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FULL PAPER

Christian Spirituality and the Diakonic Mission of the Yoido Full Gospel Church

1. The History and Growth of the Korean Church

Since Catholicism was first introduced in Korea in 1784, many Catholic believers suffered persecution and martyrdom partly because of the problems that had arisen from the cultural differences between the Korean society and the Western world. Protestant Christians also experienced no less persecution, which was introduced in 1885. Robert J. Thomas, a Presbyterian missionary from Wales, arrived in Korea in 1866 with high hope to evangelize the country on board the General Sherman ship. As soon as he approached Pyongyang, however, he was arrested and beheaded in Yanggak-do's Ssuk Island in Pyongyang. He was only 27 years old, and he was not able to proclaim a word of the gospel before his death.¹ He was reported to say to his slayer, 'Yaso, Yaso' (Jesus, Jesus) and offered him a package. It contained many copies of the Bible. However, his martyrdom was not fruitless at all. In fact, the blood of the martyrs—either the Western missionaries, or early national believers—is the very secret on how the Korean churches have been able to grow so fast in such a short time, with 12 million believers today.

In the history of the evangelization of Korea, there is a unique feature that not many countries have. Korea had voluntarily sought for the gospel even before any missionary was able to set his foot on the Korean soil. By the time when the first Protestant missionaries reached Korea, most part of the Bible had already been translated into Korean—either by Western missionaries, or by the Korean believers who lived or studied abroad, such as in China, Japan or in the U.S. or who were international traders—so that the earliest missionaries to Korea were able to preach with Korean Bibles.² Evidence abounds to attest the enthusiasm of the earliest Korean believers over the Christian faith with the attitude and fervor of inquirer.³

There is another important feature in the growth of the Korean Church: attitude of humility found both among the missionaries and national believers. For example, Rev. Henry G. Appenzeller lived a simple life based on John Wesley's famous teaching, 'Sanctification, Justification, and One penny a Week', and dedicated himself to be a missionary to Korea at the early age of 26.⁴ He came to Korea as one of the first Western official Protestant missionaries in 1885.⁵ Another remarkable characteristic of Appenzeller's missionary work is

¹ More detail on the martyrdom of Robert J. Thomas is available in many sources, such as in *Thomas's Letter to Tidman*; Manyeul Lee, *A Study on the History of Acceptance of the Korean Christianity* (in Korean) (Seoul: Dooraesidae, 1998), 38; Kyungbae Min, *The History of the Korean Church* (in Korean) (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1993), 101-102, 136-139.

² The Library of the British and Foreign Bible Society, *Historical Catalogues of Printed Edition of the Holy Scriptures* (London: The Bible House, 1903); M. Lee, *A Study on the History*, 38-44; K. Min, *The History of the Korean Church*, 165-167.

³ M. Lee, *A Study on the History*, 458-68.

⁴ William E. Griffis, *A Modern Pioneer in Korea: The Life Story of Henry G. Appenzeller* (Fleming H. Revell Co., 1912), 70; M. Lee, *A Study on the History*, 202-49.

⁵ Appenzeller, a formally appointed Methodist missionary to Korea with Horace Underwood, an appointed Presbyterian missionary arrived in Korea on the Easter day (April, 5) of 1885. *Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1885, 237; Tongshik Ryu, *A History of Chung Dong First Methodist Church, 1885-1990* (Seoul: Editorial Committee of Chung Dong First Methodist Church, 1992), 38.

his respect of local culture and situation of Korea as much as possible. He, for instance, made every effort not to violate any rule that the Korean government had set for the foreign missionaries. Consequently he devoted himself primarily to educational activities for a considerable period of time.⁶ He sat with his legs fold on the floor of the small sanctuary in a Korean fashion at the first worship service at Chung-dong First Methodist Church in 1887. He powerfully demonstrated his adaptability to the Korean local culture.⁷ In summary, in the birth and development of the Korean churches, humility, devotion, and obedience were evident both among the missionaries and national leaders. Their resolute commitment to the scriptural teaching resulted in persecution and martyrdom.

