

A Proposed Korean Common Confession

SeongheeChae

Assistant Professor in Church History

atYongnam Theological Seminary University

Abstract

Korean churches need to express faith in language meaningful for our context. Not only churches in Korea, but all churches in the world, so that Korean churches are able to make enriched communication with churches about confessional articulation, an issue developing and seeking resolution in many parts of the world. In this paper, I have suggested a viable Korean common confession concerning Korean context. My proposed faith statement includes the issues of the visible unity of the Korean church, Christian solidarity, Korean church as the universal ecumenical family. It aims to alleviate tensions brought on by gender-laden language, and to express Jesus as peacemaker concerning socio-economic, and political situation of Korea. The confession further recognizes the Holy Spirit who blesses us by absolutely releasing *han*-ridden life of Korea. Christian faith cannot be separated from the dynamic life among society. I dream the my proposed common confession of Korean churches contribute to communicate the core of the gospel with context we live. So that the kingdom of Christ is to be established in peace in Korea.

Key words: Korean Church, Common Confession, Ecumenical Family

Introduction

The Commission on Faith and Order in Lima, in Peru 1982, decided to focus its attention during the ensuing years on the following theme : "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today." In the working paper from Lima three directions were emphasized :

1. Towards the common recognition of the apostolic faith as expressed in the ecumenical symbol of that faith : Nicene Creed
2. Towards the common explication of this apostolic faith in the contemporary situation of the

churches

3. Toward the common confession of the apostolic faith today.¹

Given the present divided state, visible unity cannot be hoped for unless each church becomes aware of the painful situation of our divisions. The ecumenical commitment to move towards confessing together brings churches into awareness of the need to manifest visible unity. It encourages churches in the world to express one apostolic faith together transcending divergent traditions and situations in such a way that the life of the community is consonant with the Word of God. The second emphasis, especially empowers the contemporary interpretation of the meaning of "apostolic faith" in its context. This second emphasis encourages churches to confess the faith in the midst of real life in their own languages, cultures and societies.

This paper explores what Korean Christians believe in and proposes a common statement of this belief through a so-called "new Korean common confession" which is intended to be adequate for the Korean situation and in accord with the second emphasis above. The proposed new Korean common confession is meant to be a compact and felicitous summary of the faith of the Korean church; at the same time it reflects the dynamic relationship between the ancient affirmation (the Nicene Creed) and its practical suggestions for the life of the Korean church in today's world. It not only seeks the visible unity of the Korean churches and Christian solidarity, but also encourages the identity of one family of the ecumenical movement by confessing apostolic faith in a specific context.

During the past 200 years of Korean Protestant church history, on one hand Korean churches have developed rapidly and have become indigenous. Korean churches have maintained outward maturity in terms of church organization, worship format, celebration of the sacraments, the proclamation of the gospel, the exposition of the faith, the building of the fellowship and engagement in mission to the world. On the other hand, they have been divided into many more denominations, each of which has used its own confession for its own sake.

The desire for unity of the churches first explicitly emerged after the Hong Kong consultation was convened by the EACC.² The EACC emphasized the importance of autonomy for

¹WCC, Confessing Our Faith Around the World, Vol. 3, ed. Hans-Georg Link, Faith and Order Paper No. 120 (Geneva : World Council of Church, 1983), 5.

²The Hong Kong Consultation convened by EACC (The East Asia Christian Conference) in 1996 dealt not only with Faith and Order for the church unity, but the theme of "confessing the Faith in Asia Today" to seek to understand the Asian situation.

the churches in Asia and their mission. It affirmed that the primary task for mission could be fulfilled only through "church union." Mission projects further stimulated the desire for unity of the church. Besides these trends, Minjung theology, which emerged in Korea in the 1970s, criticized the established but divided churches and stimulated concern for social justice and peace which had been ignored in the Korean church. It impelled the Korean church to improve both the horizontal task of the church toward better social community as well as its vertical purposes. Moreover, the general trend of the ecumenical movement to seek visible unity of the churches has accelerated the Korean church movement toward unity. For the sake of this task, for mission to the world, and for the sake of what the church is within the surrounding community, the visible unity of Korean churches has become a leading goal. The Korean church believes that Christians cannot be truly united unless they recognize in each other the same apostolic faith which is witnessed in both word and in life. A Korean common confession, as provisionally stated below, would serve as a statement of church unity and Christian solidarity in spirit.

This Korean common confession is rooted in the Nicene Creed that the Faith and Order Commission decided to use in order to identify the fundamentals of apostolic faith. The Nicene Creed summarizes the condensed contents of the apostolic faith and is recognized as the most appropriate text not only claiming an unchanging faith of the church but also speaking to contemporary times and circumstances.³ The Korean church, sharing in this confession would not only participate in the ecumenical family, but it would also recognize in itself an apostolic confessional family gathered in the united symbol of the Nicene Creed as the common expression of the faith of the church. Yet, the provisional new Korean confession would also bear in mind its distinctive socio-political situation. Diversity occurs due to cultural, religious, economic, and ideological forces. Churches have to respond adequately to social needs.

Below, the proposed Korean common confession is presented. Following that, the role of creeds in terms of origin and function is overviewed, with comments on why creeds or confessional formulas historically have been one of the essential conditions and elements of church unity, the primary goal of the ecumenical movement today. The third part of the paper explicates ameliorated phrases in the text of the proposed Korea common confession. Modified phrases which need explications consist of three main themes. First, the proposed Korean confession excludes gender oriented languages and implications such as "God Father" and "Virgin Mary." It also embodies "Jesus as a peacemaker" which is required from the specific socio-political concern. Finally the proposed Korean common confession explicates the Holy Spirit who "blesses us." The explication seeks to connect both the basic features of Christianity and the social issues

³WCC, Confessing the One Faith, Faith and Order Study Document (Geneva : WCC, 1991), 6.

addressed in the Korean context.

