

# **Theological Issues of Reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula**

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## **Introduction**

The Korean peninsula is in a crisis of war. The Bush administration of America is condemning Kim Jong-Il's North Korean regime as an "outpost of tyranny" or "axis of evil" and publicly announcing military action to break down North Korea's nuclear program, which is currently in negotiation at the six-party talks. Meanwhile North Korea has been suffering from an economic shortage resulting in a famine which has caused numerous deaths. South Koreans are divided into two groups: conservative rightists and liberal leftists. The former group is against the Kim Jong-Il regime and pro America while the latter group is pro North Koreans and anti Bush administration. The Korean peninsula is in a complicated conflict domestically and internationally.

Reunification is a way of peace in the Korean peninsula. At the same time reunification has paradoxically been a main source of conflict because the South wants to reunify the two Koreas by its own system (capitalism) while the North also by its own system (communism). This tendency, however, has been changing since the German reunification in 1989. The North and South Korean governments seem to hesitate to pursue an immediate reunification. The South is anxious of the economic burden and the North worries about being absorbed by the South. The two Koreas want to have a period of peaceful co-existence instead of an immediate reunification. The prolongation of reunification increases a threat to peace in the Korean peninsula. This is the dilemma we are facing. In this situation we consider reconciliation between the two Koreas, between North Korea and America, and between conservative rightists and liberal leftists within South Korea, as a precondition of a peaceful reunification between North and South Korea.

Conflict between North and South Korea is characterized as not only political and military but also cultural and psychological. Since the Korean War (1950-1953) and the subsequent division of the nation, people in North and South Korea have been living under different social systems and thus their life-styles, attitudes and values are different.

An old Korean pastor laments that “the North is insane and the South is spoiled.”<sup>1</sup> The long ideological and politico-military conflict has made people think that the two Koreas are hostile to each other. Deep mistrust and antagonism are rooted in their minds. National division has made a great chasm between them, which is a main obstacle to the national unity. Reconciliation is to build a bridge to cross the chasm. This essay deals with the theological issues of reconciliation in the Korean context in four ways: repentance; jubilee and sharing; memory; and Eucharist.

## 1. Repentance

The Korean Churches’ confession of sin in the Reunification Declaration in 1988: “we have long harbored a deep hatred and hostility toward the other side within the structure of division” made a significant breakthrough opening a new stage of relationship between North and South Korea. That is, this confession of sin broke the political, social, cultural and religious taboos on South-North relations. The Korean theologian, Oh Jae Shik, who led the seminar process of the document, described the significance of the religious action as follows:

The social atmosphere at the time, with regard to South-North relations, was that nobody admitted their wrongs or even mentioned them. But the Declaration confessed our sins of hatred and unforgiveness of our brothers and sisters, and we stood up naked before God. Through that opportunity we came to stand at the same level as the people in North Korea bearing together our past historic burden, as equal partners, and recognizing the other side as the counterpart with whom we could cooperate for a common future. Through the Declaration we voluntarily gave up the foundation of our insistence that all the wrongs were on the side of North Korea.<sup>2</sup>

Confession of sin means a behavior of repentance, which becomes the first activity to open the gate of reconciliation in hostile relationship between North and South Korea. Let’s see the theological implications of repentance in terms of reconciliation.

(1) Repentance is based on truth. It doesn’t aim to quarrel over right and wrong.

Repentance aims at turning to God and “renouncing a way of thinking or acting

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<sup>1</sup> Lee Sang Chul, “Peace March Toward the New Millenium,” NCKK, *The 10th Anniversary of the '88 Declaration*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Oh Jae Shik, op. cit., p. 59.

regarded as bad.”<sup>3</sup> In biblical terms it implies *metanonia*, which we translate as “conversion” or “repentance.”<sup>4</sup> It forms the identity of Christians.

