ECCLESIOLOGY AND MEMBERSHIP TRENDS

IN THE SOUTH KOREAN CHURCHES

by

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Declaration

I the undersigned hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirely or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

Signature: _____

Date: _24 / Jan / 2000_

ABSTRACT

This study examines the reasons for the recent membership decline in the South Korean Churches (SKCs) as well as the existing problems facing the Churches. It investigates the pathological pattern in the Churches and its fundamental roots. The study proposes an alternative solution that could remedy the problems and promote healthy growth within the Churches.

Two issues are taken into consideration:

1) In general, the SKCs' explanations of the recent membership decline are inadequate. The reasons for the decline cannot be found by simply examining statistics. The problems are at a much deeper level and the decline requires a comprehensive examination.

2) The Churches' remedial actions are also inadequate: they are both short-sighted and, in practical terms, ineffective, as well as theologically unfaithful. A new direction for healthy growth should be proposed.

This study focuses on the assumption that the reasons for the recent decline in membership of the SKCs are closely related to the distortion of the Churches' dominant ecclesiology, which has produced various ecclesial pathologies and has resulted in the Churches' loss of credibility in society. This study thus pays attention to the ecclesiology of the Churches.

Chapters II and III analyse the dominant ecclesiology of the SKCs within their historical

and contextual background. The analysis shows that problems relate to the SKCs' uncritical accommodation of the American churches' dominant ecclesiological models. This implies that the SKCs urgently need the construction of a contextual ecclesiology.

This study hypothesises that a practical theological methodology can construct a relevant contextual ecclesiology. Hence, the central thesis of the study is: the development and application of a sound practical theological methodology will lead to the development of a biblical and contextual ecclesiology ('practical theological ecclesiology') which will explain the growth and decline in the SKCs and indicate a new direction for healthy growth.

Chapter IV presents a theoretical basis for this study: it discusses a practical theological ecclesiology by means of a four-phased practical theological methodology. This consists of descriptive, explanatory, normative, and strategic phases.

Subsequent chapters address the four phases and analyse the growth of the SKCs: emphasis is placed on the fact that the dominant ecclesiology of the SKCs has encouraged the Churches to accommodate contemporary culture and dominant ideologies, whether secular or religious, without proper critical, theological reflection. This accommodation has undermined healthy growth and resulted in a numerical decline. Finally, this study recommends 'a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology' as a new direction for the SKCs. This will play a critical, constructive role in promoting the healthy growth of the Churches.

OPSOMMING

Die studie ondersoek die redes vir die daling in die lidmaatskap van die Suid-Koreaanse Kerke (SKKe) asook die probleme waarmee die kerke gekonfronteer word. 'n Bepaalde sigbare patologiese patroon word ondersoek. 'n Alternatiewe oplossing vir die probleme word gesoek sodat die SKKe op 'n teologies-gebalanseerde wyse kan groei.

Twee sake word onder die loep geneem:

1) Daar word aangevoer dat die SKKe se verklarings vir die daling in lidmaatskap onvoldoende is. Om bloot statisties na die daling te kyk, is geen oplossing van die probleme nie.

2) Die regstellende aksie wat die SKKe aanvoer is ook onvoldoende. Dit is kortsigtig, prakties oneffektief en ontrou aan basiese teologiese beginsels. 'n Nuwe benadering tot gebalanseerde groei word voorgestel.

Die studie werk met die vooronderstelling dat die redes vir die huidige daling in lidmaatskap in die SKKe verband hou met 'n teologies verwronge ekklesiologie wat tot verskeie wanpraktyke aanleiding gegee het. Die verwronge ekklesiologie het die kreke geloofwaardigheid in die samelewing laat verloor. Die studie gee dus aandag aan die ekklesiologie van die SKKe.

In Hoofstukke II en III word die heersende ekklesiologie in die SKKe geanaliseer teen 'n historiese en kontekstuele agtergrond. Die analise toon aan dat die probleme verband hou

met die onkritiese akkommodasie in die SKKe van die heersende Amerikaanse kerkmodelle. Die implikasie is dat die SKKe dringend moet aandag gee aan hulle ekklesiologie.

Die studie werk met die hipotese dat 'n prakties-teologiese metodologie kan lei tot die ontwerp van 'n kontekstuele ekklesiologie. Die sentrale hipotese van die studie is dus: die ontwikkeling en toepassing van 'n gebalanseerde prakties-teologiese metodologie sal lei tot die ontwikkeling van 'n bybelse en kontekstuele ekklesiologie ('n prakties-teologiese ekklesiologie'). As sodanig sal dit die groei- en kwynpatrone in die SKKe kan help verklaar en die basis lê vir gebalanseerde groei in die kerke.

Hoofstuk IV handel oor 'n teoretiese basis vir die studie: 'n prakties-teologiese ekklesiologie word bespreek aan die hand van 'n vier-fase prakties-teologiese metodologie. Dit bestaan uit beskrywende, verduidelikende, normatiewe en strategiese fases.