Korean Common Confession

*I believe in one God, The almighty,
Maker of woman and man in God's image,
Of heaven and earth,
Of all that is seen and unseen.*

*I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
The only Son of God,
Eternally begotten of God,
Light from light, true God from true God,
Begotten, not made, of one being with God,
Through Jesus all things were made.
For us all and for our salvation
Jesus came down from heaven:
By the power of the holy spirit
Jesus became incarnate from the virgin Mary,
And was made human, become a peace maker.
For our sake Jesus was crucified under Pontius pilate;
Jesus suffered and was buried.
On the third day Jesus rose from the dead
In accordance with the scripture ;
Jesus ascended into heaven
And is seated at the right hand of God.
Jesus will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
And God's kingdom will have no end.*

*I believe in the holy spirit,
The Lord, the giver of life who blesses us,
Who proceeds from God,
Who, with God and Jesus, is worshipped and glorified,
Who has spoken through the prophets.*

*I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sin.
I look for the resurrection of the dead,
And the life of the age to come. Amen*

Role and Function of Creedal Formulas

Besides the painful situation of division of churches, Christianity stands at the crossfire attacked pluralism, relativism, pantheism, atheism and Secularism. In this situation crisis, the Faith and Order study declared the unity of the churches binding with one apostolic faith. The Faith and Order study on apostolic faith claims that the common confession of the apostolic faith is an indispensable element of the visible unity we seek.⁴ Pope John Paul II has stated explicitly the importance of the common confession of the apostolic faith : "This is a fundamental theological work for unity in the profession of faith [which] conditions the outcome of all the efforts made in common,.... Our witness cannot be truly and completely common until we reach unity in the confession of apostolic faith."⁵

In the early church the Nicene Creed had performed the function of uniting all genuine Christians - - or at least as many as possible. It is an incontestable fact of history that for many generations this creed united nearly all Christians in all lands in one communion until the final separation of the Eastern and Western church in the eleventh century.⁶

⁴*Apostolic Faith Today : A Handbook for Study*, ed. Hans. George Link (Geneva : WCC 1985), xiii.

⁵*Apostolic Faith Today*, 2.

⁶We have to admit that the creed itself divided people by setting boundaries. However, we have

The unity in the confession of apostolic faith may work to overcome the difficulties of the church today both the faded and incompetent identity of Christianity within the wider pluralistic culture and the situation of division, which is disobedience to the will of Christ. Unity in confessing one faith may enable churches to lead the world into new human conditions in new ways. Confessing our faith together plays a leading role not only in formation of deeper Christian unity and solidarity but in strengthening mutual understanding of the strong basics of the Christian faith. It may further help to identify Christianity within the pluralistic world.

Therefore, one apostolic faith should be expressed together. The same faith has also to be confessed in different situations and in relation to the challenges of the world today. One apostolic faith is attested to in the Holy Scriptures and is summarized in the creeds of the early church. The importance of a creed that connotes the essential contents of the apostolic faith has been and will continue to be manifested by examination of its function and use and its original purpose and meaning through Christian history.⁷

Origin and Purpose of Creeds

The biblical origin and purpose of creeds may be traced to Jesus' question: Who do people say I am? (Matt 16: 16).⁸ This question has been issued to all people who want to be Jesus' disciples and to all churches. Following the conviction of Peter's expression of faith, though in other verbal formulas, the confession became a statement attesting the Lordship of Jesus as it may be stated on all church community occasions. At catechesis, baptism and eucharist, candidates and participants traditionally made brief confession of faith or proclaimed the creed in confession either directly or indirectly. Martyrs often confessed their faith at their trials in traditional

to struggle to find what has contributed most toward the visible unity of the churches throughout church history. The chief means was creedal even though it was not perfect.

⁷Creedal formulas assume the danger of formalism. I do not insist on a single fixed formula. Rather, at least on special occasions, all Christians can share the apostolic faith expressed in creeds, or specific representatives of the Nicene Creed, so that each church recognizes in others the fullness of the apostolic faith.

⁸*Confessing Our Faith around the World*, vol. 1, forward by C. S. Song (Geneva : World Council of Churches 1980), 1.

words⁹. The act of confessing faith in the early Christian community assured the sacred position of confessing faith. Confessing the faith was needed to convince the faithful and to defend the faith against heretical distortions.

In the fourth century the early Church developed verbal formulas for confessing the faith and at last produced formulas of confessing the faith through ecumenical acceptance. These were the Nicene Creed, the Apostles' Creed, the Athanasian Creed and the Chalcedonian definition. The Nicene Creed became the most universally accepted Christian creed. The Apostles' Creed, being Roman in origin, is known and used only in churches of Western origin such as the Roman Catholic Church and some Protestant Reformation churches. The Nicene Creed, on the other hand, is acknowledged more widely by these Western churches, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, and the like.¹⁰

The purpose of these formulas of the early church was to function as defenses in the face of false accusation, or as answers to questions raised in and out of the church. In the second century many people joined Christianity and converted, despite accusations and persecutions. The early church came to include people of widely diverse backgrounds. The enriched church, on one hand, gave witness to the universality of Christianity; on the other hand, it faced the danger of syncretism because of widely differing interpretations of Christianity, which threatened the integrity of Christianity.¹¹

Among differing interpretation of Christianity, Gnosticism was one of the most dangerous and pervasive systems of thought. Gnosticism was strongly rooted in Greek dualism. It affirmed that originally all reality and a supreme being was spiritual and good, whereas all the material world was evil. At this point Christian Gnostics rejected the notion that Christ had a body like ours. Saturninus at Antioch, one of earliest Gnostics said,

Christians may suppose that the Logos became flesh. Their faith is false. The Savior was actually unbegotten, incorporeal, and formless. Those who thought he was a man were wrong, since he simply had the appearance of being a man.... [The s]avior was not actually a man.¹²

⁹*Apostolic Faith Today*, 263.

¹⁰Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1 (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publisher, 1991), 165.