*Metanonia* speaks of a radical change in one's understanding of the world and oneself, a reorientation not only of the mind, but of the entire being, a change of allegiance committing oneself to doing the will of God and adapting oneself to the values of God's realm (cf. Acts 5:31; 11:18; 26:20).<sup>5</sup>

## (2) Repentance creates a new future.

Genuine repentance means “a turning away from the negative images and exclusive identities fostered by the anathemas and mutual condemnations of the past.”<sup>6</sup> It includes “the desire for a new beginning and the restoration of broken relationships.”<sup>7</sup> Justice and peace and integration of creation follow repentance. True repentance is proved in its social significance; it “is then unfolded in a commitment and obligation to move away from divisions and separations, discrimination, violence and exploitation, and to move towards an inclusive society in which all find their place and the diversity of cultures and traditions is respected; a society marked by active nonviolence and a caring relationship to nature, a true community of women and men and a renewed church which lives out of continuing forgiveness.”<sup>8</sup>

## (3) Repentance is the grace of God.

Repentance does not come naturally but is the response to a call (Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38). In the Gospels Jesus calls for repentance and people respond. At the same time it is a gift of God (Jer. 31:18; Acts 5:31; 11:18).<sup>9</sup> Raiser articulates it as follows: “Turning to God in conversion is not the first but the second act. Conversion is possible because God has first turned to this world in love and has become present in

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<sup>3</sup> Groupe des Dombes, *For the Conversion of the Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1993) p. 66.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Konrad Raiser, *To be the Church: Challenges and Hopes for a New Millennium* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997) p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Liechty, “Repentance and Peace: A Challenge to the Churches,” Alan D Falconer and Joseph Liechty (Eds.), *Reconciling Memories* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 1998), p. 262.

<sup>8</sup> Raiser, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>9</sup> Dombes, op. cit., p. 67.

Jesus Christ for all of humanity.”<sup>10</sup> Repentance, therefore, becomes a privilege for Christians while it used to in shame or as a scandal in politics and secular life. Nevertheless, it is true that repentance has not only a religious effect but also the political and social power to create reconciliation. Often the repentance of politicians contributes to purify the political order and create a new relationship with rivals.

(4) To repent first in a hostile relationship leads a process of reconciliation.

There is a stereotype in a hostile relationship: we are right and you are wrong, and so you should repent first; we are victims and you are persecutors. This “righteousness mentality” and “victim mentality” hinders true repentance. Repentance of the righteous and the victim, therefore, creates reconciliation. In this respect, Gil Bailie, a reader of Rene Girard, suggests that “to repent of the violence of our justice,”<sup>11</sup> may cut a vicious cycle of violence. Volf’s comment that victims’ repentance may bring about genuine reconciliation is worthy to be listened to:

Victims need to repent of the fact that all too often they mimic the behavior of the oppressors, let themselves be shaped in the mirror image of the enemy. They need to repent also of the desire to excuse their own reactive behavior either by claiming that they are not responsible for it or that such behavior is a necessary condition of liberation. Without repentance for these sins, the full human dignity of victims will not be restored and needed social change will not take place... If victims do not repent today they will become perpetrators tomorrow who, in their self-deceit, will seek to exculpate their misdeeds on account of their own victimization.<sup>12</sup>

(5) Of what should we repent in our social life?

Jesus’ message of wealth and violence illustrates the social relevance of repentance. He says, “You cannot serve God and wealth,” (Matthew 6:24) and “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). These two injunctions express a critique of the greed and enmity which destroys peace and reconciliation in both human minds and society. Our repentance in social life is to turn

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<sup>10</sup> Raiser, op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>11</sup> Gil Bailie, *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), p. 200.

<sup>12</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), p. 117.

to Jesus' call to life from greed and enmity. Raiser comments on this: "Jesus' call to life took many forms—for the rich, it meant to get free from Mammon; for the sick, it meant to believe in God's love and healing power; for the privileged, it meant to share wealth and power; for the downtrodden, it meant to overcome despair; for the educated, it meant to renounce the pride of superiority; for the weak, it meant to gain self-confidence."<sup>13</sup>

(6) Repentance and forgiveness should go hand in hand.

