

진실로 너희에게 이르노니 너희
중에 두 사람이 땅에서
합심하여 무엇이든 구하면
하늘
저희를
두 세
곳에는 나도 그들 중에
있느니라.

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마태복음 Matthew 18: 19-20

Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. (NRSV)

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The Formation of Presbyterian Worship in Korea, 1879-1934

Kyeong Jin Kim, Th.D. Boston University, Boston, MA. 1999.

Summary

“How were patterns of Korean Presbyterian worship formed in its beginning?” This is the primary question Dr. Kyeong Jin Kim tries to answer in his dissertation, *The Formation of Presbyterian Worship in Korea, 1879-1934*. However, his aim is not limited to finding out resources of the Korean Presbyterian Church and restoring the pattern of worship in its primitive stage; rather, he goes further and finds “future directions for the reform of the worship.” As the first step, in the first chapter, he sets up a specific period, 1879-1934. It is because the first Korean Presbyterian worship took place in Manchuria in 1879, when the first Korean received baptism by Rev. J. MacIntyre. And since 1934, when The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea adopted *The Directory of Worship of the Presbyterian Church of Chosen*, there have been no significant changes until the “Liturgical Movement” arose in the 1980’s.

In order to trace the origin of Korean Presbyterian worship, he introduces early liturgical materials of the Korean Presbyterian church, which had never been introduced: *Directory of Worship of the Presbyterian Church of Chosen* (1922) and the *Forms of Marriage and Burial, A Supplement on the Administration of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and on the Ordination of Pastors and Elders* (1924), and Charles Allen Clark’s *Moksa Chibop* [Pastoral Theology] (1919). By examining these early materials historically and theologically, he tries to find out how the shape of Korean Presbyterian worship was formed.

Dr. Kim starts the second chapter by opposing the dominant opinion that the Korean Presbyterian Church started with the arrival of the first Presbyterian missionary to Korea, Horace N. Allen, in 1884. He presents the historical documents showing that four Koreans were baptized

in 1879 in Manchuria by Scottish Presbyterian missionaries. Surprisingly, these first baptized Koreans participated in the translation of the Bible into Korean. Many Koreans accepted the Christian faith by the distribution of Scriptures and many of them continued disseminating the Gospels and tracts, after they returned to Korea. Therefore, he argues: “the beginning of the primitive faith communities in Korea was initiated by the native colporteurs...not by the missionaries.” (p. 210)

According to Dr. Kim, there are two great influences on the formation of Korean Presbyterian worship. The first is the Chinese Church, which greatly influenced the worship practice of the Manchurian church by eight points: 1) *Itinerancy*: the missionaries settled down in large cities as centers and they superintended a large area by helping native evangelists, 2) *Street preaching*, 3) *Evening service* mainly for Bible instructions, 4) *Introduction for the Catechumens*, 5) *Daily Meeting for baptized members* for Bible reading and exposition, 6) *Lord’s Day service* mainly focusing on the singing of hymns and public prayers, 7) *Liturgies of the Chinese Church* consisted of three elements: hymn singing, public prayer, and Bible reading, and 8) *Christian Alternatives for Chinese social customs and rituals*.

The second is *American missionaries* who introduced their liturgies to the Korean Presbyterian Church: 1) *Weekly Service*, 2) *Fervent Prayer Meeting*, 3) *Private Baptism* due to the prohibition of the law, 4) *Sunday Service*, 5) *Prayer Meetings*, which became one of the most dominant liturgies of the native churches, 6) *Watch Meeting* [watch night service] concentrating on repentance and the renewal of faith, 7) *Hymn singing*, and 8) *Itinerancy*.

Furthermore, American missionaries published tracts and Bibles between 1882 and 1890. These publications reveal glimpses of early liturgies of the Korean Presbyterian Church. 1) *Yesu Syonggyo Nuga Pogum chonso* [Gospel of Luke]: Baptism was translated as Serye [Rite of Cleansing]. 2) *Sindok Tongnon* [Tract of Faith]: Teaches people to pray twice a day regularly. 3) Miyimi Kyohoe Kangnye [*Articles of Religion and Ritual of the Methodist Episcopal Church*], the first liturgical book published in Korean by the Methodist missionary, Henry G. Appenzeller, in 1890. Dr. Kim argued that because of the ecumenical mood of the day, “Presbyterian missionaries probably used...[the book] in their formal worship services.” The book has six liturgies: 1) Infant Baptism, 2) Adult Baptism, 3) Reception of Members, 4) The Lord’s Supper, 5) Matrimony, and 6) the Burial of the Dead.