¹¹*The Story of Christianity*, 56.

¹²Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* II.9, ed. W. W. Harvey (Cambridge, 1877), 52.

He assumed that the human body could not serve as a vehicle for the revelation of the supreme God. Therefore, the savior Christ could not have come in flesh, but only as a bodily illusion. His suffering and his death were not real.¹³

Another dangerous interpretation of the Christian message came from Marcion. He developed an understanding of Christianity within the boundaries of both anti-Judaism and anti-materiality. For him there was a big gap between God, or Jehovah of the Old Testament and Jesus of the New Testament. Furthermore, to him God in the Old Testament delivered the word of an inferior god. For Marcion God in the Old Testament required bloody sacrifices, led his people in battle, and ordered slaughter of whole populations. He was "a jealous god." For these reasons Marcion separated the supreme God from God of the Old Testament. Marcion contrasted Jehovah and Jesus, seeing, "... the one a judge, fierce and warlike, the other mild and peaceful, solely kind and supremely good."¹⁴

Another problem that the early church confronted was Judaizing Christianity. Judaizing Christians affirmed that Jesus had not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill the Law.¹⁵ Therefore, true Christians must obey the Law. This problem is seen in the Acts and in the Epistles of Paul. The historian Justin, in his Dialogue with Trypho, argued against Judaizing Christianity.¹⁶

The core draft of what later came to be called the Apostles' Creed emerged in response to a diversity of religious contexts. The early church needed to respond to heresy. The response of the second century-Christianity was three fold : the New Testament canon, the creed, and the doctrine of apostolic succession emerged as anti-heretical instruments. In the response of the early church to the emergent heretical challenges, the creed was given a sacred position in the church, and its historical implications continue to play out.¹⁷ Justo Gonzalez has explained the importance

¹³Hans Joan, *The Gnostic Religion : The Message of the Alien God and Beginning of Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 78-90.

¹⁴Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 1.6, trans. and ed. Ernest Evans (Oxford : Clarendon, 1972), 15.

¹⁵Justo L. Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, vol. I (Nashville : Abingdon, 1984), 124.

¹⁶Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 47. Trans. By Thomas B. Falls (New York : Christian Heritage Inc. 1948), 219.

¹⁷This is not to suggest that the creed has the same or more authority than the Scripture. The question of the relation between the Scripture and the creed is will be the principal issue to be studied. However, the authority of the creed comes from the consonance of its content with

of the creed as one of three great consequences of reaction against the challenge of heresy :

[E]mphasis on apostolic succession and the formulation of a New Testament canon were not enough to determine whether a doctrine was apostolic or not. Apostolic succession could guarantee a certain measure of continuity, and it was a very valuable norm, but it did not include an exposition of the correct doctrine. The New Testament, on the other hand, did expound that doctrine, but it did not so in such an extensive and unsystematic way that it by itself was enough for a quick and definitive recognition of unorthodox doctrine. It was therefore necessary to develop a systematic summary of the faith of the church.¹⁸

The church made an effort to summarize doctrine and position so as to distinguish clearly between authentic faith and other various doctrines. The importance of the creeds increased.

The process by which the Nicene Creed emerged was one entailing an interrelationship between the church and Hellenistic culture. It emerged within a highly intellectual setting. With the Arian controversy, Christology in the relationship with God was an unresolved question. The debate in the church raised by the Arian controversy was concluded by inserting the term *homoousios* into the Nicene creed. The term *homoousios* was adopted from Hellenistic language not from scriptural language. However, the Trinity, even with *homoousios*, could not be fully conditioned in the doctrine of apostolic succession or the canon. Nevertheless, the creed functioned to affirm this term as a basic doctrine of Christian faith. The church clarified and solidified the doctrine of the Trinity in the formulation of the Nicene Creed. The Nicene Creed served to unite all genuine Christians in the uniform profession of essential doctrine of Christianity, in order that they might worship God as one family.

The early church thus strove to protect Christianity from heresy, and it solidified Christians in profession of one doctrine of the Triune God, by formulating creeds. Along with the canon and the doctrine of apostolic succession, the creed played an essential role not only in the protection of Christianity, but also in the visible unity of churches.

Creed and Context

The creeds were responses to the direct challenges raised by the religious-cultural

revelation itself. Even though creedal language was dependent on the culture in response to the needs and the situations of the time, the creeds were intended to convey a summary of the central teaching of the Scripture. See *Apostolic Faith Today*, 219.

¹⁸ *A History of Christian Thoughts*, 153.

situations. The early church and Christians were put under heavy pressure to decide what they believed. The Apostles' creed was determined by the Roman church to advocate the historical Jesus and defend against heretical Judaism, Marcionitism and Gnosticism. Likewise, the Nicene Creed was formulated to articulate the theology of the Trinity within an intellectual environment.¹⁹ The Nicene Creed punctured the controversy about three persons and one substance. It was able to unite all Christians from different traditions and situations into one apostolic faith which embodied the concept of the Triune God. During the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the Reformers reaffirmed the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed in order to confess their reconciliation between the creeds and their sixteenth-century context, as well as to answer questions about justification and sanctification.²⁰

It can be said that the creeds were contextualized forms confessing faith in response to Jesus' question, Who do you say that I am? The second emphasis of the report adopted by the commission on Faith and Order the Lima Document 1982 (Toward the Common Explication of this Apostolic Faith In the Contemporary Situation of the Churches), points out that the expression of the apostolic faith needs to involve the dynamics of relationship between creed and contemporary situation.²¹ It is quite important that creeds help every church recognize the unchanging Christian faith in different traditions and situations of its own time and circumstance. Visible unity of the churches through apostolic faith sheds the light of hope, signifying human society in peace, justice and life.

In this point of view, the Korean common confession is an attempt to express the apostolic faith in the Korean context. The Korean common confession presented above is aimed to respond to issues which have emerged in the Korean context : socio-political, economic and religious complexity, and gender as well as other forms of personal alienation. Its goal is not only the visible unity of Korean churches, but also a more effective practice for the mission task of the Korean church in the world through solidarity in apostolic faith.