Repentance calls for forgiveness and forgiveness calls for repentance. Both are reciprocal. The Irish theologian Joseph Liechty explains this as "a mirror-image relationship—repenting is a way of dealing with my sin, forgiving is a way of dealing with sins against me—so that what is true of one is likely to have a complementary application to the other."<sup>14</sup> Biblically this is echoed by the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us" (Luke 11: 4). Shriver says: "Divine forgiveness alone will produce an interior renovation of humanity sufficient to renovate relations between humans."<sup>15</sup>

Repentance and forgiveness release us and our enemies from the past tragedy, and create a new relationship. A reconciliation which is captured by the past cannot be a genuine reconciliation with forgiveness and which cleanses the past wrongdoing. In this respect, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in the Republic of South Africa, which was a holy experiment not only for a new nation-building for South Africa but also for a new humanity in the world, suggests a spiritual source for theological reflection on repentance and forgiveness. The Commission begins its work from hearing stories of victims who have a temptation of vengeance against the persecutor. The TRC offered the cathartic opportunity for victims to speak their stories, which include anger, sorrow and frustration. At the same time victims' voices were heard openly through public media, and recorded as the historical truth. Through this process, past victims are able gradually to restore their human dignity.<sup>16</sup> On the other

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<sup>13</sup> Raiser, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Liechty, op. cit., p. 263.

<sup>15</sup> Donald W. Shriver Jr., *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> Geiko Muller-Fahrenholz, *The Art of Forgiveness: Theological Reflection on Healing and Reconciliation* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997), p. 89. "This profound satisfaction is not a subliminal form of revenge, but expresses itself in a genuine readiness to forgive. Many victims repeat the phrase expressed by a witness during the first days of the

hand, the oppressors were forgiven by their repentance and confessing of truth about their past faults in front of the Commission: the so called “amnesty by truth.” The TRC gave wrong-doers an opportunity to repent and restore their humanity through a confession of truth. Finally, even though not fully satisfied, the TRC contributed to save South Africa from apocalyptic violence.

We have seen the theological implications of repentance in six ways: truth, a new future, a grace of God, greed, enmity, and forgiveness. True repentance brings about true reconciliation. Repentance is not only a religious concept but also a sociological idea which has an effect on the political and social relationship. In particular, the Korean ecumenical group has experienced that repentance could make a great breakthrough in reconciliation between North and South Korea.

North and South Korea fought each other in the Korean War and have kept a hostile relationship until now. North Korea has tried to communize South Korea while South Korea has tried to destroy the North Korean communist system. They have criticized each other for their lack of endeavor for national reunification. “This is the logic of the vicious circle. Seized by this logic, both parties are trapped within the negative mutualism of ‘I won't do a thing until you implement the agreement first.’”<sup>17</sup>

The way to break this negative mutualism is a unilateral action to implement the Agreement. Although the action seems to be risky in political realism, it could be a worthy adventure to create trust. Some people advise that such an attempt is effectual when there is equal power between both parties, however, the matter of trust-building is not done by political strategy but rather by human capacity to create a good and new relationship. In this respect a theological contribution is expected to be part of reconciliation.

## **2. Jubilee and Sharing**

The Korean National Council of Churches (NCKC) announced the year 1995, which was the 50th year of the division of Korea, as the year of Jubilee and the Christian movement for reunification in the light of the spirit of the jubilee.

Biblically the Jubilee means the fiftieth year following the completion of a cycle of seven sabbatical years totaling 49 years (Leviticus 25:8-10). As a vision of new history the Jubilee is revealed in relation to the Israelites' experience of Exodus, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt.” (Leviticus 25:38), and to the

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hearings: I am ready to forgive, but I need to know whom and for what.”

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 113.

building of a new community. Jubilee is a “year of liberation” free from the social and economic oppression of the powers: the enslaved are liberated, the indebted have their debts forgiven, sold land is returned to its original tillers, and seized houses are returned to their original inhabitants (Leviticus 25:11-55). Jesus proclaimed the Jubilee as the core spirit of his ministry: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19). Through the proclamation of Jubilee in Korean history, Korean ecumenical Christians aimed to express their belief in the historical presence of God and the realization of the covenant community of peace in the history of the Korean peninsula.