In the third chapter, Dr. Kim studies an early stage of the Presbyterian liturgy in Korea between 1890 and 1907. Because the methods of John L. Nevius, a Presbyterian missionary to China which emphasized self-support, self-propagation, and self-government were the backbone of Korean mission, American missionaries let Koreans continue the liturgies they followed previously before the missionaries came in. As Nevius encouraged, missionaries became helpers superintending large areas and native Koreans became leaders actually leading the worship in the local communities. Emphasis on teaching rather than on preaching, itinerancy, a simplified worship service, and a time of probation for catechumen which American missionaries brought into Korean mission field, also came from Nevius Methods.

Under the influence of the Nevius Methods, the early Korean church developed its unique liturgies. 1) *Haksup* [Learner]: New believers should attend Sunday school for at least six months before taking the *Haksup* examination to become a catechumen. 2) *Sagyonghoe* [Bible Class]: In its beginning, it was a one-month theological class during summer and winter for helpers and leaders. But later, the length of the class was shortened to one week, membership was extended to the whole church, and the object of the class came to include prayer, conferences, and evangelism as well as Bible study.

Based on Nevius Methods, Presbyterian mission in Korea began to expand rapidly after 1891. Even though there came to be various forms of liturgy as the number of churches was increased, we can still find common elements in their practices. Weekly, Koreans gathered on Sundays, Wednesday nights, even every morning for worship and prayer. They also gathered anytime they needed for Bible studies. Annually, Koreans had a New Year's Service in the beginning of the year, as missionaries had watch night meetings. Special worship services for special occasions in the church calendar, such as Good Friday, Easter, and Pentecost, were kept. Two kinds of Thanksgiving Day, one for the harvest of barley and the other one for the general harvest, were observed. There had been prayer meetings on the Korean King's birthday for years.

Furthermore, we can also see a glimpse of the early liturgy through the publication of various tracts and hymnbooks. As a Presbyterian Missionary to Korea, Horace G. Underwood says clearly in his *Kurisudo mundap* [Christian Catechism] that Presbyterian Church prohibited bowing to the deceased. Daily prayer was observed twice daily, morning and evening. Baptism was called Se Rye [liturgy of Cleansing] and the Lord's Supper focused on the death of Jesus

rather than on the resurrection. Not only tracts but also hymnbooks were published in this period, such as a Methodist hymnal, *Chan Mi Ka* in 1892, and a Presbyterian hymnal, *Chan Song Ka* in 1894.

In the fourth chapter, Dr. Kim explains first how official Korean Presbyterian liturgy developed between 1907 and 1934. With the emergence of the independent Korean Presbyterian Church and the ordination of seven Korean pastors in 1907, the number and size of churches became larger and a more standardized form of worship was needed for various occasions. The general assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea adopted a *Directory of Worship* included in the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church of Chosen* in 1921. The assembly directly translated 16 chapters from the *Directory for Worship of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* (Southern) without much adaptation to the Korean context. On the contrary, *Honsang Yesikso* [Forms of Marriage and Burial], produced by the commission of the assembly, included Korean native liturgies such as the ceremony of lowering a coffin into the grave during a funeral service. However, this book did not include forms for Sunday Worship, even though it included forms for Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the ordination of pastors and elders. Except for this book, Korean churches almost blindly received Western liturgies that the missionaries provided.

Second, Dr. Kim explains how unofficial or unique liturgies of Korean churches developed. In 1907, people who gathered for *Sagyongheo* [Bible Class] in Pyongyang began to do audible prayer with public confession, strongly experienced the Spirit's manifestation, and went out to evangelize. This Great Revival of Pyongyang introduced audible prayer [*Tongsong Kido*], hill prayer or mountain prayer [*Sansang Kido*], and dawn prayer [*Saebiyok Kido*] into Korean Presbyterian practices. These prayers were suitable for Koreans, because in many ways they were similar to shamanist and Taoist practices that Koreans were familiar with. And they still exist in Korean churches even though there has been no theological interpretation of them. In addition, Korean Presbyterians conducted many worship ceremonies in the Christian fashion but following Korean customs, such as *chudo-yebae* [memorial service] and *Kaekwansik* [opening of a new building].