Explication

As I mentioned above, the Korean common confession is a modification of the Nicene Creed in keeping with Korean contextual issues. This section explicates mended parts in light of

¹⁹Rupert E. Davis, *Making Sense of the Creed* (London : Epworth, 1987), 4

²⁰*Apostolic Faith Today*, 221.

²¹*Apostolic Faith Today*, 215.

major concerns of the Korean church. First it suggests eliminating the gender discriminating language for the name of God. This part explores the fixed languages such as Father for God and virgin Mary because these languages had been rooted in patriarchal oriented and suited to praise male superiority. The proposed confession attempts to point to that which all persons can accept. Next, Jesus is called "peace maker" for it is in this role that he is concerned with the social, economic and political situation. This part will refer to the historical Jesus who has struggled with human history towards horizontal justice and peace. Korean churches have excessively clung to transcendent divine actions and ministry of Jesus. Meanwhile, we believe that the historical Jesus is doing His ministry within the realm of the socio-political, and cultural situations as well as in transcendent redemptive reality. The meaning of the Holy Spirit is explicated last in this discussion. The Holy Spirit is an essential element for visible unity of churches. Therefore, this proposed Korean common confession will examine the contextualization of the Holy Spirit within the Korean religious context in detail.

*I believe in one God, The almighty,
Maker of woman and man in God's image,*

The Consultation on Church Union 1984 (The COCU Consensus) illustrated the current dilemmas concerning the relationship between Church unity and mutual recognition of baptism and masculine bias in language. It argued that "lack of church unity imperils the credibility of the gospel and hinders peace among the nations."²² The consensus statement pointed out that "sexism which permeates the language and practice of worship is a threat to Christian unity."²³ The provisional Korean common confession presented is in full agreement with this consensus. Sexist language is to be removed from the text of the Korean common confession.

One of the prominent modifications of the confession presented above is the omission of "Father" for the name of God. SchusslerFiorenza argues that she does not question the name "Father" for God but rejects the patriarchal understanding of "Father" used by the church to legitimate patriarchal authority.²⁴ In the second century context when heresies provoked Christian

²²*The Consultation on Church Union Consensus : In quest of a Church of Christ Uniting* (Princeton : COCU, 1984), 7

²³*The Consultation on Church Union Consensus*, 9.

²⁴Elizabeth SchüsslerFiorenza, *In Memory of Her : A Feminist Reconstruction of Early Christian*

faith, the early church took the responsibility to build up a dialectic for a pure gospel. In heresies such as Marcionism and Gnosticism, the feminine image of god and woman priesthood prevailed. For this reason the feminine image of God and woman priesthood were excluded from the institutionalized church along with heresies. The early church, meanwhile, legitimated the exclusive male image of God. Since then, patriarchal understanding and masculine language for God have fostered sexism and fixed it. When a confession removes "Father" for the name of God, It does not insist on one sided nature of God as female, but rather on using the female as well as male images of God because human beings are equally created in God's image. Therefore, in this paper, focus on explications of feminine images of God is meant to balance interpretation of God. This is exertion to excavate feminine expression, image, language, and nature of God which have been ignored throughout church history.

It is true that prevailing ideology in Korea, as elsewhere has shaped the character of society. Since the Yi dynasty(1392-1909), main ideas, concepts and belief patterns have converged in Confucianism. Confucianism has taught a social code which enforced gender discrimination and hierarchical roles in it. In its social code the father figure is defined as strict, fearful, stubborn and authoritative. Therefore, the constant use of "Father" for God contributes to inclination toward God's image in a one sided term, as fearsome and unmerciful. The loving God of Jesus Christ has been hidden in the Korean context. It is one of primary tasks of the Korean church to express both images of God : justice and love. This is the true God who responds to the wounded hearts caused by such a partial and distorted image of God for the sake of true apostolic faith in which God is expressed in terms of both justice and love.

Biblical language in terms of hermeneutical interpretation must be examined in any critique of the inadequacy of using the term "Father" to define God. Many recent ecumenical attempts at the explication of the apostolic faith still hold to the expression of "Father" for God. They affirm this with statements that our "Lord is never addressed as Mother"²⁵ even though there are many feminine images of God in the scripture.

Chiding the Israelites who turned away from God in the wilderness, who complained and worshipped their golden calves, Moses said, "You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you; you forgot the God who gave you birth" (Deut. 32:18 NRSV). According to Phyllis Trible's study, the Hebrew "bore" (*yôladtekā*) can describe either the begetting of a father or birthing of a mother. The same word (*yôladtekā*) is presented in Proverbs 23 :22, 25 and Job 38 :28-29. By contrast "the

Origin (New York : Crossroads, 1983), 151.

²⁵*Confessing One Faith*, 29

God who gave you birth" is exclusively maternal. The Hebrew phrase "give birth" (**mehōleleka**) designates only a woman in labor giving birth. With labor pains, God gave birth to Israel.²⁶ Giving birth is the apt metaphor for the way God conceived and brought forth a new nation. However, throughout its history, the church has forgotten all feminine ways of talking about God. As the Israelites forgot the Rock that bore them and the God who gave them birth, the church forgot as well.

The central support of the name "Father" for God in the New Testament is The central support of the name "Father" for God in the New Testament is Jesus' using the Aramaic abba for God. According to the biblical scholar Jeremias, the Hebrew word abba is related to "daddy" in English word small children use to call on their fathers. Jeremias emphasized the intimacy of the relationship between God and Jesus.²⁷ In the Ancient Palestine tradition, a son would team the father's trade secrets and thus would be the only one capable of sharing them with others.²⁸ Similarly, through his intimate relationship with God, Jesus revealed God's salvific will. Jesus gave all people and nations privilege to have a mutual relationship with God. Through Jeremias' works, we find that there are big differences between Jesus' use of abba and the patriarchal use of "Father" of the church tradition. Jesus' use of abba puts more emphasis on the nearness and tenderness of God as a parent whereas the legitimized name "Father" for God in the church has been used to force obedience and surrender by children to the father, based on the patriarchal motif of hierarchical domination.