Jubilee is not solely a utopian ideal but indicates a historical vision that the Kingdom of God is achieved in this world. Han Ucko emphasizes its social significance as follows:

The jubilee legislation requires society to recognize a basic right of entitlement as part of being human... And it is “not in heaven” (Deut. 30:12); it will not come to pass only in the beyond. The jubilee legislation is not conceived for another dimension, but it is set in time and in a regulated time, for everyone to count the days and years, when things will be changing, debts will be cancelled, the slaves will be freed and the land will lie fallow and rest.<sup>18</sup>

In this spirit of Jubilee the Korean churches proposed the philosophical grounds of “true” reunification which includes ideas of reconciliation: reunification for life together (symbiotic reunification); reunification for reciprocal learning and reflection (convergent reunification); reunification for renewal (creative reunification).<sup>19</sup>

First; “reunification for life together” rejects the destructive reunification through conquest over rival and seeks the way of mutual cooperation and prosperity. In order to foster such a circumstance North and South Korea should overcome a hostile relationship and take a realistic step for mutual trust, i.e. mutual disarmament. In particular, economic exchange will help both Koreas; North Korea has good natural resources and labor while South Korea has high technology and international networks.

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<sup>18</sup> Hans Ucko, “The Jubilee as a Challenge,” Hans Ucko (Ed.), *The Jubilee Challenge: Utopia or Possibility* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997), pp. 2-3.

<sup>19</sup> Park Kyung Seo, op. cit., pp. 118-120.

Reunification will be of much benefit to both Koreas.

Second; “reunification for reciprocal learning and reflection” pursues reunification not by a one-sided ideology or system but by being productive through good experiences in different ideologies and systems. During the period of division over 50 years North Korea has experienced socialism, equality and self-reliance while South Korea has experienced capitalism, freedom and international competence. In the process of reciprocal learning and reflection, the good points of both sides should be synthesized dialectically on the one hand and the bad points of both should be overcome on the other. This is the convergent reunification, which needs a positive attitude to respect one’s rival’s good points (Matthew 7:3; Romans 12:6; 15:1-7).

Third; “reunification for renewal” indicates a new and future-oriented national community building. Being one country is not to return to the old system; rather, it means to create a new national community based on true spirit and the system which has national independence, democracy, peace and justice, and human rights in the Korean situation. In this sense the national Jubilee is embodied in the process of reordering and reorientation into the world of reconciliation and liberation.

Jubilee presents the spirit of sharing. The early Christian apostolic community practiced the spirit of sharing among the believers. “The material, socio-economic resonance of the jubilee idea is clearly audible in the life of this Pentecost community as described in Acts 2: 42-45.”<sup>20</sup> After the experience of Pentecost they shared everything with each other; selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as they had need. This is the practice of sharing to characterize the new community.

Since the early 1990s, North Koreans have been suffering from the poverty and starvation which was caused by both natural disaster and economic sanctions imposed by the United States of America. The North Korean economy is bankrupt. It is presumed that millions of people have died since then. Korean Christians have sent food and medicines, and actively participated in various relief campaigns for North Koreans with the spirit of sharing and life together. They believe that the sharing should be based on unconditional and genuine fraternal love, and that through this process, more trust will be built up. Jubilee and sharing are biblical ideas to create reconciliation.