2. Brief History of the Pentecostal Movement in Korea

2.1. The Worldwide Revival at the Start of the 20th Century

At the beginning of the twentieth century, God poured out the Holy Spirit simultaneously throughout the whole world. In 1904, God used a young man named Evan J. Roberts to spread the fire of the Holy Spirit in the United Kingdom centered on Wales.⁸ In the United States, William Seymour, a son of an African American slave, was used by God to ignite the whole United States and Europe with the Holy Spirit from his humble Azusa Street Mission from 1906 to 1909.⁹ Also South America, countries like Brazil, Chile and Argentina experienced a great Pentecostal outbreak. India, influenced by the Wales revival movement, also experienced the flames of the Holy Spirit in Caspia region and many other parts of India. The news of the Indian revival finally reached the Korean Peninsula.

2.2. The Revival in Korea

In 1903, Methodist missionaries invited Rev. M. C. White, who was ministering in China, for a revival meeting. White's spirituality had been shaped by the Keswick higher life movement, which emphasized the convention for the promotion of scriptural holiness.¹⁰ In his Wonsan meeting, a strong manifestation of the Holy Spirit was felt by the participants. The revival in Wonsan had a direct influence to the Great Pyongyang Revival of 1907.¹¹

The Holy Spirit movement in the Korean churches started with repentance. On January 4, 1907, Pyongyang's Jangdaehyun Church, greatly inspired by the revival throughout the world, including Wales and India, held a revival meeting for two weeks.¹² People were not being changed until the end of the event. Sun-joo Gil, an elder who participated in the revival as a church leader, just led a prayer meeting. During the repentance time, he publicly confessed his sins in front of the congregation as follows:¹³

⁶ Jonghae Noh, *New View on the History of Korea Methodist Church* (in Korean) (Seoul: Poongman, 1988), 198-99; Tongshick Ryu, *A History of Chung Dong First Methodist Church*, 40-46.

⁷ Henry G. Appenzeller, *Diary*, on October 11, 1887.

⁸ Young-hoon Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea: Its Historical and Theological Movement* (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books International, 2009), 27.

⁹ Y. Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea*, 66-67.

¹⁰ 'Keswick Higher Movement', in Stanley M. Burgess, Eduard M. Van Der Maas, eds., *The New Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2002), 820-21.

¹¹ Y. Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea*, 25.

¹² 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference described the great revival in 1907 in Korea as a 'pure Pentecostal experience': World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission I*, Edinburgh, 1910, 77-80.

¹³ William Newton Blair and Bruce Hunt, *The Korean Pentecost and the Suffering Which Followed* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Trust, 1977); Kwangsoo Kim, *The History of the People in the Korean Christianity* (in Korean) (Seoul: Kidokgeomunsa, 1981), 140-141; for more detail on the ministry and the theology of Rev. Sun-joo Gil, see Y. Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea*, 34-39.

I am like Achan, and because of me you could not experience the grace of God. Once my friend pleaded me at his dying hour and said, 'I'm dying now and I want you to dispose of all my fortunes. My wife cannot do anything because she is uneducated, so I plead you', and with this words he passed away. While I was disposing his fortunes, I took 100 won for myself and deceived God. Early tomorrow morning I will give that money back to the widow.

Gil's public repentance challenged and inspired many others to follow his example in open confession of their sins. Missionaries also joined in their own public confessions.¹⁴ The Holy Spirit's conviction of sins was the hallmark of the Pyongyang Revival. Also other manifestation of the Holy Spirit appeared: speaking in tongues, and slain in the Spirit until the next morning by the power of the Holy Spirit. One child was under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and repented for stealing a Chinese pancake. Soon he went back to the store and paid back for it. The revival from Pyongyang's Jangdaehyun Church spread throughout the country with the characteristic repentance.¹⁵