The ameliorated text of the Nicene Creed presented above sets forth that God is not limited to male nor female metaphors. We need to be freed from the biased image of God constructed by patriarchal understanding and then express the true image of God by confessing faith. As Visser'tHooft argues, the fatherhood of God is not a closed or exclusive symbolism. It is open to correction, enrichment, and completion from other symbols, such as mother, brother, sister, and friend.²⁹

The woman Many

²⁶Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia : Fortress Press, 1978), 62-64.

²⁷Joachim Jeremias, *The Central Message of The New Testament* (New York: Scribner, 1965), 21.

²⁸Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayer of Jesus* (Philadelphia : Fortress, 1978), 51.

²⁹W. A. Visser'tHooft, *The Fatherhood of God in an Age of Emancipation* (Geneva : WCC, 1982), 133.

We need to question the patriarchal understanding of "virginity" toward women. It came from the idea that woman was a secondary creation and that a woman could flee from her wickedness only by being a virgin. Generally the understanding of woman's nature as a secondary creation and the according of role distinctions are based on one interpretation of the Fall. The traditional prejudiced understanding was that woman spoiled the whole world. Eve allowed the entrance of evil into the world. This skewed interpretation has shaped man's authority throughout church history and context. Korean Christians believe that Jesus was conceived by the virgin Mary through the holy Spirit. What is needed is to go beyond patriarchal understandings of "virginity" and further examination of new interpretations of the Fall.

Early church fathers insisted that original sin absolutely resulted from Eve. Deceived Eve tempted Adam, so Eve was worse than Adam. Church Fathers developed basic doctrines of woman in negative ways. The early church fathers taught women to become spiritual beings, because they identified women as representatives of the material world after the fall. Only in virginity could a woman forget her natural feminine wickedness and live in manly vigor. A woman could transcend her female nature and become transformed into a male only through virginity. So virginity became an option for the religious woman just as for a religious man.³⁰ Consequently marriage was regarded as a condition of peculiar temptation and trial. Celibacy was regarded as a special holiness. This religious meaning of virginity, however, came from church Fathers' teachings on women.

The Fathers blamed Eve, because according to Paul, "Eve was thoroughly deceived by Satan but Adam was not" (1 Tim. 2: 14). Adam's sin was seen as less evil than Eve's. However, Paul also mentioned the origin of sin as led by only one man (Rom. 5:12, 15, 17). Given this Scripture, no one should have placed blame for the origin sin of entirely on one sex. Regardless of its name or color, sin is still sin. Both man and woman sinned. When they sinned, they lost the conscious presence of God. They fell from righteousness into the quagmire of sin-consciousness. They were dead to God! Man and Woman are equally guilty in terms of the fall. Accordingly the proposed Korean common confession suggested to remove the term "virgin" fostered by male oriented church dogma with name "Father" for God.

And was made human, become Christ, the peacemaker

Korean Christians now tend to answer the question, "Who do you say that I am?" with the confession, "You are Christ, the peacemaker." Korean Christians do not hesitate to identify

³⁰Rosemary Reuther, *Religion and Sexism* (New York : Simon and Schuster, 1974), 157-159.

Jesus Christ, child of the living God, as the peacemaker in the Korean context. This identification is based on the horizontal relationship between the whole church and the world in terms of social ethics. Korean churches have been very limited by ideological theology and interpretation of spiritualized Jesus and His ministry. Such orientation has caused Korean churches to ignore the plight of the social community within which they live.

During the past decades Korean churches have been involved in bringing about social justice. Since the 1970s, they have heightened the social concern, being convinced that the church has to play a key role in mitigating widespread socio-political injustices such as poverty, oppression, dehumanization and national division. Here, the Korean church calls for Jesus as the peacemaker. Confessing Jesus as peacemaker encourages the Korean church to participate in social justice and national reunification as ministry.

The four Gospels depict Jesus' ministry as embodying God's salvific will for the world. At the same time, they also show that Jesus lived among the victims of injustice, showing "compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt. 9:36). Like the poor, he had "no place to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20). Jesus' work was characterized by healing the sick, forgiving sins, feeding the hungry, comforting the afflicted, challenging the powerful, and reaching out to the outcast. Isaiah 61 :1-2 looks ahead to this ministry of social concerns: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).³¹ Jesus reconciled the world with God through ministry. Jesus opened the way for fallen humanity to receive peace with God. Through the cross and resurrection, Christ disarmed the powers, conquered death, and broke down the dividing wall separating peoples and nations from each other (Col. 2:15; 1CoI. 15; 2Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:28).³²

Jesus continues to perform his ministry in the socio-political systems of Korea. The Jesus-event in Judea two thousand years ago and the Jesus-event in Korea yesterday and today are related. Around 1603(Yi Dynasty) a Roman Catholic was smuggled into Korea where the social divisions of both ruling class (Yangban) and commoners were clearly under Confucian domination. The government of the Yi Dynasty persecuted Christianity because it conflicted with Confucian policy, while the common people looked to the church as their hope for liberation from

³¹*Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation*, (Geneva: World Alliance of Reformed Church, 1988), 50.

³²*Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation*, 51.

oppression of the Confucian social order. The Christian faith played a significant role in the political history of the Korean people from the very beginning. This period was in fact the beginning of the indigenization of Christianity into Korean society.