Die daaropvolgende hoofstukke handel oor die vier fases. Die groei in die SKKe word aan die hand daarvan ontleed. Daar word aangetoon in watter mate die heersende ekklesiologie in die SKKe tot die akkommodering van dominante kultuurpatrone en ideologieë aanleiding gegee het. Sekulêre en godsdienstige ideologieë is sonder kritiesteologiese refleksie geakkommodeer. Dit het gesonde groei in die kerke oor die lang termyn gesaboteer en aanleiding gegee tot die heersende daling in lidmaatgroei. Ten slotte word 'n "trinitariese praxis ekklesiologie" as 'n nuwe metodologiese benadering in

die SKKe voorgestel wat 'n krities-konstruktiewe rol kan speel om die kerke weer te help

om gebalanseerd te ontwikkel.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CPD: Center for Parish Development

GOCN: Gospel and Our Culture Network

KHC: Korean Holiness Church

KMC: Korean Methodist Church

KNCC: Korean National Christian Council

NAE: National Assoiation of Evangelicals

PCKH: Presbyterian Church in Korea (Hapdong)

PCKK: Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koshin)

PCKT: Presbyterian Church in Korea (Tonghap)

PCROK: Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (Kijang)

PTCS: Project Team for Congregational Studies

SKCs: South Korean Churches

WCC: World Council of Churches

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in the South Korean Churches

CHAPTER I.   Introduction

1.1 Problem

The South Korean Churches (SKCs)[1] experienced rapid growth in membership for more than two decades after 1960 and was proud of this astronomical growth. The Christian church throughout the world was also astonished at the rapid growth of the SKCs. C Peter Wagner, a professor at the School of World Mission and the Institute of Church Growth, affirmed this trend of the SKCs and in several of his works predicted continuous membership growth. He stated emphatically that:

> Worldwide one of the flash points of church growth is Korea. One hundred years ago there were no Christians in Korea. Now Christians make up almost 30 percent of the population and should be over 50 percent by the end of 1980s (Wagner 1984:50).

But ironically the growth trend started to slow down after 1984, the very year that Wagner made his predictions. Over the past decade there has been a declining trend in growth; in fact, an absolute decline became apparent in 1993. A recent report of church statistics shows the church membership growth rate as follows (Ro 1995:40; cf Table 3 in this dissertation): 1989: 9,0%; 1990: 5,8%; 1991: 3,9%; 1992: 0,6%; 1993: -4,0%. This report so shocked the SKCs that an inquiry was instigated into why the miraculous rise had turned so quickly into a slide.

The significance of this declining trend has been vigorously debated by the SKCs. Although a considerable amount has been written recently dealing with the issue of membership trends, the descriptions and interpretations have tended to be stereotypical and inadequate. A deeper and wider interpretation of membership decline is therefore

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[1] By 'the South Korean churches' is meant mainly the Protestant churches in South Korea.

required.

Another issue is the way the SKCs are reacting to their membership decline at present; their response is comparable to that of most North American churches in similar crisis situations:

> The typical North American response to our situation is to analyze the problem and find a solution. These solutions tend to be methodological. Arrange all the components of the church landscape differently, and many assume that the problem can be solved. Or use the best demographic or psychological or sociological insights, and one can redesign the church for success in our changing context. All it takes, it would seem, is money, talent, time, and commitment (Guder 1998:2).

Most Korean churches are trying to find a way to check the decline. There are widespread movements committed to reversing the trend, such as the seekers' church movement, the mission movement, the diakonia movement, the ecumenical movement, and the church renewal movement. But our critique is that their remedial actions are ineffective: the same problems that confronted the churches previously are still evident in the current movements. Therefore, the movements are both short-sighted in practical terms and theologically questionable.

Light can be shed on the decline of the SKCs by pondering the following questions:

1. When did the membership decline start? What are the noteworthy factors in the membership trends of the SKCs?

1.1 Which denominations or groups are showing the most dramatic decline?

1.2 Which denominations or groups are still growing?

2. Why is membership declining in the SKCs?

2.1 How do the SKCs interpret their decline?

2.2 What are the weak points in their interpretations?

2.3 Which theory or model is likely to be the most appropriate for interpretations of this subject?

2.4 What are the prominent problems facing the SKCs at present? How can an inquiry discover the fundamental causes of these problems?

3. How can these problems be solved and a theologically sound growth of the

SKCs be re-instated?

3.1 What are the SKCs doing to halt the decline?

3.2 In what ways are their reactions open to criticism?

3.3 What alternative is there to ensure the healthy growth of the SKCs in the Korean context?

1.2 Method

Descriptive, explanatory or exploratory answers will be given to the above questions. Generally speaking, these answers are given from a faith perspective, theologically and sociologically. A 'faith-perspective' implies the basic assumption of this study: belief in the Triune God who revealed Himself in Jesus Christ and gave His Word, the Bible. 'Theologically' means, in particular, that practical theology informs the main research method. 'Sociologically' implies that the results of social scientific studies relevant to this research will be used.

The realities of the SKCs, which include growth and decline in church membership, can be distinguished on two levels: the macro level and the micro level. The macro level refers to the church insofar as it finds itself in the national, international and global environment: it includes the Churches' relation to the American churches situated in a central position in the world religious order; to the nation-state; to civil society; and to other religions and denominations with which they are competing in the religious market situation. The micro level has to do with the church insofar as it has developed in the local, regional environment, as well as its history. The church is influenced by religious traditions and ideologies, power structures within the church and related conflicts, characteristics of church organisation, characteristics of church leadership, and the social status and class of the majority of church members (Kang 1996:26-35; cf Van der Ven 1993a:xii).

The realities of the church can be understood more clearly by analysing them at both levels. The church at the macro level cannot be regarded separately from what happens on the micro level. The reverse also applies (Van der Ven 1993a:xii).