Korea had to go through an extremely difficult time until its independence in 1945, and so was the church. The revival brought an explosive of the church, and its flame was continued by several revival leaders in the next four decades, although the revival itself ran its own course. Christianity, once considered a vanguard of nationalism and independence spirit, became a formidable force for the transformation of individual life. The revival has brought the unique prayer life to the Korean church, beginning with the daily early morning prayer and a unison prayer traditions. They were later followed by the prayer mountain movement, weekly (usually Friday) all night prayer, and mass prayer rallies. The revival tradition laid a firm foundation for the surge of the Pentecostal movement. Korean Christianity in general, but the revival tradition in particular, also contribute to the social transformation, for example, by leading numerous campaigns to promote biblical lifestyle, including the prohibition of alcohol and smoking,¹⁶ taking concubines, as well as prudent life, diligence, love for farming, the purchase of national products to support industries, and many others.

3. David Yonggi Cho and the Yoido Full Gospel Church

God had a plan for the Holy Spirit revival not only to impact Korea, but also to spread to many parts of the world. He took a nation which went through the harsh colonial rule and the pains of the Korean War (1950-1953). God also raised an unlikely individual and his tiny congregation at the outskirts of Seoul among the poor and marginalized. This young man is David Yonggi Cho, and his Yoido Full Gospel Church, now grown to be the largest congregation in the world.¹⁷

¹⁴ For instance, Rev. Hardie confessed his errors and arrogance in public and asked fellow missionaries and national Christians for forgiveness. All the participants then began to weep and repent altogether: William Newton Blair and Bruce Hunt, *The Korean Pentecost and the Suffering Which Followed* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Trust, 1977), 71.

¹⁵ Y. Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea*, 29-33; K. Min, *The History of the Korean Church*, 276-81.

¹⁶ International Theological Institute, *A Minister in Yoido: A Biography of Rev. Yonggi Cho* (in Korean) (Seoul: Seoul Logos, 2008), 232; K. Min, *The History of the Korean Church*, 266-267.

¹⁷ Yonggi Cho launched a tent church with his five family members as church members on May 18, 1958 (Y. Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea*, 95).

3.1. Growth

The basis of the growth of Yoido Full Gospel Church is the Pentecostal Holy Spirit movement.¹⁸ Cho started his first church at Daejo-dong, a suburban area of Seoul in 1958.¹⁹ This congregation was quickly known for claims for healing and miracles. First, an alcoholic was healed, and then two women who were deaf and blind. Even a shaman came to repent. Soon the congregation was known for speaking in tongues as the Holy Spirit gave utterance. The message was clear: sin and suffering comes from human separation from God's lordship, and thus the proper solution to any human problem is God's lordship in life. The gospel impacts, according to this belief, impacts not only the spiritual aspect of human life, but also physical and material dimension of daily life. The Daejo-dong tent church grew up to six hundred members in three years.²⁰

In 1961, when the church moved from the impoverished Daejo-dong to Sudaemun, Seoul's central business district, and the work of the Holy Spirit intensified.²¹ Initially people suspected as a preference of the wealthy over the marginalized. However, soon the church proved to be a sanctuary from the poor, the sick, and the socially marginal.

Once a woman missionary asked Cho, 'Reverend, why are there only sick people in this church? I can't stand the smell. How can our holy Lord come to this smelly place? Try not to gather these people anymore. And go out and preach the Gospel. Teach your congregation on how to take a bath'. Cho's answer to the missionary reveals his view of the church's role to the poor and suffering,²²

Rightly said, Missionary. These people are from heaven's 1st complex. Why is it 1st complex? Because when Jesus comes, they will be the first ones to go to heaven. It is not that these people are not cleaning themselves because they do not know how to take a bath. During winter they have to go to a public bath for washing but they cannot afford as they are poor. They can only clean themselves in the summer in the Han River. As a missionary, you must know this. Do you think that Jesus ever took a bath? Foxes have holes and birds have nests but Jesus had to sleep on the mountains and fields because He did not have a place to rest His head. Jesus could only take a bath in the Galilee beach when it rained. Jesus likes poor and smelly people because he belongs to them. Is there any greater news than healing the sick and helping the poor? Isn't this the gospel? Isn't God our healer, and healing the gospel?

