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory : Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76-78.

possibility in God's promise. Then, we can anticipate a new relationship with those who trespassed against us.

While Ricœur presented the memory and voices of victims as moral criteria for just memory, Volf has tried to find an exemplary and just memory and a "framework for remembering" through biblical tradition. He explained: "At least for Christians, 'exemplary' in its primary sense refers not to the memory of any given wrong suffered, but specifically to the memory of the suffering and deliverance of God's people and God's Anointed."<sup>52</sup> With a truthful memory, Volf argued, a community can reconstruct its true identity, searching for its wellbeing and that of its members and the Christian tradition through the Bible; this can constitute grounds for a new project involving the transformation of a memory of wrongdoing or trauma into a hopeful future. Volf insists that Jews and Christians share "four formal features" of their sacred memory according to the biblical stories of Exodus and Passion: identity, community, the future and God. According to Volf, through rituals such as the Passover Seder, Jews commit to their sacred identity by recollecting the sacred memory of the past, while Christians hold Holy Communion for the same purpose: "in remembering Christ, they remember themselves as part of a community of people who have died and risen together with Christ and whose core identity consists in this spiritual union with Christ."<sup>53</sup> He adds that the sacred memories of the two groups are "essentially communal memory" that has been shared and transmitted through generations, and that these sacred memories also concern the future, as Jews believe that the Exodus is not only a past event, but also the future deliverance of their community. The story of Exodus and the Passion of Jesus Christ deliver valuable lessons about correct remembering:

Remember wrongs so that you can protect sufferers from future injury, remember them truthfully so as to be able to act justly, and situate the memories of wrongs suffered into the narrative of God's redemption so that you can remember in hope rather than despair.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

Volf further maintains that God is the main actor in their sacred memory, in that He has intervened in the affairs of humankind and given His promise.<sup>55</sup> Hence, Volf urges his readers to reshape their frames of remembering into four simple questions: “who we are, where we belong, what we expect, and what or who we ultimately trust”.<sup>56</sup> Volf refers to the truthful collective memory of all human beings as a sacred memory that allows for the remembrance of crucial events and construction of reliable narratives; for example, the life, passion and death of Christ, which is perhaps the most important collective memory and narrative of Western society, as well as much of Eastern society, particularly Korea. Likewise, Volf argues that the story of Jesus Christ is not only the story of Him or of the Israelites, but indeed that of all human beings. This memory helps us rediscover our identity for the benefit of our future(s), and also our relationship with God, given that the Incarnation of Christ was, for Christians, the unique, final, most personal and universal revelation of God to all of us.<sup>57</sup>

Through the Passion of Jesus Christ, we, struggling between truthful remembering and searching for retributive justice against our transgressors, can discover a third way: forgiving. The story of the Passion of Jesus Christ provides an anticipatory memory that teaches us that Jesus died for all human beings despite evil-doers and that God cares and loves our transgressors too. South Korean Christians are victims of the war and of the division of Korea and some of them are even victimisers who killed and persecuted innocent civilians during the war, as well as under the authoritarian governments.<sup>58</sup> However, the story of the Passion of Christ teaches us, firstly, “to extend unconditional grace...[even to our wrongdoers]”; secondly, that “we must affirm as valid the claims of justice”; and thirdly, “to aim for communion”<sup>59</sup> even with our wrongdoers in “a community of love.”<sup>60</sup> In this way we can move on to declare that our memories of war and hatred of North Korean

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 100-102.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., pp. 97-98.

<sup>58</sup> For more details, see Tae-Yook Choi, “Are the Christian Churches of South Korea the Victims or Victimisers of the Genocides? - Christians’ Memory of War and Genocides,” *Kidokgyo Sasang (Christian Thoughts)* 680 (2015).

<sup>59</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory : Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, p. 121.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

communists do not control our lives, expecting that at the final judgement all the truth of transgressions will be disclosed and sinners will be redeemed and transformed, and we only need to seek a new relationship with our former enemies.

Volf also explains that even if we forgive wrongdoers and forget their transgressions, our identity will not be renounced. We believe that our memories are like pieces of puzzle and we cannot imagine our identity without a small piece of memory. Volf, however, encapsulated that even though we may renounce our memories, especially a memory of being wronged, our identity will not be renounced: “If our identity is made and remade of gathered fragments, the non-remembrance of suffered wrongs will not violate our sense of identity”,<sup>61</sup> because our identity in God is retained by faith. Thus, South Korean Christians who believe that anti-communism is a pole by which to maintain their belief and Christian identity come to realise that their identity is in God in faith and they are indeed obliged to forgive the North Korean communists who have been considered the enemy of South Koreans and South Korean Christians.

### **7. 3. 3. Reconciliation as a Christian Responsibility**

The North Korean regime has shut itself away from the outer world because of a fear that the regime will be threatened by “American imperialism and capitalism”, which it experienced as aggressive during the Korean War. The South Korean churches have no choice but to work towards the reconciliation of the two Koreas within South Korea first, because without reconciliation with our estranged neighbours we cannot reconcile with God. As Jesus taught: “If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:23-24).<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, the discourses of the peace, reconciliation and unification of Korea have come to reflect the issues of

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>62</sup> New International Version Bible.

South Korea herself more than inter-relational issues with North Korea. In this regard, there are three factors the South Korean churches could pursue, as outlined below.