In the Seminary setting, Charles Allen Clark published *Kangdo Yoryong* [Homiletic Lectures] in 1910, *Moksa chibop* [Pastoral Theology] in 1919, and *Kangdohak* [Lectures on Homiletics] for the liturgical instructions. In these books, Clark wrote that the sermon was the

most important task of pastors over church administration, teaching, and pastoral visitation. Textual sermons, rather than topical sermons, were encouraged. The selection of texts was entrusted to the preachers, and *Puhung* [evangelical or revival] sermon was noticed as a unique characteristic of Korean preaching. In *Moksa chibop* [Pastoral Theology], we can finally find general order of Sunday Worship [*Taeyebae*]: Introduction (Call to Worship), Confession of Sin, Hymn, Reading of the Bible (in sequence), Creed, Hymn, Reading of the Bible (for the sermon), Public Prayer, Hymn, Offertory and Prayer, Announcement, Hymn, Sermon, Prayer after Sermon, Hymn (Doxology), Benediction, Meditation (remain seated). Beside Clark's books, T. S. Soltau published *Yebae chopgyong* [Aids for Public Worship] in 1934 particularly for lay leaders. In the book he emphasized the importance of preparation for worship.

In the fifth chapter, Dr. Kim discusses the theology of early Korean Presbyterian liturgies. First, Korean Presbyterian liturgies were influenced by the Puritanism of the mission agencies. They emphasized the authority of the Bible, as *Sagyonghoe* [Bible Class] became dominant, and prohibited ancestral worship. Second, Pietism and Revivalism influenced Korean Presbyterian liturgies, because Puritans were influenced by the Great Awakening of their time (18th-19th century) which originated from Pietism. It has an evangelical, emotionally intense, individualistic and anti-intellectual feel. This revival characteristic of worship was greatly intermingled with Korean worship through the Great Revival of Korea during 1903-1910. People's emotion was expressed by weeping, crying, and even falling. And the Audible prayer [*Tongsong Kido*], Mountain or Hill prayer [*Sansang Kido*], and Dawn prayer [*Saebiyok Kido*] became dominant features of Korean Churches. Third, theology of the New School of the American Presbyterian Church focusing on evangelistic passion to save souls also had a greater influence than the Old School which emphasized decorum. This liturgical tradition shaped by Puritanism, Revivalism, and the New School of the American Presbyterian Church still dominates Korean churches.

Then, Dr. Kim analyzes particular liturgies of the Korean Presbyterian Church. First, concerning Sunday worship, the temporary order of worship designed for the absence of a pastor by Samuel A. Moffett, who was actively involved in the process of making and editing Korean Presbyterian liturgy, became the dominant form of the Sunday worship service. Especially in this order of worship elders or lay leaders do public prayer considered as the model for the rest of the

congregation's prayers. Second, concerning baptism, they regard adult baptism as an act of public profession rather than the communal acceptance of the baptized. Concerning the liturgy of the public profession of the baptized members [*Ipkyo*] and the public profession of the Catechumens [*Haksup*], Dr. Kim questions the meaning and validity of these liturgies because the process is similar but the result is quite different. Applicants for *Ipkyo* take the *Ipkyo* exam and applicants for *Haksup* take the *Haksup* exam. Once they pass the exam and profess their faith, baptized members become the full members of the church while Catechumens do not. Third, concerning the Lord's Supper, quarterly observance and preparation the week prior are encouraged of all members. Koreans mainly focus on the suffering and death of Jesus in the Lord's Supper rather than on thanksgiving as the table cloth covering the elements reminds participants of the white cloth covering the dead in Korean traditional funeral rites.