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However, it is impossible for this study to deal with all the elements of the two levels. At the macro level, the focus is on the American churches' influence on the SKCs and the Churches' relation to the socio-political, religious, and cultural situations in Korea. At the micro level, questions of denominational ethos, tradition, theology and political propensity are considered.

The theological methodology used in this study follows practical theology. The social sciences are thus used - but critically. This means that the research tools and findings of the empirical sciences are adapted to shed light on theological questions, aims and norms. Proposing a revised (critical) correlation method in theological studies, Tracy (1983:77-78) argues that theologians must exercise theological discernment to criticise the social sciences. Firstly, theology must preserve a critical distance from the social sciences and must also liberate people from the bondage of ideologies which hold captive the social sciences, as well as theology itself.

1.3 Hypothesis

This dissertation takes its title 'Ecclesiology and Membership Trends in the South Korean Churches' from the author's belief that the recent decline in the membership of the SKCs is the outcome of their dominant ecclesiology. Hence there is a need to analyse and interpret, ecclesiologically, the reasons for the rapid numerical growth of the SKCs over two decades until the mid-1980s. There is also a need to investigate whether it was this very ecclesiology which occasioned the end of this phenomenal increase and caused the decline after 1984; whether, in fact, the SKCs are reaping what they sowed.

It is difficult to prove that the ecclesiology of the SKCs has had a direct bearing on membership trends. The link between the ecclesiology of a church and the size of its membership is not decisive. It will be found that the reasons behind membership growth or decline in the SKCs actually lie in a complex set of influences.

However, what can be investigated is the ecclesiology which the SKCs embraced during the period of growth, and also during the time of decline in membership. The investigation aims to determine where the dominant ecclesiology originated and to discover the theological or sociological trends that formed this ecclesiology. Indications will emerge that the dominant ecclesiology resulted in a loss of the Churches' credibility in society, which in turn was an important reason for the dwindling in membership. It follows that the ecclesiology of the SKCs requires urgent attention.

It is not suggested that a renewal in ecclesiology will necessarily attract members once more. In spite of a reformed ecclesiology, the SKCs might still experience a 'plateau phenomenon' - the attainment of a limit.

The problem facing the SKCs would appear to stem from the following considerations:

1. The rapid numerical growth of the SKCs in the 1970s and 1980s did not promote growth towards spiritual maturity but rather impeded it. At the time the growth of the SKCs was unhealthy and unbalanced.
2. The explanations of the recent membership decline presented by the SKCs are in general desultory and quite inadequate. The explanations should be integrated into a comprehensive examination of the decline.
3. The SKCs' reactions to the decline tended to look for quick solutions and an immediate recovery. Many trends reflect this desire for a ready-made, programmatic answer, which does not involve change at a deeper level.
4. The fundamental problem facing the SKCs is that they have lacked critical self-reflection. In other words, this study argues that the problems facing the SKCs have been caused by a lack of a sound practical theological methodology.
5. The SKCs' lack of a practical theological methodology is the outcome of their imitation of American ecclesiological models without employing any critical distance or sound theological reflection. The American ecclesiological models that the SKCs copied seemed to suit the Korean situation during a certain period but eventually proved to be inadequate, because of their own inherent flaws and a changing global and Korean situation.

Hence, the central argument of this study is: *the development and application of a sound*

practical theological methodology will lead to the development of a biblical and contextual ecclesiology ('practical theological ecclesiology') which will explain the growth and decline in the SKCs and point to a new direction for healthy growth.

This argument draws on the following hypotheses:

1. Membership trends can be studied in a balanced way only if theology is supported by the input and insight provided from other disciplines, most notably: sociology, economics, psychology, history, and political science (Hendriks 1995:36).
2. A thorough and sound interpretation of the membership trends of the SKCs also needs a comparative study of Western and American churches. Such a comparative study will throw some light on theories of church growth for the world church, as well as for the churches in the West and in Korea.
3. To explain the recent membership decline in the SKCs the variables in contextual and institutional factors affecting that decline will be considered.
4. The membership question is not simply a matter of statistics. The healthy growth of the church is hardly the simple sum of numbers (Coalter, Mulder & Weeks 1990a:27).
5. Diagnosing the problem facing the SKCs and proposing a new direction should be considered within historical and contextual background.

1.4 Aim

The aim of this study is to propose a helpful direction for the development of growth studies in the SKCs through the following two endeavours. Firstly, the study provides a practical theological approach as a sound theological method for church growth studies that would assist the SKCs to know God truly and be His witness in the Korean situation. By means of this method the reasons behind the recent numerical decline in the SKCs will be investigated and their ecclesiological problems will be analysed.

Then, a tentative ecclesiological model will be briefly proposed which may help the SKCs to cope with their ecclesiological problems and to proceed in a new direction for healthy

growth in the light of a practical theological ecclesiology. 'Tentative' means that such a model may play a constructive role in transforming the SKCs in their particular situation, but not all churches in South Korea should accept the model. The SKCs are too multi-faceted to be subsumed under one model. Instead, it is to be hoped that the numbers of churches appropriating this model will increase in the SKCs. Such churches may stimulate the SKCs to rediscover the meaning of the Gospel today in the Korean context. These churches could eventually encourage the SKCs to become refreshed and revitalized. This study does not, however, describe in detail the contents and strategies of church ministry that the model concretely employs.