The Protestant mission came to Korea when it was a colony of Japan. the Japanese colonial government wanted to expel both the Korean and the Christian influence from the colonial educational system. The Korean church suffered with the people under a foreign power, Japanese colonial domination. The Korean Protestant Christian community participated in the famous Independence Association which had become influential in the political reform movement. Participating in the independence movement, the Christian community declared the messianic vision of the Korean people, which undergirded their real political vision and the unmistakable spelling out of a polity of people's sovereignty. Through this declaration, a complete transformation in the consciousness of the Korean people occurred.³³ The church participated in the suffering of the people and experienced the *koinonia* of pain with the people oppressed by the Japanese empire.

After liberation from colonial life, the Korean people had to endure another experience of the reality of power, the military occupation by the Soviet Union in the North and the United States in South, a structure that divided the nation and people. In the North the churches were almost completely annihilated. On the other hand the churches in the South grew and continue to grow since the division of the nation.

Along with the gradual growth of the church, the Korean Christian community also suffered military rule which held a cynical posture toward the the church. In the midst of military dictatorship in the 1970s, the movement for human rights, church in Korea. In this context Minjung theology,³⁴ emerged. Christians began to integrate theology with political and social thinking. One of the important developments was the concept of power at the grass-roots level.³⁵ The Christian community believed that democracy should be from the bottom to the top. The grass-roots level, the bottom, was the source of minjung power.

³³*Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation*, 99-100.

³⁴*Min*, literally means "the people" and the *Jung* "the mass." The word minjung has been used to imply the poor and oppressed people. However, it is difficult for non-Koreans to understand fully the meaning of the word minjung. Cf. *An Emerging Theology in World Perspective Commentary on Korean Minjung Theology*, ed. By Jung Young Lee (Mystic: Twenty-third, 1988), 3.

³⁵*Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation*, 101.

The Christian community and churches inserted themselves between the oppressive powers and the people, bearing witness to truth, justice and human rights for the Korean historical process, much the way Jesus lived with the poor and oppressed people. It was both difficult and a hopeful struggle. The Korean church grew in belief that Christ is risen and presides over all principalities and powers (Col. 1:16; 2:15) and that ultimately his justice, peace and reconciliation was to be achieved on the earth. Therefore, even though the world seemed to degenerate day by day. The message of Jesus was to encourage churches to be standards for God's peace so that His people would prepare the way of the Lord. By confessing Jesus as peacemaker, as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, Korean churches willingly took up responsibility to promote human rights, reject social absurdity, and to seek reconciliation between ideological enemies.

From the 1980s to the present, Christians in Korea have engaged in serious discussion on the problem of peace and peaceful unification of national division beyond ideology. The Korean people, whether they live in South or North Korea, desire the unification of the divided nation. It is the most urgent need to overcome division not primarily from the diplomatic or military perspective, but rather with the eyes of a suffering, divided people. The division of Korea has increased the crisis surrounding the nuclear war threat in the global context. When the Korean church confronts the reality of conflict among this divided people, they never hesitate to identify Jesus as peacemakers are blessed as children of God.

Confessing Christ, a peacemaker, for Jesus our Lord, we must bear in mind Jesus' life and ministry. Jesus works for Korea as the Servant of Peace, proclaiming reconciliation and liberation to the world hurt by division, conflict, injustice and oppression.³⁶ The Asian Peace Conference of the Christians in Okinawa, 1985, defined the concept of peace as "life for people" and the peace movement as "the struggle against the force of death."³⁷ Jesus Christ the peacemaker was presented as immanent and at work in the concrete human life and social structure in this world, as our peacemaker who coexists with us and shares our desire for justice, peace, integrity of creation and unification.

While this task of the Korean churches interested in social transformation is highly considered, confessing Jesus, our Lord as peacemaker further implies that the real backbone of social justice and peace must be grounded in the truth of the Gospel. The truth of the Gospel must be untainted by outer activities of the church in the world. Karl Barth asserted that the

³⁶*Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation*, 107.

³⁷*Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation*, 108.

church needs to regard social concern as "an important part of the application of the Gospel."³⁸ Barth further insisted that the restoration of social issues could not be realized without Gospel. Only the Gospel assures the efficacy of its attending social demands.³⁹ By examining the biblical concept of peace in Luke-Acts, he concluded "repentance and commitment to Jesus Christ are two contextual elements which make peace a reality. Peace in terms of value of social justice can be achieved through union with Jesus Christ, and peace is esteemed as a gift by God."⁴⁰ The Korean church believes in God who functions actively in His world to give peace between God and human beings and to ensure peace among human beings themselves. Here, the Korean churches confess Jesus as peacemaker keeping harmony between the truth of the Gospel and its purposeful role toward the world. Korean churches seek the essential connection between concretizing the Gospel and legitimate social concerns.

*We believe in the Holy Spirit,
The Lord, the giver of life who blesses us,*

The growth of the Korean church is well recognized by most churches in the world. In general, Korean theologians and scholars accept that the growth of the Korean church is strongly related to the movement of the Holy Spirit. No matter what denominations of Christian community churches represent, they share in the common denominator of the spiritual movement that began in Pyung Yang in 1907. God as Holy Spirit is thus very relevant to Korean Christians. They believe that the Holy Spirit has built and sustained the Korean church, and that the Holy Spirit supplies a most essential dynamic power for church growth. The God who has worked in us and in acts of redemption in the past, present and future is best understood as the Holy Spirit. Korean Christians aspire to spiritual fulfillment, and the activity of the Holy Spirit is continuously emphasized as a central for the Korean ecumenical perspective toward visible unity. Focus on a pneumatological approach viable for the Korean context must accord with the peoples' tendency

³⁸Karl Barth, "Evangelium und Die Sozialismus," ed. And trans. By E. Busch, *Karl Barth : His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts* (Philadelphia, 1975), 70.

³⁹Karl Barth, "Evangelium und Die Sozialismus," 116.

⁴⁰John J. Killagen, "Peace in the Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles" in *Studia Missionalia* vol. 38 (Roma :Pontificia University Gregoriana, 1989), 78.

in this regard.⁴¹

In regard to the importance of the Holy Spirit in the Korean church, we need to ask theological questions of how the Holy Spirit movement has been contextualized and has caused remarkable church growth. Two indigenous concepts help to explain the contextualization of the Holy Spirit in the Korean church.