Like the Daejo-dong Church, Full Gospel Central Church was also a church for the poor and the sick. When the Holy Spirit started to work among them, their lives began to transform. First, there is regeneration, realizing that what is visible in this world is not the full reality. People began to live with hopes of heaven, and naturally began to dedicate themselves to the Lord. They also began to live a sanctified life. Violent husbands became faithful to their wives and families, and those who always borrowed money from others started to lend and share their possessions with others. Church revival was the natural result of such dedication and service to the Lord.

In 1973, Cho made another move for his church to Yoido. In this new location, the church continued its growth, but this time, increased its influence to the wide Christian world. For

¹⁸ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movement in the Twentieth Century* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 287; Myung Soo Park, 'David Yonggi Cho and International Pentecostal/ Charismatic Movement', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 12:1 (2003), 107.

¹⁹ Y. Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea*, 95-96.

²⁰ Y. Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea*, 95; Frank J. Lechner and John Boli, *World Culture: Origins and Consequences* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 173.

²¹ Y. Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea*, 96-97.

²² Yonggi Cho, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew (2)* (in Korean) (Seoul: Seoul Logos, 2008), 240-42.

example, from 1977 until today, the annual Church Growth International (or CGI) conference has been held with thousands of ministers from around the world.

3.2. Holistic Understanding of Salvation

To provide its members with clear identity of faith, vitality in faith and hope in life, Cho developed a theological framework later known as 'The Fivefold Gospel and Threefold Blessing'.²³ The 'Fivefold Gospel' is five principal themes of the Bible: 1) salvation (by faith); 2) fullness of the Holy Spirit; 3) (divine) healing; 4) (divine) blessing; and 5) the second coming of Jesus Christ. His holistic theology of salvation found its expression in 3 John 2: Christian salvation includes life which 'enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well'.²⁴ He tried to emphasize the fact that Jesus came to this world not only to save souls, but also to heal the sick and resolve human suffering.²⁵ Cho even argued that in the Gospels Jesus often used salvation and healing as synonymous.²⁶

The significance of this theological thinking is not only the new interpretation of salvation, but also its close attention to the social context where the gospel is proclaimed. The message of fivefold gospel and threefold blessing was a message of hope to the nation which was suffering in poverty, devastation and destruction after the Korean War. To Cho, Christian salvation is holistic, encompassing spiritual, emotional, relational, physical and material levels of human existence.²⁷ The work and intervention of the Holy Spirit was embodied in the message of hope, healing, miracle and blessing based on the fivefold gospel and the threefold blessing, and this has attracted the poor and marginalized to the Yoido Full Gospel Church, which eventually grew to be the largest congregation in the world.²⁸ The emphasis on holistic salvation was also expressed at a corporate level, when Cho revolutionized church leadership by recruiting, training, empowering and appointing women lay leaders over the church's vast cell groups. Considering the male dominant social culture of Korea, this was a radical decision, but theologically well traced to the Pentecostal theology of empowerment. Nonetheless, it is important to note that Cho's notion of salvation until the early 1980s was focused on the personal level.

4. YFGC's Missionary Engagement: Salvation, Engagement with Society and Beyond

4.1. Saving Souls

The YFGC has been strong in missionary engagement. As a committed Pentecostal congregation to Pentecostal beliefs, since 1976, the church has initially sent missionaries to minister to overseas Koreans. From 1993, the church has emphasized a strong cross-cultural mission.²⁹ Cho's highly publicized oversea crusades have also changed their focus from North American and European countries to Asia, Africa, Latin America and East Europe. YFGC missionaries have been establishing Bible schools throughout the world to train

²³ Prof. Jürgen Moltmann succinctly summarizes and analyses Cho's 'Fivefold Gospel and Threefold Blessing' in his article 'The Blessing of Hope: The Theology of Hope and the Full Gospel of Life', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 13:2 (2005), 149-150; Y. Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea*, 100-102.