In conclusion, Dr. Kim argues that for the reform of Presbyterian Worship, first, liturgical leadership by lay leaders, which temporarily flourished in the beginning of Korean mission but became a solid tradition, should be replaced by pastors. Second, under the leadership of pastors and liturgical scholars, well organized Sunday worship service should be kept containing the Calvinistic tradition finally geared toward patristic traditions, such as continuous reading of the Bible and the singing of psalm. Third, distinct liturgies of Korean churches, such as *Chudo yebae* [Memorial Service], should be evaluated critically and theologically. Through the process of bringing up and reflecting on liturgical traditions, the Korean Presbyterian Church will restore the Calvinistic tradition.

Evaluation

Dr. Kyeong Jin Kim's attempt to find the origins of Korean Presbyterian worship is commendable, not just because his work has found the very beginning of Korean Presbyterian worship, which occurred in Manchuria in 1879,¹ but because his work has valuable points for us to think about. The first point is that patterns of Presbyterian worship in Korea were products of constant struggling to adjust previous orders to new social contexts. Long and sophisticated orders of worship became simplified in order to evangelize to Koreans effectively in the beginning of Presbyterian mission in Korea. Lay leadership in worship became a dominant feature of Korean Presbyterian mission because the itinerancy system encouraged Korean leaders

to lead worship service for locals. The Bible Study and Week of Prayer that missionaries brought into Korea came to take the form of a Revival Meeting by the whole church, *Sagyonghoe*, later called *Puhungheo*.

It is interesting to note that the direction of adjustment does not only extend from the Presbyterian tradition, which was mainly American, to Korean traditions, it also goes from Korean tradition to Presbyterian tradition. For example, *Chudo yebae* [memorial service] and *Saebiyok Kido* [Dawn Prayer] were products of adjustment of Korean tradition to Presbyterian or Christian tradition. Even though controversy still remains concerning the amount of adjustment by the Presbyterian tradition, which missionaries brought in, and the Korean tradition, Dr. Kim's work helps expand our understanding of present Korean Presbyterian liturgies and how they developed.

The second point Dr. Kim's work has is that he encourages us to do a theological reflection upon present liturgies of the Korean Presbyterian Church that we accept without consideration. As he points out, concerning certain Korean Presbyterian liturgies such as *Saebiyok Kido* [Morning Prayer] and *Chudoyebae* [Memorial service], there has been no critical theological reflection. Without a critical theological foundation, they cannot be maintained in the church. Critical theological reflection does not simply mean cutting Korean liturgies out and keeping Western liturgies; rather, it may be the opposite. Dr. Kim laments that many liturgies came to the Korean Presbyterian Church by American missionaries without consideration for the Korean context. For example, Thanksgiving Sunday following the American Presbyterian Church calendar did not fit in the Korean agricultural calendar. Therefore, we need to critically examine the validity of present Presbyterian liturgy for the liturgical reform.

However, although Dr. Kim's work has valuable points for Korean Presbyterian churches and liturgical reform, it has a serious weakness. That is the absence of future directions for liturgical reform. Although he says that his dissertation is geared toward the liturgical reform of the Korean Presbyterian Church at the beginning and he presents couple of suggestions for reform at the end of his dissertation we can hardly see practical directions for future reform. Even though he recommends following the Calvinistic tradition, such as the continuous reading of the Bible and the use of psalms, he only recommends them indirectly through the word of Charles Allen Clark.² Even when he mentions Calvinistic reform, he only talks about how the

liturgical reform of the Korean Presbyterian Church has happened since the 1980's rather than presenting future directions for liturgical reform.

Furthermore, we can hardly see the theological foundation of his argument. For example, the reason why he recommends the continuous reading of the Bible and the use of psalm in worship is because they are Calvinistic traditions that originated from a patristic tradition. However, we can ask, "Can this be the reason for us to repeat what our ancestors of faith did in the past?" If he does not present the reason of these liturgical activities helping us to grow in our faith, there is no reason for us to accept these elements in liturgical reform. Concerning the liturgical leadership by pastors, we cannot also find a theological foundation or practical suggestions on how to change present liturgies. His basic rationale is that liturgical leadership by lay leaders was only a temporary thing, which was inevitable at the beginning of mission. In short, his entire work has faded because of the absence of practical suggestions for the liturgical reform for today.