These are *bok* and *han*. One of the unique characteristics of the Korean people is a particular form of suffering known as *han*. However it is more than suffering. *Han* involves a cluster of Korean people experiences. The closest English equivalent to the experience of *han* is the idea of the "blues" in the US. Black experience of *han* is sometimes understood as "grudge" or "resentment."⁴² the Korean theologian Hyun Young Han describes *han* as a typical, prevailing deep feeling. Theologian Han says :

Han is a sense of unsolved resentment against injustice suffered, a sense of helplessness because of the overwhelming odds against a feeling of total abandonment, is feeling of acute pain, of sorrow in one's guts bowels making the whole body writhe and wiggle, and an obstinate urge to take revenge and to right the wrong, all these combined.⁴³

Andrew Sung Park treats law as an important factor in human evil. Concerning the sin of people, he points out that *han* is "the pain of the victims of sin." The victims of various types of wrongdoing express the ineffable experience of deep bitterness and helplessness. Such an experience of pain is called *han*.⁴⁴ Here Park extends the concept of hurt to basic bitterness and helplessness of the alienated apart from God. *Han* has been used individually or collectively to designate a unconsciously conscious layer of psychic power that entangles and oppresses the lives of the Korean people.

As was discussed previously, the history of Korea has been a history of suffering because of poverty, the tyranny of government, and the invasion offoreign countries. Due to ceaseless suffering of humanity throughout this history, *han* has been turned inward, accumulated and

⁴¹Nam Dong Suh, "Hisotrical Reference for a Theology of Minjung," *Minjung Theology*(Seoul: Korean Christian, 1988), 163.

⁴²*An Emerging Theology*, 99.

⁴³ Letty M. Russell, *Inheriting Our Mothers' Garden* (Philadelphia : The Westminster, 1988), 159.

⁴⁴Andrew S. Park, *The Wounded Heart of God* (Nashville : Abingdon, 1993), 10.

intensified on and on. Korea is a *han*-ridden people. *Hun* is accordingly an original and fundamental element of the religiosity of the Korean people. Amazing activity of the Holy Spirit was possible because of the religiosity of Korean people in terms of *han*-riddenness. The Holy Spirit plays a key role to remove *han* from the Korean people.

Another feature of Korean people is *bok*. It can be said that Korean culture is *bok*-oriented culture at the same time that it is a *han*-ridden one. *Bok* is translated "blessing" in the English. It has a somewhat narrower meaning than the biblical concept of blessing. *Bok* originated in shamanism and is very limited in its denoting superficial, visible and material blessing. However, the concept has deeply influenced Korean Christianity.⁴⁵ To understand the concept of *bok*, one needs to examine shamanism, as the root of Korean traditional religion. *Bok* is essential to Korean shamanism. It dominates people's deep intrapsychic and collective social structure. Hark Do Kim says that shamanistic dregs are deposited at the bottom of Korean people's consciousness.⁴⁶

Korean Shamanism believes that success or failure and life or death of a person are controlled by spirits which are more powerful than humans. The person are controlled by spirits which are more powerful than humans. The spirits take charge of the *bok*, of the production of descendants, their health, materials and household peace, and sometimes even of a nation's peace. There are three major spirits in Korean shamanism : *Jesuk*, a spirit of taking charge of the *bok* of production and descendants; *Daegam*, a spirit of material *bok*, and *Sungju*, a spirit of household peace.⁴⁷ All are concerned with the *bok* in this world. Korean shamanism is in its this-worldly focus very practical. Such belief that powerful spirits control human affairs leads people to worship these spirits to obtain *bok*.

Why do Korean people so cling to *bok*? The use of *but* is closely related to the history of suffering in Korea. Korean peoples' emphasis on *Ink* is found in their efforts to get out of their miserable situation, their *han*-ridden way of life, and to survive a life manipulated by spirits. Korean people pursue *bok* from positions of poverty, oppression of class division, unjust social

⁴⁵The transformation from shamanistic concept of *bok* to the biblical concept of "Blessing" will be explained later in terms of contextualization.

⁴⁶Hak Do Kim, "Funreal of Korean Reformed Church Contrasted to Traditional Rites of Korea" (D. Min. dissertation, Acts, 1986), 2.

⁴⁷Sung Tae Kim, "Contextualization and the Presbyterian Church in Korea," (Ph.D dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1991), 301.

structure, suffering from foreign invasion, and all causes of *han*. From these perspectives, pursuing *bok* in shamanism has been syncretized with all kinds of religions in Korea, even Christianity. Yet, the Korean church has to a large extent developed through a transformation of orientation away from the *bok* of shamanism and toward the blessing of Christian conceptualization. I further explain the theological meaning of this transformation in terms of contextualization of the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

I am of the opinion that a key theological implication of *bait* is its power to cancel the hold of *han*. The movement of the Holy Spirit in the Korean church has implicitly and explicitly functioned to relieve people from their *han* which has been intensified by suffering from the socio-economic and political system and which has been compounded by the irresistible force and sway of spiritist belief. In the Korean context the Holy Spirit has been understood as a supreme power to give *bok*, breaking down many evil strongholds and conditions manipulating spurs.

David Cho⁴⁸ explains the concept of *bok* in the light of Christianity. It is a contextualized theological word in Korea context. Cho interprets it as "Three-fold salvation" or "triple bloating." The first *bok* is salvation of the soul from spiritual death. The dead soul after the fall recovers he/her life in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. Then the Holy Spirit leads the person towards eternal life with ongoing guidance. The second *bok* is the *bok* of prosperity. Cho supports the idea that Jesus took our poverty, went to the cross and became poor instead of allowing us this suffering. This is salvation of life from the curse of nature. The last *bok* is the *bok* of health, which means salvation of the body from sickness. He maintains that Jesus Christ took our weakness to the cross and fully redeemed us.