First, the churches should proclaim that they embrace North Koreans as their neighbours, so that South Koreans no longer want to exclude North Koreans and other communists through violation, assimilation, subjugation, indifference, abandonment, ignorance and judgment.<sup>63</sup> Anti-communist and anti-North Korean sentiment among South Koreans are products of the identity war against North Korea that has been ongoing since the establishment of the South Korean government in 1948, and this was intensified by fear of the Korean War and the subsequent confrontations between the two Koreas, as well as governmental manipulation of memory. In her examination of Belfast in Northern Ireland, Geraldine Smyth pointed out that:

Where communities have been structured around the boundary demarcation of insider and outsider, where the other is perceived as ever-encroaching threat, the boundary itself becomes the repository of identity and culture is driven by fears for security.<sup>64</sup>

Fear and yearning for their own security have driven South Koreans to search for a pure and exclusive communal identity; they have searched for ways in which South Korea could defeat their enemies in North Korea and occupy the North. However, securing peace by eliminating North Korean communists is not possible; we have witnessed historically that violence and war sow the seeds of further violence and war. Therefore, if we want to secure peace, as Moltmann represented with a simple phrase that is hard to achieve – to develop “creative love”<sup>65</sup> – we have to ask, “How can we remove the enmity of our enemy” and “make them part of our own responsibility” for “common security and lasting development”?<sup>66</sup> Christians in

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<sup>63</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace : A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), pp. 64-68.

<sup>64</sup> Geraldine Smyth OP, “Respecting Boundaries and Bonds: Journeys of Identity and Beyond,” in *Explorations in Reconciliation : New Directions for Theology*, ed. David Tombs and Joseph Liechty (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 147.

<sup>65</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *Creating a Just Future : The Politics of Peace and the Ethics of Creation in a Threatened World* (London: SCM, 1989), p. 43.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

South Korea are called to embrace our neighbours in the North because embracing is a manifestation of our struggle for justice and truth, as well as God's hope that we will love our neighbours.<sup>67</sup> Further, the hope for a pure identity is nothing more than an illusion. South Korean society is becoming multi-ethnic and multi-cultural; therefore, if South Koreans are supposed to embrace "otherness", then why not include North Koreans in these "others"? We are called to the struggle of embracing our neighbours despite the current relationship of enmity. The only possible way to embrace them "with...equality and reciprocity at its heart", Volf suggests, is "through self-sacrifice, even if self-sacrifice is...a necessary *via dolorosa* in a world of enmity and indifference toward the joy of reciprocal embrace".<sup>68</sup>

Anti-communism, an ideology instilled by the authoritarian government since the division of the peninsula, has been overwhelming the conservative South Korean churches and they still strongly sustain the militant anti-communism even in the era when peaceful negotiations continue between South Korea, North Korea and US. This ideology of anti-communism is more than a theory against communism and North Korean *Juche* ideology, it is a touchstone for the identity of the people in South Korea and the majority of South Korean churches have actively propagated this anti-communism to the congregation. In their understanding, true Christians should be anti-communist and loyal to their government, particularly when it strongly upholds anti-communism. Timothy Lee argued that the exceptional growth of the South Korean protestant churches was due to their zeal for evangelism, nationalism and anti-communism,<sup>69</sup> which was also assessed in chapter 3. It is also true that the more conservative churches have achieved significant growth in church numbers, as well as church memberships, with the propagation of nationalism and anti-communism. In many cases, their nationalism has simply been regarded as statism or patriotism. South Korean churches should ask themselves how this truthful identity can be compatible with their belief in South Korean anti-communism, which

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<sup>67</sup> Miroslav Volf, "A Vision of Embrace," *Ecumenical Review* 47, no. 2 (1995), p. 204.

<sup>68</sup> *Exclusion and Embrace : A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*, pp. 146-147.

<sup>69</sup> Lee, "A Crucial Factor in Evangelicalism's Success in (South) Korea: Coalescence with Nationalism and Anticommunism".

has long been manipulating people's memories and even their social lives, and is used to justify the unjust activities of their state, including genocides against innocent civilians, to secure the authoritarian regime. As Volf argues, the communal memory of Christians of the biblical teachings reveals their truthful identity, which is related to God and for whom Jesus Christ shed his blood on the cross to bring about God's forgiveness through God's unconditional love. Therefore, he insisted that we remember truthfully in order to forgive, forget and achieve communion with our enemies – North Korean communists in the Korean context – in God's justice and love.

Secondly, South Korean churches should seek justice by prioritising the memories of surviving war victims and their families and helping them to tell the truth about the violations of the state, in particular about the genocide of civilians in South and North Korea and separated families in the two countries. Listening to the voices of victims of the war and division will constitute an important step toward personal healing, inviting more people to search for the truth about the war and division, allowing for further recognition of the horrendous aftermath of the Korean War. Rather than commemorating the war in a national realm that often overstates the memories of individuals and particular localities<sup>70</sup> and provokes enmity against the state's enemy, we should appeal to the voices of victims in order to recognise the importance of peace in the Korean peninsula and the world.

Thirdly, South Korean churches should share memories of the war and the division of Korea with the younger generation, who might not know about the war and its aftermath. As explained in previous chapters, the younger generations of South Korea do not care about unification and are not interested in North Korean issues. The memories of war and division held by the older generations have been manipulated by the authoritarian governments to secure their regime and this memory has made younger generations consider North Korea an enemy that does not share a common nationality. Nowadays, many young people do not even want the unification of Korea, in contrast to the era of the military governments of Jeon Doo-

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<sup>70</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 91.

Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo and the first civil government of Kim Young-Sam, when colleges and universities were centres of student movements for democracy and the unification of Korea, which, it was believed, would end violations in the Korean peninsula. Nonetheless, the younger generations can be invited to share in the truthful memories of the victims of the war and division, to learn who their enemy is and what they can do to address the problem of the divided Korea. After researching memory activities and conducting an examination of white audiences at indigenous cultural performances in Canada, Campbell stated that:

Recollection is often publicly expressed and shared among those who do not share a past. Thus, when people remember, they often direct the imaginings of appreciators who may not share a past with them but who become participants in recollective activities...and create bonds of membership.<sup>71</sup>

One example that is relevant to this issue of sharing the memories of victims with the younger generations in South Korea is the *Pyeong-hwa Nabi* (Butterfly of Peace) Network, through which younger students engage with the issue of the sex slaves of the Japanese military during the era of the Japanese occupation. The students attend “Wednesday Demonstrations”, which are held every Wednesday in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, in order to listen to the voices of victims of sex slavery and to acknowledge responsibility for sex slavery, the history of which was manipulated and distorted by the Japanese government. It can be suggested therefore that this memory of the victims has become a collective memory shared by younger students, and hence it has become their responsibility.<sup>72</sup> Likewise, sharing the memories of victims of the Korean War and the division of Korea with younger generations will evoke feelings that they are also responsible for the peace, reconciliation and unification of Korea; indeed, unless the younger generations are encouraged to engage with these aims, they will not be achievable in the future. As Moltmann argues:

There is never lasting peace in history just for the present generation, it arises out of responsibility for justice between generations... Therefore, peace in history is never a state with which one can be content, but is always a way

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<sup>71</sup> Campbell, *Our Faithfulness to the Past: Reconstructing Memory Value*, pp. 72-78.

<sup>72</sup> Na-Young Lee, “Rethinking Korean Women’s Movement of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery: Overcoming Cultural Trauma and Constructing Empathetic Audience,” *Society and History* 115 (2017), p. 99.

one must take in order to create time for humankind and make possible life of generations to come.<sup>73</sup>

Indeed, the younger generation in South Korea are not interested in the unification of Korea and related issues. Recent surveys indicate that the majority of younger people do not want unification and they do not even consider North Koreans part of the same nation. However, I would argue that their image of and ideas about North Korea and unification are not static; they are malleable, and may be particularly impacted if they are educated about the modern history of Korea and they interact with North Korean people. I interviewed six athletes from the South Korean ice hockey team, which united with the North Korean ice hockey team for the Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Games in 2018.<sup>74</sup> Most of the interviewees were in their 20s and all of them were born in Korea. I asked them what images they had of North Koreans before they met the North Korean athletes.

H<sup>75</sup>: My image of North Koreans was that they were poor and their leaders extensively manipulate their people. They are *Bbal-gaeng-i*. I do not know what *Bbal-gaeng-i* means.

P: I also thought they were poor. The country is a nuclear problem maker.

HD: Beggars.

The images of North Korea that the young athletes had were not favourable and even seemed very patronising towards North Koreans. Some scholars have identified this view, held by South Koreans about North Koreans, as a type of “Orientalism towards North Koreans”.<sup>76</sup> H explained that she was afraid when she heard that the North Korean players would share flats with the South Koreans because of her negative perception of North Koreans. Their ideas about North Korea seemed to have been formulated in the last ten years under the conservative governments that re-promoted anti-communism, and it seemed they had insufficient education about the modern history of Korea and North Korea. However, when they were training with the North

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<sup>73</sup> Moltmann, *Creating a Just Future : The Politics of Peace and the Ethics of Creation in a Threatened World*, p. 41.

<sup>74</sup> Ladies' Ice Hockey Team Athletes of South Korea for 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Games, interview by Hoon Song, 16 March, 2018.

<sup>75</sup> Initial of the last name of the interviewees.

<sup>76</sup> Hyuk-Beom Kwon, “A Critical Assessment of Unification Discourse- How to Understand the “Differences” between Two Koreas,” in *The Korean Peninsula and the Issue of the Unification* ed. Hyuk-Beom Kwon (Seoul: Daewangsa, 2002), p. 184.

Korean athletes, they came to feel greater proximity toward the North Korean athletes than other team members who had been born in other countries and were originally from countries such as the US and Canada. They came to believe that the North Korean athletes were no different from other women in their 20s, and they all agreed that they enjoyed mingling with the North Korean players.

Even though these athletes became familiar with their North Korean counterparts, their experience was limited to sport, and therefore they did not agree that unification was appropriate because they were worried about the confusion that would arise in the process. They valued peace and security more than unification. Relating to North Korean issues, the younger generation seem to care more about universal humanitarian virtues such as justice, human rights and egalitarianism, rather than sympathy for a “same nation sentiment”. Therefore, the cause of the unification of Korea should pursue the virtues of universal human dignity, and just remembrance should be part of the goal of unification.

Lastly, South Korean churches, I suggest, should rethink their campaign in their North Korean missions, which has long been promoting anti-communism, anti-North Korean discourse and the “reclaiming” of North Korean territory to rebuild churches in the North. The conservative camp continues to argue that the unification of Korea should be “evangelistic”, or based on the teachings of the gospel; this strategy is labelled *Bok-eom Tongil*. Yet gospel messages in such a land of division, conflict and hatred should be those of love, forgiveness and reconciliation, as stated above, and their messages to the congregation about North Korea should be consistent with this. Missions to North Korea should promote healing, reconciliation and peace for the two states, as well as human dignity and justice in the Korean peninsula. The unification of Korea is not a process of rebuilding the churches in the North that have been destroyed under the communist regime, but rather a way to reveal truth and realise “abundant peace” in the peninsula, as Jeremiah predicted would happen after the unification of the peoples of Israel and Judah.