1.5 Delimitation

The area of study will be the SKCs in general. Thus this study does not deal in depth with specific denominations or denominational families. No attempt will be made to focus on the congregational level. Instead, this study focuses upon the general trends or grand common movements of the SKCs related to their membership trends and ecclesiological traits. It is certain that the study of such ecclesial megatrends has the danger of generalisation that disregards diversity and pluralistic traits in the SKCs. However, anyone who wants to understand something of the SKCs, needs to see and understand the grand or general movements of Korean religious and ecclesial cultures, which have affected the life of virtually every congregation.

In the case of the SKCs there are some reasons why the danger of generalisation is reduced. The Korean people consist of a sinlgle people and has their own unique language (Han-Guhl). Korea is a monocultural country, which is very different from the USA or South Africa. As discussed later in this dissertation (see: pp 145-155); Korea demonstrates a high degree of cultural and social homogeneity, perhaps because of its mono-ethnic population as well as its small geographical size, which has led to a more or less uniform, centralised value system. Furthermore, Korean religious culture can be defined as syncretic. It is distinguishable from the pluralistic religious situation in the USA, where competitive, mutual tolerance of different faiths is the norm. All religions in Korea have

blended into a synthetic whole in the spiritual life of the people (cf Chung 1982:624-625). This predominant syncretic feature of Korean religiosity has greatly influenced the uniformity of the SKCs (see: pp153-155 in this dissertation). For example, in Korea, the conservative evangelical churches[2] show great similarity, not only in their religious system and polity, but also in their doctrines, confessions and religious inclinations. Denominational boundaries are tending, therefore, to disintegrate more and more. It is no exaggeration to say that a clear distinction hardly exists among them, apart from the difference in their names. This makes it very easy for a member to change denomination and church. It also makes it difficult to define and clearly analyse the membership trends at a denominational level. In brief, in this study an attempt will be made at a general analysis of the denominational membership trends and the dominant ecclesiology of the SKCs by comparing churches in the major denominations or denominational families in the SKCs.

Two factors hamper the reliability of this study (cf Hendriks 1995:36-37). For the descriptive part of the study use will be made of the census reports published by the government as well as membership trends by denominations and some institutions. The unreliability of the data and statistics imposes a limitation. It must be recognised that the census data relating to church membership is always inflated. For this reason American sociologists ignore church statistics. These inflation errors are more serious for membership statistics than for attendance counts. Membership statistics are inflated because many denominations have no accepted procedure for deciding when to purge inactive members from church rolls. Denominations also differ in their interpretation of membership (Hadaway, Marler & Chaves 1993:743). In the Korean situation, in which church members frequently move to other congregations thereby becoming affiliated with several congregations, it is even more difficult to rely on church statistics. Nevertheless, there is no other option but to use the statistics, because it is far more difficult to collect church attendance data. Research of longitudinal trends in the SKCs can partly decrease this statistical unreliability.

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[2] Even though there are many denominations and denominational families in the SKCs, these can be divided broadly into four groups: conservative evangelicals, moderate evangelicals, liberal Protestants, and other Christians. The conservative evangelicals are in the majority in the SKCs (see: p 125 in this dissertation). Korean conservative evangelicalism includes conservative Presbyterian churches, conservative Methodist churches, Baptist churches, and Pentecostalists, as classified by Noll, Bebbington & Rawlyk (1994).

The reliability of the explanatory and the exploratory parts of this dissertation could be compromised by human fallacy. It is not easy to move beyond the boundary of personal presuppositions, theological preference and the tendency to reductionism, and to transcend individual stories. To help curb these limitations, a multi-disciplinary approach is used. In this practical theological study, the results and methods of other social sciences, such as sociology, the sociology of religion and history are critically incorporated.

1.6 Conceptualisation

The mainline churches refer to the Presbyterian and Methodist churches in Korea. They were founded by the early missionaries sent from the USA Presbyterian and Methodist churches in the late 19th Century. Till now these two denominations have constituted the majority of the Korean Church (about 70% of all Korean Protestants). According to church statistics in 1995, about 63% of the mainline churches consist of conservative evangelicals (non-KNCC), about 33% are moderate evangelicals, and the rest are liberals[3].

Church growth is used in a general sense. It is defined along the lines of Loren Mead's (1993) *More than numbers.* Church growth is more than numerical growth. It implies the holistic concept of growth: maturational, organic and incarnational as well as numerical.

Numerical growth / decline or **membership growth / decline** is used when referring to the statistical side of church membership. **Membership trends** is the blanket term for both numerical growth and decline over a period of time.

Church growth studies include a research methodology on the one hand, and theories of ministry and strategy on the other, used to analyse the reality of a particular church in terms of church growth and to promote healthy church growth.

By **practical ecclesiology** or **practical theological ecclesiology** is meant an approach to formulating a contextual systematic theory of what the church is and should do. A

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[3] These statistics are calculated from Table 8 and Table 11 in this dissertation.

practical theological ecclesiology is often called the base theory of church ministry. Heyns (1992:324-325) defines practical ecclesiology as the study of the functioning of the church in its specific context. Effective functioning depends on the dynamic relationship between the actions of the church and the way in which these actions are structured. Practical ecclesiology, thus, deals with the actions and the structures of the church. The actions generally refer to the spheres of church ministry: worship, preaching, instruction, care and social service. Although Heyns' definition is accepted, it needs to place more weight on the dynamic relationship between the church, the world and the Gospel. In this regard, practical ecclesiology includes ecclesiological hermeneutics which determines whether an ecclesiological model plays a constructive role in relation to the Gospel and the context, or not. Further, practical ecclesiology helps the church to seek ecclesiological models faithful to God's calling in its present contextual situation. Accordingly, practical theological ecclesiology is a crucial aspect of practical theology, integrated with our concept of church growth studies (defined above).