### 3. Memory

Memory makes the past to be the present. The past confines the present through

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<sup>20</sup> K.M. George, “Sunday, Pentecost and the Jubilee Tradition: A Patristic Perspective”, Hans Ucko (Ed.), *The Jubilee Challenge: Utopia or Possibility*, p. 100.



memory. The Irish theologian Alan Falconer says that, “memory is an important element in the shaping of contemporary identities and contemporary conflicts.”<sup>21</sup> There are good and bad memories: the good memory forms a good identity while the bad memory a bad identity. The Korean War has been the most painful memory for Korean people. It left a great trauma in the hearts of Koreans and whenever remembering it fear, anxiety, anger, sorrow and antagonism are also refreshed. “A remembered wound is an experienced wound. Deep wounds from the past can so much pain our present.”<sup>22</sup>

Politics, education and religion are conveyers of memory. They contribute to strengthen a group identity through remembering. Politicians, teachers and priests continue to revive memory and shape identity. In South Korea the slogan, “remember 6. 25 (June 25)”, the date on which the Korean War started, shapes anti-Communist identity and provokes resentment and wariness against North Korea while the memory of the Korean War in North Korea supports the state identity of being against American imperialism. Also many victims of the Korean War keep their enmity alive in their memory. Therefore, without reconciling the memories first, genuine reunification between the two Koreas would not be achieved; whatever “reunification” may be achieved the reunified Korea would enter a whirlpool of vengeance. Memory may create conflict or peace according to our approach to it. In this regard, let us examine the way to deal with memory from the theological aspect of reconciliation.

First, we can see two leitmotifs for the positive interpretation of memory in Scripture. In the Old Testament, remembering (anamnesis) is linked with the Exodus experience. Remembering the Exodus is a core idea of Israelite identity. “Thus the admonition ‘Remember Egypt’ leads to laws that focus on the protection of the aliens, the weak and powerless.”<sup>23</sup> In the New Testament, it is discovered in Christ’s words to the disciples at the last supper: “Do this in remembrance of me.” This memory in Eucharist forms the Christian identity. Blyth describes the liturgical significance of memory in Eucharist as follows:

It is not just a rehearsal of a past event, a passive backward-looking memorial, but it is also a forward-looking event, involving re-collecting, re-presenting, and re-committing all that

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<sup>21</sup> Alan D. Falconer, “Remembering,” *Reconciling Memories*, Alan D. Falconer and Joseph Liechty (eds.), (Dublin: the Columba Press, 1998), p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace*, p. 133.

<sup>23</sup> Geiko Muller-Fahrenholz, *The Art of Forgiveness*, p. 37.

that event symbolizes, in order to receive the sacramental energy for living.<sup>24</sup>

In the Scriptures, remembering means the way of salvation (liberation) and truth, not revenge and resentment. In this respect, we may think of the memory of the Korean War as being to promote peace and for the victims of the war not to stimulate hostility and revenge. Many Korean churches' preaching of anti-Communism at the annual Korean War Memorial Sunday, is based on the negative interpretation of the memory of the Korean War. Positive interpretation of memory becomes a leitmotif of reconciliation theology in the Korean peninsula. The Korean thinker, Ham Sokhon, interpreted positively the Korean War in the light of the theology of the burnt offering:<sup>25</sup>

It was in the 6.25 (Korean War) that a "princess of the suffering" (i.e. Korea) cried while giving birth to the king of the new era... The Korean War was the burnt offering for cleansing the sin of the Korean nation. Though it brought about severe destruction, the original purpose of the war was to cleanse completely the deep-rooted sin in the heart of Koreans. Many people who came from several countries poured out their blood on the Korean soil. Korea was the common altar of humanity, UN and nations.<sup>26</sup>

Second, a way to deal with bad memory is the forgetting of the past. "Let bygones be bygones." This is a future-oriented way. Nobody steps forward to a new future with a bad memory. In the Scripture, the forgetting is symbolized by Jesus' teaching "don't look back"; "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62); "But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt" (Genesis 19:26). Remembering the bad thing of the past brings about only conflict and misfortune.

Bad memories need cleansing in terms of religion. This is not something resolved by a political negotiation. Among the rituals of Korean folk religion there is a ritual for cleansing called *ssikgim kut*. This ritual calls out the ghosts who died with an oppressed mind, and soothes them through apologizing for the sin against them. Apology means to confess the sin. The persecutor himself/herself or some agents on

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<sup>24</sup> Myra Blyth, "Liturgy after the Liturgy", *The Ecumenical Review* vol. 44, no. 1, January 1992, p. 74.