#### **7. 4. Unification: Seeking Justice for the Victims of the Division of Korea**

The vision in the Old Testament of the unification of the people of Israel and the Judean people has frequently been referred to by Korean theologians, as well as pastors of Protestant churches in South Korea. While conservative church pastors prefer the stories of the reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem after their return from Babylon, liberal theologians have developed their theological approaches toward the unification of Korea based on the vision of Ezekiel depicted in Ezekiel chapter 37.<sup>77</sup> Even though the historical context of Koreans and Israelites are different, they have explained that just as the people of Judah and Israel were liberated from the powerful kingdoms and unified according to the vision, North and South Koreans will be liberated from the foreign influence of China, Russia, the US and Japan and then they will realise the unification of the two Koreas. As secular historians have argued, the history of Korea indicates that Koreans still suffer from the oppression and bondage of foreign intervention. I also argue that people in the peninsula still suffer from the oppression of ideologies.

Jeremiah prophesied that the Israelites and Judeans would be unified and restored to the Davidic kingdom, but he put more emphasis on truthfulness for the unification of the two nations. According to this prophecy, God indicated that healing, peace and truth would emerge with the restoration of the kingdom: “Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and **I will heal them**; and I will **reveal** to them an abundance of **peace and truth**” (Jeremiah 33:6).<sup>78</sup> The word “heal” is also used in

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<sup>77</sup> In Ezekiel chapter 37, verses 15 through to 22, it is quoted that: “The word of the LORD came again to me saying, ‘And you, son of man, take for yourself one stick and write on it, “For Judah and for the sons of Israel, his companions”; then take another stick and write on it, “For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions.”’ ‘Then join them for yourself one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand. ‘When the sons of your people speak to you saying, “Will you not declare to us what you mean by these?” say to them, “Thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will put them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.’”’ ‘The sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. ‘Say to them, “Thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms.’” (New American Standard Bible).

<sup>78</sup> New American Standard Bible.

Jeremiah 19:11 to mean “restoring to the original state” from broken pieces, or “repairing”. Moreover, the restoration of the kingdom would reveal peace and truth. In a broken land full of conflict, where people’s memories have been manipulated, healing, peace and truth cannot be separated from each other, and the restoration or unification of the land shall follow them, according to the vision of Jeremiah.

As argued in the previous chapters, the unification discourse has been based on nationalist and *minjung* sentiment that North and South Koreans are one nation and unification is the indisputable goal of the Korean people. As pointed out by Kwon,<sup>79</sup> the unification discourse has not allowed for criticism of unification itself. Therefore, there has been insufficient discussion about why the two Koreas should be unified in relation to the methodologies of Korean unification. Through recent discourses about peace and unification in Korea, a critical and fundamental question has arisen: is the unification of the two Koreas essential for the Korean population in the two Koreas? Do they really need unification? Recent discourses about the unification of Korea aim to emphasise that unification is needed to ameliorate universal humanitarian virtues in the Korean peninsula that have been challenged by the division of the area. Liberal theologians have argued that unification would contribute to promoting peace, human rights, welfare and equality. However, it can be argued that the development of humanitarian virtues in the Korean peninsula is possible without the unification of Korea.

Unification requires processes such as reconciliation and healing of the memories of the Korean people; without unification, we cannot end the manipulation of these memories and stop victimising the Koreans who have suffered from the division of Korea. The ideologies of each state – South Korean anti-communism and North Korean *Juche* ideology – both involve manipulating memory, sentiment and even social life. In particular, separated families in South and North Korea are the ostensible victims of the ideological conflict and division of the two Koreas. The division of Korea will also produce more victims due to ideological and military

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<sup>79</sup> Kwon argued that unification discourse in South Korea has been abused for political purposes and operated as an ideology. All discourse against the unification of the Koreas was challenged as anti-unification and anti-national. Kwon, “A Critical Assessment of Unification Discourse- How to Understand the “Differences” between Two Koreas,” p. 173.

confrontations between the two parts. Therefore, the loss caused by the division of Korea is not “imaginative, but existential, [and] shall be ended by the unification of Korea.”<sup>80</sup> The division of Korea has increased the sorrow of the people, who were unjustly persecuted by the military government, and it has been viewed as imprudent to search for the truth and offer compensation for their suffering because some conservatives have argued that this would benefit the North Korean communist regime. The wrong-doers insist that there was nothing wrong with what they did to innocent people. The older generation, who were educated in anti-communism under authoritarian governments, do not want to believe the emerging truth, and instead argue that the victims of political oppression were in fact communists. In this situation, the voices of the victims of the Korean War and the division have been ignored. The memory of a community should speak for victims, but in South Korea, the older population, whose memories have been manipulated by political power, aggressively express their hatred for victims due to their indoctrinated belief that they are North Korean communists. Hence, only the unification of Korea will fix this manipulated memory and hatred of both the victims of the division and the North Koreans.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I discussed the ways in which the memory of the South Korean people, as well as South Korean Christians, has been manipulated by a statist ideology of anti-communism, which has defined South Koreanness and South Korean Christianity for many years. This manipulated memory has justified crimes against innocent people and created strong factions and hatred of North Koreans, as well as among the South Korean population, rather than contributing to sustaining peace and bringing reconciliation in the Korean peninsula. Therefore, as Volf argues,

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<sup>80</sup> Ji-Hyun Im, “From a Historiography of a Nation toward a Historiography of Human Beings,” in *The Issues and Tasks of the Unification Discourse of the Korean Peninsula*, ed. The Committee of Commemorating 60 Anniversary of Hanshin University (Osan: Hanshin University Press, 2001), p. 195.

churches can provide a lens of sacred memory highlighting the Passion of Jesus Christ and teaching us about true identity in God's hand.