²⁴ Y. Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea*, 97-99.

²⁵ Some references to the healing ministry of Jesus are Matt 4:23, 9:35, 8:2-4, 14-17, 8:28-34, 9:1-8, 18-26, 27-31, 32-34 and so on; for Jesus' feeding ministry, see Matt 14:13-21, 15:29-39, Mark 6:34-44, 8:1-9, Luke 9:12-17, John 6:1-13.

²⁶ For example, Matt 9:21, 22, Mark 5:23, 28, 34, 10:52, Luke 8:36, 48, 50, 17:19, 18:42; Acts 4:9, 14:9.

²⁷ Cf. David Yonggi Cho, *Salvation, Health and Prosperity: Our Threefold Blessings in Christ* (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1987).

²⁸ As our church moved to Yoido area, it has been renamed as Yoido Full Gospel Church from Full Gospel Central Church since 1973.

²⁹ YFGC, *The Fiftieth Anniversary of Yoido Full Gospel Church*, 197; currently our church has sent 727 missionaries in 65 countries; among them 152 native missionaries are in fifty countries.

national workers and leaders. Today's annual World Missions Conference of the church is celebrated its missionary work in many countries of the world.³⁰

The cross-cultural missionary work of the church has a strong emphasis on the empowerment of national leadership. This approach is based on the reading of the Great Commission (Mat 28:19-20): 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age' (Mat 28:19-20). The core of this commandment is 'making disciples'. This is understood for Jesus' disciples to go to 'all the ethnic groups' and *make* their leaders *disciples* so that they may in turn take this mandate their own country and people and beyond.³¹

4.2. For the Poor and Suffering

As Korean society became politically stabilized and economically developed in the 1980's, the YFGC's ministries and the focus of its mission gradually started to change. Up to this point, much of pastoral attention was focused on spiritual regeneration and empowerment to live a victorious Christian life. As theological maturity demanded Christianity to reach for a higher purpose, there was a deep process of reflection. The faith of Threefold Blessing was clarified not as self-centered teaching, but a missional commitment to bring transformation to personal and corporate life by practicing Christ's ethical teachings. This theological change has given rise to several distinct ministries as a concrete expression of the theological awareness.

The church began to serve the needy in society. An initial inspiration was drawn from Acts 2:44-47 which defines the church's impact to society. The church responded to disasters with relief programs, both at home and overseas. In 1982, the YFGC established a non-profit social program called the 'Movement of Sharing Headquarters', and it supported orphanages, nursing homes, the rural poor, impoverished slums and village churches. Support was offered in various forms: voluntary workers, finance, logistics, supplies and books. Free medical aid was given to orphans, seniors living alone, and social welfare recipients. A feeding center was established to offer hearty meals to unattended seniors. This is a significant shift of the church's mission thinking and practice by bringing the social diakonic element to the existing mission emphasis of evangelism.

This ministry of serving is intensifying as Cho created another instrument. Around Cho's retirement from his fifty-year pastoral ministry at the YFGC, the 'Sharing of Love and Happiness Foundation' was created in 2008. He is now devoting himself to a world-wide social relief and development ministry. This full-thrust ministry requires not only much resources but a more fundamental theological realignment from self-centered faith to self-giving lifestyle. For this reason, the message of 'Threefold blessings' is now adapted with a godly purpose of blessing. It is encouraging to see the wholehearted and enthusiastic support of, and participation of the church in this ministry. As the new senior pastor, I publicly pledged my own commitment to fully support Cho's social ministry by equipping and empowering the church to be an instrument of God's transforming power of individuals and society.