<sup>25</sup> "Then the priest is to sacrifice the sin offering and make atonement for the one to be cleansed from his uncleanness. After that, the priest shall slaughter the burnt offering and offer it on the altar, together with the grain offering, and make atonement for him, and he will be clean." (Leviticus 14:19-20).

<sup>26</sup> Ham Sokhon, *The Korean History in the Light of the Providence* (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1997), pp. 402-422.

behalf of the persecutor can do it. Finally, the survivors make a new promise to live rightly for the future.

This ritual helps people to be free from the bad memory in which the victims' cries remain vivid. It cleanses the bad memories in the psyche of survivors (persecutors). The religious ritual activity for cleansing the past wrongdoing can therefore contribute to healing the bad memory and creating a new future and a new relationship. "In the Christian tradition, the miraculous cures of Jesus are the distinctive sign that the Messiah has come and that the new age of the kingdom of God has dawned (Mt. 4:23-25, 10:1, 10:7-8, 11:4-5). As the divine physician, Jesus instructs his disciples how to cure all kinds of diseases, especially by casting out unclean spirits."<sup>27</sup> Paul F. Knitter explains the significance of religious healing in relation to the human psyche as follows:

Religions therefore play a valuable, a necessary, role in mediating between the "divine content" of the unconscious and a person's conscious awareness... So Jung could call the world religions the great psychotherapeutic symbol systems of the world; they provide the symbols by which the archetypes can be touched and called forth. They tune us to the mystery within so that we can feel its call and not be frightened by its unknown demands. They assure us that this mystery is real and at work within us.<sup>28</sup>

To recover the value of religious faith and to regain a religious outlook might be the process of reconciliation beyond the wound caused by the conflict and division. Reconciling memory might be a very painful process, but is indispensable for true reunification between North and South Korea. Without the reconciliation of memory it is impossible to rebuild a new community based on the wholehearted embracement of people in the two Koreas.

#### **4. Eucharist**

Eucharist is a religious resource of unity and reconciliation between North and South Korea. When some North-South Christians met each other for the first time in Glion, 1986, they embraced each other in Eucharist. Distrust, antagonism and wariness were all swept away at the moment when the North-South Christians had Eucharist

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<sup>27</sup> Mircea Eliade (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion volume 6* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987) p. 226.

<sup>28</sup> Paul F. Knitter, *No Other Name?* (London: SCM Press, 1985), p. 60.

together and warmly embraced each other.<sup>29</sup> In effect, nobody had anticipated such a moving meeting. Such a meeting had never happened in political meetings between the North-South governments. However, at the first meeting the North-South Korean Christians experienced the mystery of Eucharist to reconcile peoples in opposition. Keshishian says that:

The Eucharist is the sacrament of unity par excellence. The unity between Christ and his people as well as among the people who constitute the koinonia is revealed in the Eucharist through the sharing of the bread and the wine.<sup>30</sup>

St. Paul stresses Eucharist as the sacrament of unity. “Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf” (1 Cor. 10:17). Christians are unified with Christ through eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ. In spite of various differences Christians experience oneness in Eucharist which is a holy locus of unity. Christian identity is confirmed by Eucharist. A Christian, therefore, who refuses Eucharist cannot be a genuine Christian.

Eucharist has two symbolic behaviors: eating and drinking, and remembering. Whenever eating the body of Christ and drinking the blood of Christ, Christians remember Jesus Christ’s life and death; his sacrifice once-for-all and his ministry. Eating and drinking something together is an expression of companionship.<sup>31</sup> Nobody eats and drinks with an enemy. But Eucharist as a table of “holy food” changes the enemy-friend relationship. Before that, all people are only sinners and debtors with obligation to Christ’s costly redemption. This awareness that all are sinners creates the equal relationship between the people participating in the Eucharist, in which injustice, discrimination, distrust and resentment are immediately swept away. This is the mystery of Eucharist to make a true unity. Keshishian says, “In other words, the so-called ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ dimensions of unity are existentially experienced in the Eucharist.”<sup>32</sup> Eating and drinking the same thing together reveals the sociological significance of the Eucharist. “The sharing of the common loaf and the common cup in a given place demonstrates the oneness of the sharers with the whole Christ and with their fellow sharers in all times and places. By sharing the common loaf they show their

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<sup>29</sup> Erich Weingartner, “A momentous encounter”, *One World* 120 (1986), pp. 4-6.