The Bible teaches us love, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace. As Christians, we have to seek these virtues in this violent world. In a context of violent conflict, and for the people who experienced a terrible war, it is difficult to accept that they ought to seek love, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace with the people who were (and are perhaps still thought to be) their enemies. People tend to seek revenge against those who wronged them, but this is how evil wins. Volf stated that, "To triumph fully, evil needs two victories, not one. The first victory happens when an evil deed is perpetrated; the second victory when evil is returned";<sup>81</sup> in this regard Volf has borrowed words from the apostle Paul: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21).<sup>82</sup> South Korean churches should not exclude North Koreans and search for retributive justice against them. If they do so, the memory of war and the confrontations between the two Koreas only contribute to shaping a new Cold War system around the Korean peninsula and impeding the people's movements and discourse of the reconciliation and unification of Korea. As I have argued by referring to Volf, Christians are obliged to remember truthfully in order to forgive and eventually forget in faith in God as God wants us to reconcile with our enemies and live with them in a communion of justice and love. Therefore, we should realise that we are obliged to embrace North Koreans as our neighbours, even when it seems impossible to overcome evil with good through love, forgiveness and reconciliation. God, as a generous giver and lover, showed us true love through the passion and death of His only begotten Son. Paul also proclaimed that: "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation... For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." (Colossians 1:15, 19-20).<sup>83</sup> God reconciled Himself with all creatures through the blood of the crucified Jesus, and He wants us to resemble

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<sup>81</sup> Miroslav Volf, "God's Forgiveness and Ours: Memory of Interrogations, Interrogation of Memory," *Anglican Theological Review* 89, no. 2 (2007), p. 218.

<sup>82</sup> New International Version Bible.

<sup>83</sup> New International Version Bible.

Him and be reconciled with each other. It could be argued that we are unable to be as generous as God. However, as Volf maintained, through Jesus Christ, we have a “new possibility, and new life into which each of us is called to grow in our own way and ultimately a new world freed from all enmity, a world of love.”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory : Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, p. 82.

## Conclusion

The thesis has argued that two ideological approaches – ethnic nationalism and anti-communism – have provided the two primary models of unification discourse among Protestant Christians in South Korea. However, the thesis also has articulated that neither of them has provided an effectual theological basis for the efforts of the reconciliation and unification of Korea in the changing landscape in 21<sup>st</sup> century which anti-communism and anti-North Korean sentiment is still powerful. Therefore, an alternative approach is necessary to encounter manipulated memory and sentiment against North Korea from a Christian perspective., This approach suggests the importance of remembering rightly, which can then lead to forgiveness and forgetting of the memory of wrongs.

Chapter 1 described the reasons and processes by which anti-communism overwhelmed the socio-political sphere in South Korea by manipulating the memory of South Koreans, and how the conservative governments and the majority of the South Korean population came to believe that unification would occur through the collapse of the North Korean communist regime and a strong anti-communist stance. During the Cold War era, which was characterised by harsh military confrontations between North and South Korea, as well as between the US, China and the USSR, it became impossible to sustain the hope of unifying the Korean peninsula through military methods, and the authoritarian government sought to sustain the division of the peninsula and maintain their regime, while propagating that the unification of Korea was the national goal of South Korea. Instead, they argued that South Korea needed to be highly developed in order to win the ideological war against the North Korean regime and to eventually take over the North. Therefore, for the sake of state security, but primarily the security of the authoritarian regime, the economic development of South Korea was at the forefront of the Cold War against North Korean communists, and the democratisation of Korea and the individual rights of the South Korean people were given little consideration. Overshadowing their hope for democratisation and reconciliation with North Korea, the South Korean people,

even South Korean Christians, were concerned about state security and economic prosperity due to their fear of a possible re-invasion by North Korean communists.

The South Korean fear of the North Korean communists was encouraged by the authoritarian South Korean government, and the hatred of North Koreans among the South Korean population deepened. This hatred was violently expressed toward a number of social activists working against the authoritarian government and pursuing the development of South Korean democracy. Political and social movements that set themselves against the South Korean authoritarian government, as well as civil unification and peace movements, were suspected of working for the benefit of North Korean communists. However, in spite of threats from the authoritarian governments and the danger of persecution, Protestant social activists and scholars engaged in unification and peace movements, believing that the unification of Korea would bring a true democracy to Korea. They proposed ethnic nationalism, which focused on the Korean people's awareness of the need for an independent Korean nation against Japanese colonialism during the era of Japanese occupation. They criticised the statist nationalism propagated by the authoritarian governments as a form of nationalism consequent upon the division of Korea, which excluded the North Korean communists. Instead they argued that the ethnic homogeneity of the nation and people in both Koreas was unchangeable and the most important common criterion for building a common identity for the unification of Korea.

Chapter 1 also traced the development of the *Minjung* theology of the liberal Protestant churches. The *Minjung* theology became the basis for the socio-political engagement of South Korean liberal churches in the democratisation of Korea. They believed that the democratisation of Korea should be realised for the wellbeing of the Korean people, especially those who had been manipulated politically, economically and culturally, and that democratisation in South Korea would not be possible without the unification of the two Koreas. In the following chapters, the thesis also clarified that *Minjung* theology became the grounds for the unification discourse of liberal Protestant churches in South Korea.