Ecclesiology is a general term which represents the doctrine and theology of the church or the comprehensive understanding of the church's nature, ministry, and organisation (Van der Ven 1993a:x).

Practical theology in this study is not used to convey an applied theology that aims merely to effectively utilise theories constructed by theoretical theologies such as philosophical, systematic or historical theology. Instead, the concept is viewed in this study along the lines of the contemporary "practical theology movement" which has stemmed from a reflection on the nature and task of theology and has led to a reformation of theological thinking. Theology is biblical, practical, theoretical, contextual, eschatological and hermeneutical in its nature. The direction of theological reformation should be to recover '*theologia*' -- theology as *habitus* and science (Farley 1983a). As viewed by Hodgson (1994:35), practical theology points to a constructive theology, which attains ongoing dialogue between the critical-interpretive and practical-appropriate modes of thinking. In this dissertation practical theology is viewed as the core method of theological thinking or reasoning for church growth studies as well as for this study.

The Fuller church growth movement model is the term used for the ecclesiological model developed by McGavran and his followers. This model influenced the SKCs

considerably. The movement is sociological, missional and evangelical-charismatic in its nature.

The congregational studies movement is the movement initiated by James Hopewell (1987). The movement has developed under the leadership of **the Project Team for Congregational Studies (PTCS)**, which is an informal coalition of scholars and researchers, who are sharing an interest in congregations and driving common projects. By the time of writing their latest book, *Studying congregation* (Ammerman 1998), the PTCS consisted of the following eleven members: Carl S Dudley, William McKinney, Jackson W Carroll, Nancy T Ammerman, Barbara G Wheeler, Nancy L Eiesland, Ardith S Hayes, Lawrence Mamiya, Robert Schreiter, R Stephen Warner and Jack Wertheimer. Former PTCS members include Rebecca Chopp, William Hamilton Holway, James F Hopewell, Mary C Mattis and Loren B Mead (Nieder-Heitmann 1999:51). Mainline in their denominational orientation, they are primarily concerned with the sociology of religion, and form a strong academic guild that meets annually with the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Association. They study membership trends and other congregational phenomena by using positively the disciplines of the social sciences.

The Alban Institute, a church consultant institution, was founded in 1974 by Loren B Mead and a core group of individuals committed to discovering what makes a congregation a supportive and empowering environment for ministry. A 1991 promotional brochure describes the mission of the Alban Institute as follows: "The Alban Institute works to encourage vigorous, faithful congregations that can equip the people of God to minister within their faith communities and in the world. To assist those who lead or care for congregations, The Institute gathers, generates, and shares practical knowledge across denominational lines through action research, consulting, publications, and education" (quoted by Dietterich, I T 1991:34).

The Gospel and Our Culture Network (GOCN) emerged in North America in the late 1980s as the continuation of the Gospel and Culture discussion initiated in Great Britain during 1983 by Bishop Lesslie Newbigin's *The other side of 1984: questions for the churches* (Guder 1998:3). This Network consists of theologians from Reformed, Methodist, Baptists, and Anabaptist traditions, such as Lois Barrett, Inagrace T Dietterich,

Darrell L Guder, George R Hunsberger, Alan J Roxburgh, Craig Van Gelder and Milton J Coalter. As theologians of Protestant traditions, they have been guided by a shared conviction that the Scriptures are the normative and authoritative witness to God's mission and its unfolding in human history (:10-11). Under this shared conviction they advocate the need for a theological revolution in missional thinking that centres the body of Christ on God's mission rather than on post-Christendom's concern for the church's institutional maintenance. They thus propose a missional ecclesiology for the future of the church in the USA (:7).

The Center for Parish Development (CPD) founded in the USA in 1968 is an ecumenical "research-based church consulting, teaching, and training agency" (Dietterich, I T 1991:46). Its research methodology seeks "to build upon, incorporate, test, and contribute to the ongoing critical interrelationship of the social sciences and the theological disciplines" (Ibid). The Center aims to provides a range of the following services to help churches become more faithful and effective in ministry and mission: research, consulting, teaching, and resourcing. Its consulting services, in particular, are curriculum driven: they are grounded in an educational approach to organisational transformation. They make use of biblical and theological materials, change theory, and skills training in strategic management, all of which are constantly being tested, integrated, and revised in order to strengthen them (Ibid). The Center's staff members include Paul M Dietterich (Executive Director of the Center), Inagrace T Dietterich (Director of Theological Research for the Center), Raymond C Schulte, and Dale A Ziemer.

A trinitarian praxial ecclesiology is the alternative ecclesiological model that we propose for the sound growth of the SKCs. By 'trinitarian' is meant that the distinctive nature and mission of the church is led by "the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a minstry in which the church is privileged to participate" (Bosch 1991:392). Hence, this ecclesiology is theocentric. This theocentric ecclesiology implies that the Trinity as a community encourages church unity. 'Praxial' implies that this ecclesiology emphasises the praxis of the church as well as that of the Triune God (concerning 'praxis', see: pp 92-93 in this dissertation).