<sup>30</sup> Aram Keshishian, *Conciliar Fellowship* (Geneva: WCC Publication, 1992), p. 46.

<sup>31</sup> Shriver Jr., *An Ethic for Enemies*, p. 40.

<sup>32</sup> Keshishian, op. cit., p. 46.

unity with the church catholic.”<sup>33</sup> Jesus of Nazareth used to break many social taboos in eating together with people like tax-gatherers and other sinners. Shriver argues eating’s sociological influence on reconciliation and unity as follows:

The act of sitting down to eat is a human gesture of consent to human company; where barriers of social custom or a history of hostile relations have stood in the way of such consent, the mere joint presence of the alienated, now around the same table consuming the same food, can be a powerful symbol of the beginning of negotiation on its way to reconciliation.<sup>34</sup>

Another important aspect of Eucharist is remembrance through which the sacrifice and ministry of Jesus Christ is transmitted into our present lives. In this respect Eucharist is not simply a ritual but a transformative action. Blyth argues that “the ‘liturgy after liturgy’ or ‘living the liturgy’ means to translate the Eucharistic actions of receiving, thanking, breaking, and sharing into a deliberate and intentional life-style.”<sup>35</sup> The Eucharist as a sharing of the body and the blood of Christ is “the heart of the original Jesus movement, a shared egalitarianism of spiritual and material resources.”<sup>36</sup> In this remembrance, Christians inherit the historical life of Jesus Christ who went the way of reconciliation and unity beyond all kinds of barriers and conflict. Regardless of friend or enemy, sharing economic and spiritual goods is a political economy of the Eucharist, which is also a core spirit of ecumenism.

The lack of daily bread, for which Christ taught us to pray, brings hunger, starvation and death to a world that is now unjustly divided between the rich and the poor. Here is the meeting of ecumenics and economics. The Eucharistic cup calls for a daily sharing of bread and of material and spiritual resources with the millions of hungry people in this world. Through them God, the Trinity, comes on pilgrimage to us at every moment.<sup>37</sup>

## Conclusion

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Shriver Jr., op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> Myra Blyth, ‘Liturgy after the Liturgy’, p. 74.

<sup>36</sup> Shriver Jr, op. cit.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. the reference in *Gathered for Life*, official report of the Sixth Assembly of the WCC, D. Gill ed., WCC, Geneva, 1983, p. 26, cited in *Shalom*, p. 163.

We have examined repentance, jubilee and sharing, memory and Eucharist in terms of reconciliation. Repentance opens the way towards reconciliation from the hostile relationship between North and South Korea both of whom argue mutually their righteousness. Jubilee is a political economy of reconciliation through sharing and liberation. A good memory creates reconciliation while a bad memory creates conflict. Eucharist is a liturgy of reconciliation and unity. Reconciliation is a healing process of the wounded and the oppressed mind of people in the Korean peninsula. Therefore, it is the substance of reunification which is an essential condition of peace in the Korean peninsula. Reconciliation in the Korean peninsula, therefore, becomes a peace-making reconciliation. Without the reconciling healing process, genuine reunification may be impossible, and even though reunification may be achieved, it may only result in a chaotic situation of violence. German reunification has awakened Korean society to the fact that reconciliation is a prerequisite to reunification. The Korean theologian, Park Jongwha described the relationship between reconciliation and reunification as follows:

In the long term perspective, reconciliation envisions a fully “reconciled national community”, but a reconciling and reconciled life-style in the midst of the division can make a foretaste of reunification possible.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Park Jongwha, “Reunification as Reconciliation”, NCCCK, *The 10th Anniversary of the '88 Declaration*, p. 22.