This thesis has shown that the South Korean Protestant churches, regardless of their theological positions, strove for the unification of Korea on two ideological

models: ethnic nationalism and anti-communism. Chapter 2 noted that the liberal churches attempted to interact with North Korean church leaders through the WCC and they made ecumenical efforts towards the peace and unification of Korea, with their unification discourses based on ethnic nationalism and *Minjung* theology. The chapter showed that the group initiating this ecumenical approach toward unification comprised theologians and Christians living in foreign countries. This group explained that they were on the borderline between North and South Korea with regard to state identity, meaning that they would not be bonded by the political and theological boundaries of either of the two Koreas. Even though most of them were born in Korea, they had already obtained citizenship in foreign countries, and had a legitimate right to travel to North Korea and meet North Koreans. Their meetings with North Korean Christians revealed the existence of Christianity in North Korea, which surprised South Korean Protestants. As the Foreign Residing South Korean Christians' meeting with North Korean Christians took place in various areas, the NCKK leadership asked the WCC to facilitate conferences with North Korean Christians represented by the KCF, and they published statements through these conferences. The statements acknowledged the 'evil' of the division of Korea, which had been caused by the leading countries in the Cold War system, and they declared that Christians of both Koreas should cooperate to achieve peace and the unification of Korea. However, the statements also included reference to very sensitive political issues, such as the US troops in South Korea and the human rights violations by the authoritarian government in South Korea. The issues discussed in the statements were also a concern for liberal Christians, who had pursued socio-political campaigns for the democratisation of Korea for many years. The chapter further noted that these liberal Christian approaches toward the unification of Korea were criticised due to the manipulated collective memory of the South Korean people in relation to anti-communism. Some of the liberal theologians and pastors who pursued direct dialogue with North Korean Christian leaders were accused of carrying out "anti-state" activities by the South Korean governments.

Chapters 3 argued that, comparatively, the conservative churches developed their unification discourse based on a strong anti-communist identity, believing that unification meant taking over the formerly Christianised land that was now occupied

by North Korean communists, who were identified as the enemies of the Korean nation, as well as of Christians. Conservative church leaders strongly emphasised national evangelisation and criticised North Korean communists, who, they argued, persecuted Christians in the North and were even trying to cause the destruction of Christianity in the Korean peninsula. Reflecting their vision of national evangelisation and unification, they understood nationalism as a statist nationalism that was more concerned with statist security against North Korea. Many leaders of the South Korean Protestant churches were immigrants who had escaped from the North before or during the Korean War. This fear of the possible invasion of North Korean communists was shared among the South Korean population, but it was intensified from the pulpits of the South Korean Protestant churches, many of which were founded by immigrants from the North by leaders that were quite influential within Christian communities. Therefore, for conservative Christians in South Korea, the primary and most important condition for the unification of Korea has generally been the collapse of the communist regime of North Korea, which, they believe, will be realised by the power of God and evangelistic work among North Koreans. This scenario is generally called “*Bok-eom Tongil* (evangelical unification or unification through evangelism)”.

However, as South Koreans could not enter North Korea or even meet North Koreans without governmental permission according to the South Korean national security law, conservative Christians believed that they could bring about the unification of Korea through prayer campaigns and a variety of broadcasting projects, such as the Far East Broadcasting Company Korea, which aims to disseminate the Christian message to communist countries, including North Korea. They also hoped to reach North Koreans in various foreign locations and therefore passionately engaged in mission work in China and Russia where North Korean defectors were trying to find safe shelter. Along with these various evangelistic methods, the conservative churches initiated humanitarian aid for North Koreans in the early 1990s, when North Koreans were suffering from devastating famines, and they began to run programmes for North Korean defectors in South Korea. In these humanitarian works, the conservative churches sought interactions with North Koreans, believing that such work would provide the seeds for evangelisation and the

social transformation of North Korean society to secure human rights and freedom of religious activities. Chapters 3 illustrated that the humanitarian works of the conservative churches created a momentum for cooperation with liberal churches in South Korea and also showed that the conservative Christians began to question how the evangelical approach could work in harmony with the socio-political engagement of churches for the unification of Korea.

Chapter 4 focused on theological approaches toward the unification of Korea from liberal Christian thinkers such as Moon Ik-Hwan and Park Soon-Kyung. In spite of the strong anti-communism and statist nationalism in South Korea, liberal Christians upheld an ethnic nationalism that was widespread among scholars and social activists, especially in terms of unification discourse. They differentiated the statist nationalism propagated by the authoritarian governments from the nationalism that the *Jaeya* people were proposing, critiquing that statist nationalism was a basis for the division of Korea, while maintaining that the broader-based nationalism of the *Jaeya* people provided grounds for the future unification of Korea. Park Soon-Kyung proposed a nationalist unification theology that emphasised the national homogeneity of North and South Koreans regardless of their ideological differences. She argued that the ideologies of Christianity and North Korean *Juche* share common ideas about the wellbeing of human beings against capitalism, the basis of which is human greed. With a limited suspicion of communism, *Minjung* theologians also pursued the unification of Korea from the perspective of ethnic nationalism, criticising the statist nationalism of the authoritarian government, as well as anti-communism among South Korean churches, for contributing to the division of the Korean peninsula.

Moon Ik-Hwan, an Old Testament scholar, Presbyterian pastor and social activist, believed that the churches should energetically engage in socio-political movements for the democratisation and unification of Korea. Moon argued that North Korea should be more concerned with human freedom and South Korea should achieve a more egalitarian society so that the two countries could together create a social and political system that would form the basis of a unified Korea. Emulating Moon's proposal, some theologians in the liberal camp argued that a

socialist economic and political system would be an alternative to the present system of South Korea and it would constitute a middle way between the North and South Korean socio-political systems. Moon also searched for a path that would make unification discourses more popular in South Korean society so that more people became concerned about the problem of the divided Korea. However, the chapter concluded that his efforts fell short because his visit to North Korea and meeting with Kim Il-Seong led to extensive criticism by the churches as well as South Korean society and it ultimately weakened the unification movements of liberal Protestant churches.