4.3. Nurturing the Future of Society

Among the various ministries of social service, the church's attention to children and youth is noteworthy. In December, 1982, the YFGC constructed and donated a building complex including a dormitory and a chapel to the Holt Children Services, Inc, a major institution caring for abandoned children and arranging foster families.³² In 1987, the church also

³⁰ YFGC, *The Fiftieth Anniversary*, 197-99.

³¹ YFGC, *The Fiftieth Anniversary*, 197.

³² YFGC, *The Fiftieth Anniversary*, 181. The English website of Holt Children's Services Inc. is available at <http://www.holt.or.kr/holten/main/main.jsp>.

constructed the Elim Welfare Town to provide the youth with skills training while caring for homeless seniors.³³ Since 1984, the YFGC has committed approximately 11 million dollars to underwrite the heart operations for 4,268 children.

The church's role to serve society was formally recognized in 1996 by the government by awarding Cho the 'Order of Mugungwha,' the highest recognition offered to a civilian by the Korean government. This honor recognized particularly the church's contribution to children's welfare through the heart operations program for underprivileged children and ministry to orphans.

4.4. Role in the Shaping of Public Culture

The church took an important decision to play a substantial role in the formation of public culture. This was an important theological shift on the Christian understanding of the world. Christianity is not called to stay isolated from the world, but to transform the world with the gospel teaching. In December 1988, the church began a massive media project by launching the *Kukmin Daily News*, a daily news paper with a distinct perspective drawn from the gospel teaching.³⁴ It requires enormous financial, personnel and logistical resources. Through the prayer and financial support of the members of the church, the newspaper today has a half million daily subscribers as one of the country's top five newspapers.

The YFGC's heavy investment in education ministries is also another platform for Christianity to make a contribution to the public platform of national life. To cultivate committed leaders to Christian faith, the church recognized the role of higher education. Conscientious Christian professionals can permeate Christian principle in their work places, thus, contributing to national life and global world. The church transformed the former Full Gospel Theological School into Hansei University, a reputable Christian liberal arts university.³⁵

4.5. Bringing Churches Together

Just as it was taught in the book of Ephesians to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit (Eph 4:3), the YFGC has exerted every effort to create unity and agreement among the Korean churches. As Pentecostals are often blamed for creating divisions among Christians, this role is significant. Cho emphasizes the personal experience of the Holy Spirit, but he seldom uses the Pentecostal term, 'the baptism of the Holy Spirit', but prefers to use the term, 'the fullness of the Holy Spirit'. This is to prevent any theological disputes which may cause discord among denominations.³⁶

I experienced the Holy Spirit of Pentecost when I was a child, and I am now here in this place to celebrate the centennial of Church *Ecumenical* movement, because I share with the Holy Spirit the hope to achieve unity. Every year the church holds an international academic seminar and engages in various joint projects with churches from different denominations. I was a former director of the Theological Committee of The National Council of Churches in

³³ YFGC, *The Fiftieth Anniversary*, 185.

³⁴ YFGC, *The Fiftieth Anniversary*, 189.

³⁵ YFGC, *The Fiftieth Anniversary*, 191-93. Dr. Sunghae Kim, who is Rev. Yonggi Cho's wife, is currently in charge of the president of Hansei University (<http://www.hansei.ac.kr/global/en/index.html>).

³⁶ Dr. William Menzies, who is a theologian of the U.S. Assemblies of God, has often asked Rev. Yonggi Cho, who likes to use the term, "the fullness of the Holy Spirit," to use the term, "the baptism in the Holy Spirit" instead in public because the former is not the terminology of the Assemblies of God. However, Rev. Cho has thus far refused his request for the sake of the unity of the churches. Jack Hayford who is a pastor of the U.S. Four Square Church suggested at the Lausanne Conference in Manila in 1989 to use the "group of the Fullness in the Holy Spirit" instead of the "charismatic" or the "Pentecostal" (Russell Spittler, "Perspectives on the Pentecostalism," in Harold Smith, *Pentecostals from the Inside Out* (Colorado: Scripture Press, 1990). As long as the theological debate on the baptism in the Holy Spirit is still going on, we had better use the term "the fullness in the Holy Spirit" on the pastoral dimension to narrow the distance between denominations, and to be united as one in Christ.