Assessment

Despite the absence of practical suggestions for liturgical reform, we can draw two implications for a better understanding of Korean Presbyterian liturgy from Dr. Kim's work. First, we can deepen the understanding of the present liturgy of Korean Presbyterian Church through critical theological reflection, as he encourages. For example, *Saebyooc Kido* [Morning Prayer] can be understood as a liturgy of God's transformation. Even though Koreans gather at dawn while it is dark outside, as they pray, the new light comes out and illuminates the earth. This is a glimpse of God's transforming action in this world, which will finally be realized in the end. The gray of the morning is not the sign of a new day but the sign of God's new creation. This gathering of Christians is not solely Korean or from the Korean shamanistic tradition praying early in the morning because early churches also met before daybreak on an appointed day.³ Even though it was an appointed day, back then usually Sunday, why can we not meet, pray to God, and celebrate God's transforming work in the world everyday?⁴

Concerning *Chudo yebae* [memorial service], we could also critically and theologically reflect on it. Even though it came from the Confucian tradition or Korean traditions of ancestor worship, the word preached is not about ancestors, but about God. *Chudo yebae* can be a great

opportunity for Christians to preach the Gospel to unbelieving relatives. Even though it is not a Western liturgy, it is a Korean and Christian liturgy.

Second, worship renewal is a process of constantly combining classical and indigenous liturgies as Dr. Kim cries out for “liturgical renewal which is both classical and indigenous.” Here, classical liturgies mean sets of orders that the Korean Presbyterian Church has received from missionaries, such as Sunday Worship and Week of Prayer. An interesting feature we can find in Dr. Kim’s work is that in the beginning of Korean mission there is no direct implantation of liturgical orders from America to Korea. For example, Sunday worship service was simplified in the Korean context. Public prayer became the lay leader’s role rather than pastors, even though it was supposed to be temporary. The Week of Prayer and Bible Class became *Puhunghoe* [Revival Meeting], which lasts one week instead of one month and every church member is invited.

We think that this tradition of interaction between classical and Korean, between new and old should be continued because, as James F. White says, Christian worship is basically “a fascinating mixture of constancy and diversity.”⁵ Of course, we should not worship different gods in the same way. But, we can worship the same God and same savior Jesus Christ in different ways in the place where each of us is located. In this sense, liturgical reformation should not be the exclusion of Korean elements for the restoration of so-called classical liturgies. Rather, it should be a process of constantly combining classical and indigenous elements through theological examination. Through the theological reflections on classical liturgies, indigenous liturgies, and Korean context, the Korean Presbyterian Church will be able to discern God’s transforming action in our current worship and reform its liturgy as a response to God’s transforming action.

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¹ In another account, the first baptism of a Korean Protestant took place in 1864: "According to the journal of Dr. Joseph Edkins who belonged to London Missionary society and stayed at Shanghai, on the day Dr. Dugeon arrived, members of the church gathered and examined people who wanted to receive baptism. He baptized four people considered as appropriate believers. Three out of four baptized were Koreans who stayed at the house of Korean official in Manchuria." Kyong-bae Min, *Han'guk Kidokkyohoesa*. [History of the Christian Church in Korea] (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1998), 164. However, we do not know whether they belonged to the Presbyterian Church or not.

² "Well organized liturgies at least in the Sunday worship service were recommended. His suggestion of the "inclusion of the confession" in worship and "continuous reading of the Bible" regardless of the sermon of the day, clearly shows his Calvinistic liturgical intention. He even lamented, "It is regretful that the use of the psalms is very rare in Korean Church now." Kyeong Jin Kim, *The Formation of Presbyterian Worship In Korea*, 217-218.

³ Pliny the Younger reports in 2nd century, "On an appointed day, they had been accustomed to meet before daybreak [*stato die ante lucem*], and to recite a hymn antiphonally to Christ, as to a god." James F. White, *Documents of Christian Worship* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 18.

⁴ Justin Martyr reports in 2nd century, "We all hold this common gathering on Sunday [*heliu hemeran*], since it is the first day, on which God transforming darkness and matter made the universe, and Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead on the same day." James F. White, *Documents of Christian Worship*, 19.

⁵ "We have practiced basically same structures and services for two thousand years; people on the other side of town also practice them but in their own distinctive ways." James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 31.