Chapter 5 outlined the theological basis for the unification discourse of conservative Christians. Reverend Han Kyung-Chik, for example, was a pastor in Sinuiju, a city near the border between Korea and China, who had experienced the Japanese occupation, as well as communist governance. The two life lessons Han learnt were that, first, communists were anti-national and anti-Christian, and, secondly, living under a dictatorship was better than living in a colonised country. Therefore, for him, the idea that North Korea could occupy South Korea and force South Koreans to live under a communist regime was unimaginably terrifying. Therefore, he argued that South Korean churches should be strongholds of anti-communism and national evangelisation as well as being at the forefront of the unification of Korea. In later years, he launched the Loving Drive for Sharing Rice campaign which aimed to support North Korean people suffered shortage of foods caused by the great famine and this project became a flint fire of humanitarian works of South Korean protestant churches in spite of the criticisms that the humanitarian works would prolong the communist regime in North Korea. Kim Young-Han, a conservative theologian, has articulated that the unification should be driven by citizens, who intellectually educated and are able to sustain social legitimacy of South Korea different from *minjung* who are in favour of North Korean communists. Kim believed that South Korea should be highly developed to absorb North Korea. However, this chapter concluded that the theological approaches of Han and Kim based on anti-communism fell short because unification without reconciliation of the two Koreas or the redemption of hostile attitudes toward North Koreans would not

bring justice and peace in the peninsula and they have not provided theological basis for reshaping Christians longing for reconciliation and unification of Korea.

Chapter 6 proposed that since the division of Korea the subjectivities of the unification of Korea have changed according to the social milieu. Following the division, the South Korean conservative churches argued that the unification discourse and movement in South Korea should be led by the South Korean government, as unification meant a political integration of two governments and only the South Korean government had the authority to talk with the North Korean communist regime. The liberal churches, however, believed that the unification of two Koreas should be led by South Korean commoners, and in particular the *minjung* who had been exploited economically, politically and culturally.

With the development of democracy in South Korea, particularly after the June Uprising in 1987 in which South Koreans succeeded in a constitutional revolution that secured direct presidential election, the rights and responsibilities of the common people gained emphasis. Chapter 6 argued that scholars of sociology and political studies became concerned at a theoretical level with the subjectivity of “*Simin* (citizens)” in the South Korean context, with an awareness of citizens’ potential autonomous and organised power to bring about socio-political change. Based on the idea of citizenry in South Korea, a number of civil organisations were set up to engage with social, economic and political issues. Citizens could organise themselves into movements for peace and unification between the two Koreas, and if there was a possibility that North Koreans also could organise their own civil society organisations, this would signal remarkable changes in the relationships between the populations of the two Koreas. Scholars argue that the citizens of both Koreas could theoretically overcome the sensitivities of political and diplomatic confrontations, achieve social interactions with each other and push their governments to pursue peace and unification. Due to the fact that the division of Korea is not only a matter for the two Koreas, but also for citizens around the world, Yoo Kyung-Dong further argues that citizens in the countries surrounding the Korean peninsula should ally to

elect authorities that would contribute to the peace and reconciliation of Korea.<sup>1</sup> Christians in particular should engage with socio-political issues because they are also citizens of countries.

Chapter 6 also argued that unification discourses are being eroded in South Korea. Despite the continuing hope for the unification of Korea among the South Korean population, it appears that the realistic possibility of unification is declining. Generally, scholars argue that the unification of the two Koreas is not an imminent goal of the Korean population because the people have now lived with division for over 70 years and each country has developed its own governance. Hence, creating one nation-state would be very difficult. Moreover, the last two decades in the Korean peninsula have been marked by hatred and military confrontations caused by nuclear issues. It is thus argued that the peaceful coexistence of the two countries is a more imminent and practical goal than unification itself, and indeed unification discourse in South Korea is being eroded by peace discourse. Scholars such as Choi Jang-Jib and Paik Nak-Cheong argue that unification discourses and governmental unification policies have been causing conflict among South Koreans, as well as with the North Korean government, because they have experienced difficulty in proposing a governance system that could form a middle way between North Korean communism and South Korean capitalism. It was thought that the North and South Korean governments would agree to develop a kind of confederate governance, like the United States, after unification, but recently scholars such as Paik have promoted the idea of the two Koreas developing their relationship like the countries of the European Union, whose members have secured freedom of travel across other member countries and share the same currency. Then, they argue, people would want more than “union” and hope for the unification of the two countries. South Korean churches are now also developing theologies of peace in the Korean peninsula, rather than theologies for unification. However, the chapter concluded that even though the unification of Korea could be delayed by the difficult situation of the Korean peninsula, with peace becoming a more urgent goal, churches still need to develop

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<sup>1</sup> Yoo, “Peace and War, and the Responsibility of the Christian Ethics in the Post-Modern Era.”, pp. 281-284.

theologies for the unification of Korea, as this way they will gain social awareness, be able to explain why the eventual unification of Korea is just, and redress the manipulation of memory and hatred among Koreans.