1.7 Structure and Development

Chapter II reveals that the SKCs have been greatly influenced by the USA churches throughout its entire history. This implies that the dominant ecclesiology in the USA churches has deeply affected the formation of the SKCs' ecclesiology.

Chapter III deals with the critical, theological self-reflection of the American churches on their dominant ecclesiological models and their fundamental theological flaws, which have ultimately prevented the churches from sound engagement with a changing situation. This critical reflection has encouraged the church to reconstruct "an ecclesiology with a practical theological perspective" (a practical ecclesiology).

Chapter IV constructs a practical ecclesiology, which provides a four-phased methodology for a more comprehensive understanding of and a new direction for church growth: descriptive, explanatory, normative, and strategic phases.

By redescribing the realities of growth in the SKCs from multi-dimensional angles, Chapter V aims to investigate various factors which have affected the Churches' growth and membership trends [the descriptive phase].

Chapter VI explains that the unhealthy membership growth of the SKCs is closely related to a root problem inherent within their dominant ecclesiology. The root problem lies in their uncritical engagement with the dominant Korean and American cultures of secularism and modernism and in the lack of a deliberate critical, theological reflection on those cultures [the explanatory phase].

Chapter VII proposes an alternative but tentative ecclesiological model as a possible new direction that will lead towards the healthy growth of the SKCs [the normative phase]. The proposal also includes the planning of some basic strategies through which the model can function faithfully and effectively [part of the strategic phase].

CHAPTER II. A Historical Reflection on the Growth of the South Korean Churches (SKCs)

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter the history of the Korean Church[4] is reinterpreted in terms of church growth. In addition, the SKCs' reactions to their recent membership decline are briefly described. This chapter aims to depict the historical fact that the USA church had a great influence on the growth pattern of the SKCs and their ecclesiology.

2.2 A Short History, from a Church Growth Perspective, of the Korean Church until 1987

While the growth of the Korean Church should be investigated historically, it is not necessary to deal fully with its history. Hence a short history of the SKCs, which focuses upon church growth, follows.

'Church growth', as used in a general sense, does not mean merely numerical growth but the holistic concept of growth. The so-called holistic church growth theory is strongly recommended by missiologist Orlando E Costas (1974, 1983) and church consultant Loren B Mead (1993).

Both Costas (1983:102-103) and Mead (1993) stress the multidimensional nature of that growth. They classify church growth according to four dimensions:

1) Numerical (quantitative) Growth is the membership increase experienced by the church through the proclamation and living witness of the Gospel and the incorporation of those who respond to the fellowship of a local congregation.
2) Conceptual (maturational, reflective, mental, or qualitative) Growth involves the

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[4] By the Korean Church is meant the Christian church as a whole in Korea.

deepening of the church's self-understanding and its knowledge of the faith, including its understanding of the Scriptures, the historical development of Christian doctrine, and the world in which it lives and ministers. Conceptual Growth aims at the sound understanding of the Gospel in context.

3) Organic Growth is the designation given to the internal development of the community of faith, enabling the maintenance of the congregation as a living organism and an institution that can engage with the other institutions of society.

4) Incarnational (diaconial) Growth is the intensity of the service the church renders to the world as a concrete demonstration of God's redemptive love.

Both Costas (1983:105-106) and Mead (1993:v-vi) concur in that all the members of a congregation are called to growth which is as comprehensive as possible in all dimensions. Therefore, the healthy growth of the church is accomplished by integrating the four dimensions referred to above.

The view of holistic church growth provides a point of view by which church history can be written, since this view can be used as a hermeneutical framework for sound interpretations and evaluation of growth.

Special attention is given to the growth of the Protestant church in Korea in this writing of a general history of Christianity in Korea. This section aims, then, at a historical investigation into four dimensions of growth in the Korean Protestant church. The Catholic church in Korea will also be briefly dealt with, however.

2.2.1 The Early Catholic Church in Korea (1780-1910)

The Catholic church in Korea was first established in the 1780s by a small group of political literati called *Sohak (Shilhak)* scholars, a term meaning those who practised 'Western Learning'. Since they had a deep interest in Catholicism which had already been introduced in China, they began to study for themselves Matteo Ricci's *Tianzhu* (The True Doctrine of the Lord of Heaven), with hopes of learning about Western civilisation. Soon they began to discuss with friends and neighbours the new faith gleaned from the Catholic

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literature, thereby laying the foundations of the Catholic church in Korea. These early Catholic Christians devoted themselves to the new faith: they abandoned all 'pagan' rites, and preached Catholicism openly, instructing their converts in the catechism and giving them Christian baptism, without any help from missionaries or priests. Their devotion resulted in the rapid spread of Catholicism among intellectual circles in Korea (Kim, A E 1995:35).

The early Catholic Christians, however, suffered severe persecution from most intellectuals and government officials who believed that Catholicism was a threat to the basis of a Confucian society. The most controversial issue at the time was the question of *chesa*, the Confucian ritual of ancestor worship. The Catholics considered *chesa* to be an act of idolatry prohibited by God in the First Commandment. Many Christians who refused to perform *chesa* were put in prison or sentenced to death by the conservative Confucian government. Nevertheless, the Catholic church grew impressively, increasing its membership from four thousand in 1795 to ten thousand by 1801 (:36).