Boo-Woong Yoo summarizes Cho's preaching philosophy. It is one of "find need and meet need."⁴⁹ In other words the blessings of God find and meet the frustration caused by *han*-ridden existence. Through the power of the Holy Spirit who gives *bok*, Korean Christians are released from *han*. They are protected, able to exorcise the devil, experience ecstasy, heal themselves, and live in eschatological hope.

⁴⁸He is a former senior pastor of Seoul Yoido Full Gospel Central Church (on average about 700,000 in attendance). It is the most famous example of rapid growing church in Korea, and it emphasized *bok*.

⁴⁹Boo Yoong Yoo, "Pentecostalism in Korea," in *Pentecost, Mission and Ecumenism : Essays on Intercultural Theology*, ed. Jan A. B. Joneneel (Peter Lan, 1992), 173.

The *bok* of Christianity involves a covenant of God for not only spiritual salvation, but also for total liberation from physical and emotional *han*-ridden life. The *bok* of the Holy Spirit totally overcomes *han*, while the traditional *bok* of shamanism does so only superficially and in part. Through their release from the power of law, Korean people find true liberation in Christ. As a part of the body of Christ, through the Holy Spirit who blesses us, Korean Christians are joined to grow up into maturity, to the full stature of Christ. Therefore, Christian ministry is a ministry engaging both *han* and *bok*.

The theology of bait is criticized for allowing the activity of the Holy Spirit to be represented in a shamanistic way. However, we should remember the traditional theology from the West neglects this miserable world and is easily rendered a religious ideology. Jesus Christ our Lord fed the hungry and healed the sick throughout his ministry, proclaiming the kingdom of God. Jesus' ministry, has been reproduced through the Holy Spirit and has been contextualized in the concept of *bok* to release *han*-ridden Korean people.

The work of the Holy Spirit is remarkable in the Korean context. No one can deny that the revival of the Korean church across all denomination and Christian societies, absolutely relies on the movement of the Holy Spirit. We accordingly confess the Holy Spirit who blesses us in the Korean context. In confessing the Holy Spirit who blesses us and severs us from the bondage of *han*, we enjoy the reign of God from the present to forever.

Conclusion

Given the second emphasis of the theme of the Commission on the Faith and Order in Lima, 1982 (Toward the Common Explication of this Apostolic Faith in Contemporary Situation of the Churches), Korean churches are encouraged to express faith in language meaningful for our context. Not only churches in Korea, but all churches in the world, will benefit from this effort, for it enables enriched communication between churches about confessional articulation, an issue developing and seeking resolution in many parts of the world. This confessional work can contribute to a unity which acknowledges, respects and expresses diversity.

This paper has suggested that a viable Korean common confession must embody a statement inclusive of all situations in the Korean context, a seeking the visible unity of the Korean church, encouraging Christian solidarity, confessing one faith in context. Furthermore, through the proposed confession, the Korean church members can be expected that they belong to the universal ecumenical family. With this motivation, the Korean common confession Proposed by this paper is mainly based on the contents of the Nicene Creed. Some parts of the old creedal formulation have been ameliorated to allow for voices to be heard from the indigenous Korean context.

According to historical observation, creeds have been important enough to be an essential condition and element for visible unity as sought by all ecumenical movements. Throughout history the creed: have interplayed with diverse environments of Christianity- -cultural, social, political and religious context. For instance, the Apostles' Creed was formulated to rescue the gospel from the environment where in heretical ideas threatened to sway the church to false doctrine. The Nicene Creed was formulated to articulate the theology of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit within the environment of intellectual criticism of theology. Reformers reaffirmed the Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed in order to confess conciliation between creed and context, in the midst of sixteenth- century questions concerning justification and sanctification.

For my own draft of a Korean common confession, I needed first to alleviate tensions brought on by gender-laden language, especially since the constant usage of the name "Father" for God has concealed the loving image of God in the Korean context, a context replete with influence of Confucianism. In other cultural contexts where child abuse by fathers is a significant problem a similar linguistic tack may be taken, In the early church, the Fathers believed that women were the cause of the world's calamity wrought by sin and taught that women could transcend their female nature and be transformed into possessing male nobility thought virginity. By remaining a virgin, a woman could live a manly life. Therefore, the term "virgin" increased in affirmation in Christianity.

In discussing the socio-economic, and political situation of Korea, I noted the need for an expression of Jesus as peacemaker in the midst of real human history, so that the Korean Church may follow the footstep of this Jesus in ministry to social structures. We confess that Jesus works in the social and political system of Korea, and takes part in our national primary task of unification.

The confession further recognizes the Holy Spirit who blesses us. The blessing of the Holy Spirit absolutely releases *han*-ridden life of Korea. Through the activity of the Holy Spirit as *bok* Korean Christians find true liberation in Christ and fulfill the great commission of Christ. The blessing of the Holy Spirit has been contextualized in Korea in the concept of *bok*.

Creeds represent Christian doctrine formulated in given situations and periods. So, a creed or any confessional form with no regard for times, or seasons, situations or geography would be moot. Due to the development of scientific analytical methods for Christian thought and of the new areas such as the study of women, ethnicity, religious minorities, and pluralism, Christian thought has been thrust into the tumult of reconceptualizing traditional categories.⁵⁰

⁵⁰James Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History : An Introduction to Research, Research*

Given these historical facts, doesn't the confession need to be further developed? Christian faith cannot be separated from the dynamic lie of human history. The meaning of the Gospel must not be translated into immutable forms or languages, but rather must be continually updated to community the core of the Gospel. Credal formulations can be compared with clothes that must be changed to accumulate us in various seasons. Churches have to be sensitive to respond to questions of context and history. Human history will always need to see healing. The church is one bond of apostolic faith, and at the same time the church respects diversity. Their diversity as expressed in flexible formulas can be an agent of healing.

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