Following the critical assessment in chapters 2 to 6 of the previous unification discourses and movements of South Korean Protestant churches, in that they have not been providing effectual approaches toward the problems of divided Korea according to the changing landscapes of the Korean peninsula in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, chapter 7 proposed a third and very different approach towards unification. This was grounded in a specifically Christian theology of justice, memory and reconciliation particularly referring Mirosalv Volf's *End of Memory* which pursued remembering rightly to forgive by God's grace, and then forget. The divided attitudes of South Korean people toward North Korea and the North Korean population also disclosed that the problems of the divided Korean peninsula have generally become an internal issue among South Koreans rather than an inter-relational problem with North Korea. As argued in the previous chapters, chapter 7 clearly analysed that there have been two different understandings of justice among South Korean churches regarding North Korea. The majority of South Korean people, especially those who lived through the Korean War and the authoritarian government that instilled anti-communism as a state ideology, still think that there should be just punishment of the North Korean communists for the Korean War and the division of Korea. Likewise, for conservative South Korean Protestant churches, justice toward North Korea means retribution, which would result in God's punishment of the North Korean communists who caused the war and brutally oppressed human rights in the North. For liberal Christians in the South, however, a restorative justice is preferred, as this would resolve the *Han* of *minjung* who have been oppressed and manipulated by the ruling authorities and their supporters who sustained and have benefited from the system of division. They pursue the wellbeing of *minjung* in the peninsula through the peace and unification of Korea and argue that the unification will bring peace to North-East Asia, where a new Cold War confrontation is building between the US and Japan on one side, and Russia and China on the other. Peace would mean not only an existence without war, but also a

situation of shalom in which all people could enjoy human flourishing and God's justice.

Justice, love and reconciliation in the relationship with North Korea have been always contradicting each other in the South Korean context. While the liberal churches emphasised the reconciliation of all Koreans, criticising anti-communism as evil, the conservative churches emphasised the need for God's "justice" to be enacted upon North Korean communists and argued that reconciliation would only be feasible when the North Korean communists repented of their sins. I have argued that justice in the relationship between North and South Korea should be built on truthful remembering, not manipulated memory, sentiment against North Koreans, or even on ideologies which have evolved around 'political and social powers'. For a long time, the memory of the backlash against the division of Korea, including the Korean War, shaped a deep hatred of North Koreans, and the authoritarian government manipulated memory and established anti-communism as a statist ideology in order to sustain the regime. Anti-communism has concealed the fact that the South Korean government, army and police killed innocent civilians and that North Koreans were also victims in the Korean War. Seeking retribute justice against the North Korean regime for the Korean War would invigorate the North Korean population whose land was devastated, and whose families were killed by US and South Korean armies and South Korean rightist gangsters, therefore I argued that seeking justice of the Korean war should be a process toward restorative justice which would contribute reconciliation of Korean populations in both Koreas.

I also argued that manipulated memory and negative sentiment toward North Koreans has shaped the national identity of South Koreans against North Koreans. Even those in leadership in the conservative churches, which comprise the majority of South Korean churches, have argued that true Christians should be anti-communists. Meanwhile, the Christian approach to unification based on nationalism and *minjung* theology has caused fractions among the South Korean population and, ironically, it has weakened the need for unification, since it sees unification as a means to democratise the two Koreas and disregards human rights issues for North Koreans. Those seeking justice should first take the step of seeking truth and

overcoming ideological blocks, and then we will come to know that justice should not involve retributive justice against North Korean communists, but instead restorative justice against war, violation and hatred, bringing peace, love and reconciliation to the Korean peninsula and the world. The chapter proposed that a truthful Christian identity, rather than an identity built on statist or national ideologies and manipulated memories, would be a further step towards reshaping the Christian vision for reconciliation. As Volf argued in his book, *End of Memory*, Christians share their communal biblical memory of Israel's escape from slavery in Egypt and the crucifixion of Jesus, which are not simply past stories, but also embody a memory and belief that God will deliver them when they are put in danger because God is love and God's grace reaches all creatures. Likewise, the chapter argued that the sacred memory of the Christian community helps us to rediscover our identity for a better future in relation to God and Jesus Christ who died for the love of all human beings. This Christian identity will break down the ideological blocks that still remain within South Korean society and contribute to reshaping the Christian longing for the reconciliation and unification of Korea. Therefore, chapter 7 also suggested that the South Korean churches, especially conservative churches, should try to dialogue with North Koreans at various civil stages to search for a proper shared understanding, rather than looking them as targets of evangelism.

Reflecting upon the manipulated memory of South Korean soldiers and the victims of the Kwangju Democratisation Uprising in 1980, Han Gang, a writer and the Man Booker International Prize winner of 2016, assessed how the manipulated memory of anti-communism devastated people's lives in a small city in South Korea:

Some memories never fade away. Even though time passes, the memories of Kwangju are becoming clearer while other memories are eroded... I heard about a platoon of the ROK army who were sent to Vietnam. They killed all the civilians in a rural village. Women, children, old people... Soldiers summoned them to the community building and burnt them alive. After the war, they returned to Korea and received rewards from the government. Later, some of them came to Kwangju to kill us. Their memories of the war in Vietnam were not eroded; they still powerfully controlled their behaviour.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Gang Han, *A Boy Is Coming* (Seoul: Chang-Bi, 2014), p.141. The novel was translated into English under the title, *Human Acts*.

At the time this thesis was begun in 2014, anti-communism and anti-North Korean sentiment were rife in South Korean society, largely due to the North Korean nuclear issues and people's weakening confidence in the national homogeneity of the two Koreas. Fractions, tensions and hatred toward North Korea were widespread in South Korean society. In this changing landscape, ironically, the unification discourse had come to be an internal issue for South Korea rather than an inter-relational one with North Korea. Therefore, some academic attempts are needed in the future that will consider how to define a new Korean identity based, not on ethnicity and ideology, but on common values for a better and more hopeful future of people living peacefully in the peninsula and in neighbouring countries. Christianity has a potentially distinctive contribution make to the construction of these shared values. As the thesis has emphasised, truthful memory, justice and reconciliation from inside the South Korean Christian communities and then South Korean society are essential. The reconciliation and unification of two Koreas requires procedures of appeasing each other's hatred. South Korean Christian communities, the majority of whom still uphold pronounced anti-communist and anti-North Korean sentiments, could illuminate that process through remembering rightly to forgive by God's grace and building reconciliation in God's justice and love, a duty which is also central to Christian imperatives.

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