Furthermore, the involvement of some Catholic elites in factious politics resulted in the ruling party's official stance against Catholicism. Even the five severe persecutions of the government -- the Shinyu persecution (1801), the Ulhae persecution (1815), the Chonghae persecution (1827), the Kihae persecution (1839) and the Bongo persecution (1846) -- could not prevent Catholicism from growing: in 1857, there were 15,206 Catholics in Korea. This shows clearly that the Korean Catholic church grew steadily during the years of persecution (:36-37).

The last and most severe persecution of the Catholics (the Bongin persecution) was carried out from 1866 to 1873 by Taewon-gun (1820-1898), the Prince Regent. At the time, Korea faced invasions from three foreign military powers: the Russian Empire, France, and the United States. The Prince Regent, who led the anti-foreign faction in the State Council, persecuted Catholics fanatically. Because of numerous coastal confrontations between Korea and the Western powers during that period, Christianity became identified with the Western 'gunboat diplomacy', and foreign Catholic missionaries, who were residing illegally in Korea, were regarded as agents of foreign powers (:37-38).

In 1873, Taewon-gun was removed and King Kojong became the king in his own right.

From the beginning, the reign of King Kojong was troubled by a series of internal and external conflicts, which resulted in the undermining of the stability of the whole of Korea. These troubles did, however, allow the Catholic church a little more freedom from persecution (:38). In the 1870s and 1880s the Korean Catholic church enjoyed significant growth in many areas, as well as in its membership; these areas included the education of priests, the printing of the Bible, prayer books, missals and Catholic literature, and the care of orphans and the aged. By the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Catholic church had not only penetrated every part of Korea, but had also spread to some regions of Manchuria, China, where many Koreans lived. The 1900 figures show that the Korean Catholic church had 41 churches, 52 priests and 42,441 believers. These figures are remarkable, particularly in the light of the severe persecution which the church suffered for over a hundred years, during which about ten thousand Catholic followers were martyred (:38; Rhee 1995:228)

During the first decade of the twentieth century when Japanese dominance in Korea was increasing, the neutral attitude of the Korean Catholic church allowed the church to sustain her numerical growth. This attitude stemmed from the Vatican's policy which inclined more toward a passive acceptance of the impending Japanese rule. According to Catholic statistics in 1910, there were 69 churches, 71 priests, 59 sisters and 73,517 believers (Kim, A E 1995:38). The Catholic church's neutral attitude to Japanese rule, which had been continued until Korea was liberated from Japan in 1945, eventually arrested her numerical growth. This attitude was in contrast to the Korean Protestant church, which attempted to protest against Japanese rule (cf Kim, S K 1991).

2.2.2 Protestant Beginnings in Korea (1884-1910)

Before missionary work in Korea was carried out actively by American missionaries, the Christian Gospel had been transmitted to the Korean people by various channels. A few European missionaries had visited Korea briefly and had given some Korean people copies of part of the Bible translated into Chinese.

John Ross and John McIntyre, Scottish missionaries who worked in Manchuria, started to

translate the New Testament into Korean in 1875, and the following year baptised a dozen Koreans. In 1882 the Gospel according to Luke was published, in 1883 the Gospels of Matthew and Mark and Acts, and in 1887 eventually the whole of the New Testament. It was between 1882 and 1884 that the first portions of the Korean translation of the New Testament were being circulated in Korea. At the same time, one of the early Korean Protestants, Soe Sang-Yoon, who helped the missionaries to translate the Bible into Korean, moved with his brother into Sorae, a region in the central-west part of Korea, and formed a small Christian community: the first Protestant church in Korea. Seo also introduced the Christian Gospel to people by going around selling the Korean copies of the Bible (Kim, Y J 1992:59-65). It was outstanding that a Bible-centered and lay-orientated local church was born before the missionaries initiated and organised their work (Brown 1997:13).

During the same period in Japan, Yi Su-Jong translated part of the Bible into Korean, and built the Korean Church in Tokyo. The early American missionaries could thus enter Korea with the Korean version of the Bible (Kim, Y J 1992:65-66; Yi 1998:95).

The major impetus for missionary work in Korea came from the United States. The first evangelistic agencies to begin missionary work in Korea were the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church (Northern) and the Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) in the USA. The organisations started their work simultaneously in Korea, operating their missions side by side and cooperating to some degree (Kim, A E 1995:39).

In September of 1884, Allen, a medical doctor sent by the Presbyterian Church in the USA, arrived in Seoul, the Korean capital, and became the first Protestant missionary to enter Korea. Dr Allen, as a doctor of the Korean royal court, enjoyed the King's confidence and had a profound impact on missionary work in Korea. He built the first Westernised general hospital in Seoul named Kwanghyewon, in 1885 (Kim, Y J 1992:67). On Easter Sunday in 1885, the first ordained missionaries sent from the two mission boards in the USA arrived in Korea: the Methodist Henry G Appenzeller (1858-1902) and the Presbyterian Horace G Underwood (1859-1916).

Over the next decade, missionaries from other mission bodies successively came into

Korea: Plymouth Brethren in 1886, Presbyterian Church of Victoria in Australia in 1889, Canadian Baptists in 1889, Church of England in 1890, Presbyterian Church (South) in the US in 1892, Canadian Presbyterian in 1893, Methodist Episcopal Church (South) in the USA in 1896, Seventh Day Adventists in 1904 and the Salvation Army in 1908 (Kim, Y J 1992:68-71; Kim, A E 1995:39).