Korea (or NCCK), and is now serving as a co-chairperson of the Christian Council of Korea (or CCK), the national body for evangelicals. Furthermore, as the senior pastor of Yoido Full Gospel Church, I have actively involved in a various kinds of ecumenical events throughout the country. The pulpit of the YFGC accommodates a wide breadth of church traditions, while I am frequently invited to speak among wide variety of church bodies. For example, in 2009 I delivered the opening message at the general assembly of one of the largest Presbyterian denominations as it commemorated the centennial of its mission to Jeju Island, the southern providence of the nation.

Additionally, the YFGC has participated and provided leadership in many interdenominational joint projects. Every year the church records the highest number of worshippers at the Joint Easter Service. I was invited as the main preacher at the 2010's Easter Joint Service, in which more than twenty thousand believers from all different churches and denominations gathered at the City Plaza in the downtown of Seoul early Easter morning.

As I look back on the past century, I find it regrettable that the Holy Spirit movement and ecumenism had been regarded as mutually incompatible. In the Pentecostal movement, there a ecumenical heroes. Seeking to achieve unity and agreement in church, David du Plessis, who is called Mr. Pentecost, preached a Pentecostal message to the pope in Rome, even though he was threatened to lose his denominational affiliation if he did so.³⁷ The Holy Spirit, however, is the Spirit of unity. On the instructions of the Holy Spirit, Peter risked exposing himself to criticisms by entering the house of Cornelius, the Gentile, and sharing the Gospel with him (Acts 10:1-11:18). The YFGC will continue to exercise its ecumenical leadership in the coming years not only within Korea but also at the global level.

4.6. Reconciliation

Love and peace-building is a unique gift that Christians can offer to divided society and broken relationships. One strong motivation for the care for the poor and marginalized is to bring reconciliation in society. Often the marginalized are the victims of unequal distribution of wealth or an unjust social structure. The victims are socially wounded, or people of *han* ('grudge'), according to Minjung theology. Therefore, without the practice of love and peace-building, restoration of harmony and justice is simply impossible. True people of God's blessing are those who embrace his/her neighbor and society with Christian love to foster peace and harmony.³⁸ This is the goal of the church's Sharing of Love and Happiness Foundation.

In spite of continuing social and economic development, the Korean society is currently facing numerous social challenges. The biggest is the current tension between North and South Korea, with the steady flow of North Korean refugees to South. Other social problems are labor-management disputes, ideological divisions, the increase in marital breakdown, and unwanted and abandoned children, abortions, babies born out of wedlock, low birthrates, and so on. Some of them are symptoms of the steady slide of moral values, family life and increasing egoism which calls for a strong role of the church. For example, the churches also have a unique role to provide humanitarian support to lessen the food shortage of North Korea. The YFGC's big investment in North Korea in building a large-scale cardiac hospital is a visible expression of the church's commitment to this national agenda.

Another area which demands the church's immediate missional attention is the increasing immigrant workers in Korea and many problems which arise from this new social situation. Like many churches, the YFGC has developed not only English congregation, but also various language groups. Often such spaces provide social networking among immigrant works from a same country. Such a social change also provides unprecedented

³⁷ Because of this, David du Plessis was deprived of his certificate of affiliation by the Assemblies of God in the U.S.A.

³⁸ Yonggi Cho, 'Sharing of Love and Happiness', Sermon at the thanksgiving worship service for the Fifty Anniversary of the Foundation of Yoido Full Gospel Church on May 18, 2008.

missionary opportunities. Many of the immigrant laborers return home now as Christians, and some with completed seminary education in Korea. Many Chinese Koreans and Taiwanese have experienced the transforming work of the Holy Spirit at the YFGC. As they return, they often go home with a deep sense of missionary mandates. Naturally the church makes efforts to support their ministries by providing training and prayer and financial support.

4.7. Stewardship of God's Creation

The church was yet to experience another important mission paradigm shift. In 2005, during the church's opening service for the New Year, Cho confessed the shortcoming of his concept of holistic salvation. In his assessment, the message of personal salvation and social engagement is not sufficient to fulfill God's missional call. Interpreting John 3:16, he pointed out that 'God so loved the *world*' and the world is more than human beings.

Just recently I found out many insufficiencies of myself in the forty-seven years of ministry. The Bible says, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life' (NRSV). All these years, I misinterpreted it. I understood that God so loved 'human beings', not 'the world', that he gave his only Son. What is the world? In the world, there are all things such as people, society, sky, land, ocean, plants, insects and animals. The Bible says that God so loved the 'world' that he gave his only Son; it does not limit the scope of the world to human beings, and say that God so loved them all. 1 John 5:19 also reads that the world is under the control of the evil one. I thought that the evil one only controlled human beings not the world, which is why my message and salvation ministry, up to now, has been restricted to human beings.³⁹

He contended that his limited understanding of the scope of God's plan for salvation had kept him from participating in God's integral salvation ministry in personal, social and environmental dimensions. He believed, 'The fall of Adam is a universal event that became the origin of social evil and the decay of the environment. As result of Adam's sin, the devil took control not only of humankind, but also of the society as well as the environment. Therefore, salvation without including our commitment to care for the ecosystem cannot be considered a holistic salvation'. Cho declared, 'From this New Year [that is, year 2005], we will bring about salvation of our souls, get rid of social evils, and actively work toward environmental protection'. This shift has since had a strong impact each member of the church and its mission policies and practices. This message was welcomed by many scholars from within and without. Prof. Jürgen Moltmann, for instance, learned Cho's message, and completely supported his 'shift in policy' by sending Cho an e-mail message. Moltmann said, 'If the Yoido Full Gospel Church can save souls, save society and restore the environment, then I can assure you that this church can be a church that will embrace the world'.⁴⁰

5. The Best Way...

Having surveyed the formation of the Holy Spirit movement in Korea and the missionary engagement of the Yoido Full Gospel Church, several points deserve our attention.

The shift in mission and pastoral ministry of the YFGC does not imply any change in the traditional Pentecostal understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Experience of fullness of the Holy Spirit is all the more required to fulfill the church's mission to bring good news to the poor and the sick (Luke 4:18-19). The book of Acts teaches us that supplying each other's needs in the early church was a natural expression of hearts filled with the Holy

³⁹ Yonggi Cho, 'Sermon at the Opening Service for the New Year 2005'.

⁴⁰ The entire content of Prof. Moltmann's email is written on the issue of February 13, 2005 of the *Full Gospel Family Newspaper* (<http://www.fgnews.co.kr/>).

Spirit. In fact, without the transforming work and power of the Holy Spirit, no true change can be possible ranging from spiritual regeneration to behavioral change and social transformation. Without the Holy Spirit touching our hearts, we cannot even practice love. This is true expression of the Spirit's empowering presence. The missionary work of the YFGC will continue to anchor on its belief in the Holy Spirit.

When I look back on the modern Pentecostal history, I cannot but acknowledge the criticism against the Pentecostals' spirit of triumphalism. The glowing success in missionary work and exponential spread of the Pentecostal movement may have contributed to this perception. However, the truth is that all missionary work is the work of the Holy Spirit and it has been done only through the grace of God. Thus, one should humble oneself and approach ministries with the spirit of *humility*. We must glorify God alone, and our confession should be 'We are unworthy servants. We have only done our duty' (Luke 17:10b). We are only messengers of the gospel of the cross and God's love. God empowered us to achieve his goal faithfully. We at the YFGC well recognize this point and will do the best to bring God's message of salvation and love in the power of the Spirit with the heart of humility. So God help us all to be faithful in our missionary call.