During this period, the openness of the young progressive Korean intellectuals to Western ideas and their desire to acquire Western knowledge prompted missionaries to view Korea as fertile ground for missionary work. Since there remained a degree of hostility towards the foreign religion, however, direct evangelisation of the populace was difficult; hence, institutional work, i.e. medical and educational works, preceded evangelism. The missionaries provided many vital medical services, particularly for the poor and women, and built many Western hospitals. The Methodist missionaries especially stressed education. Rev Appenzeller opened the first school (Paejae Haktang) in 1886 to teach boys English. In the same year Mrs Scranton started the Ehwa Girl's School, which was developed into a college (1910) and, later, into one of the largest women's universities in the world. Presbyterian missionaries also soon established schools of their own. By 1910, there were some 800 Christian schools spread all over Korea and accommodating over 41,000 students, which was about twice the total enrolment in all Korean government schools. The missionaries also opened orphanages (Brown 1997:23). They also actively participated in the translation of the Bible and other literary works into the Korean language (Kim, A E 1995:40-41).

Thus the missionaries obtained people's confidence through their involvement in medical service and education, which in turn had a positive influence on evangelisation. Moreover, the evangelistic work was enhanced by the adoption of the Nevius Method which emphasised self-support, self-propagation, self-government and independence of the church. While this method was not popular either in China or in Japan, it was widely accepted by the missionaries of the Northern Presbyterian Church in Korea after Dr Nevius (1829-1893) visited Seoul and taught it to them in 1890. The method laid great stress on the Bible study class system, the church's self-determination, and the need for natives to carry on the evangelistic work (Kim, A E 1995:40; Hunt 1991). W N Blair (quoted by Brown 1997:31) says "more than anything else, Bible classes accounted for the rapid growth and revival of the Korean Church". The early Korean Protestants enjoyed

attending Bible classes and conferences, lasting from four to ten days, and held annually in most churches (Yoo 1987:61). They were also earnest evangelists: as Nelson (1995:248) noted, they often travelled away from home on evangelistic trips, but more often they led people to Christ in their own villages through individual evangelism.

The beginning of the twentieth century, which was marked by increasing Japanese dominance in Korea, was a period of impressive growth for Protestant churches in Korea. In 1901, Pyung-Yang Theological Seminary was opened by the Presbyterian Council. The seminary was composed of the four participating Presbyterian missions and its theology was related to the so-called 'old school' of Princeton Theological Seminary (Conn 1966). It taught above all the verbal inspiration of the Bible. Later, the seminary followed Gresham Machen's line, namely Fundamentalism (Brown 1997:40).

Within the Protestant churches, intra-denominational and inter-denominational cooperation and coordination increased significantly during this period. 'The Committee for Translating the Bible' into the Korean Language was organised by the early missionaries in 1887, and finished translating the whole Bible into Korean in 1910. In 1905, the four Presbyterian missions and the two Methodist missions created one council, called 'the General Council of Protestant Evangelical Mission in Korea', for conference and advice on questions of common interest. The General Council aimed at not only cooperation in missionary works but also the constitution of the united evangelical church in Korea. A church newspaper (The Christian News) was jointly issued, common hymns were sung, educational and medical works were also united, common textbooks for Sunday School were published, and youth mission was coordinated. To prevent the churches from competing with one another for members in the same areas, the General Council arrived at a final agreement in 1909 regarding the division of territory among the missions. The agreement was kept for nearly 30 years (The Institute of Korean Church History 1989:194-218). Such cooperation and coordination were made possible by a common cultural background and theological framework. The early missionaries were inspired by the so-called modern missionary movement, with its typical Biblical and ideological assumptions, motivation and concern. They were revivalists and conservative evangelicals, who shared an urgency and a call to preach and teach the Gospel to the heathen, those who were lost and had to be saved by Christ before He returned (Brown 1997:21; cf Yoo 1987:42-55).

Such ecumenical endeavours were strengthened by a phenomenal event in the early Korean Church: it was the Great Revival of 1907, which arose in the midst of great 'despair and deep national humiliation', before the Japanese annexation.

> The old foundations had been shaken, and the old order was passing. ... National humiliation induced melancholy and the intense hatred of the unconquerable enemy produced a deep sense of fear. Thus the problem of the Korean people was at bottom a spiritual one (Yoo 1987:74).

In such hopeless circumstances the Korean Christians were seeking new hope from God. The new hope was associated with the American missionaries who were filled with 'Puritanical zeal and Wesleyan fervor' at their Bible conferences and prayer meetings. The Great Revival, begun in January 1907 in Pyung-Yang, gained new impetus to become a nationwide revival movement. Revival meetings were held throughout the country. Wherever there were Christians, the revival experiences were repeated: they bitterly repented their sins, experienced the fire of the Holy Spirit burning their sins, renewed their lives and gained new hope from God. They gathered at the church to fervently pray together and to study the Bible, and then scattered to spread the Gospel. The subsequent result fully demonstrated the genuineness of the movement. This was the spiritual rebirth of the Korean Church, a phenomenon that is still regarded as the source of the spiritual life of the Korean Church today (:74-85).

The Great Revival intensified the passion of the renewed people for winning souls and grew into a nationwide evangelistic movement, called 'the Million Movement', which was launched in 1909-1910 (:89-90). The movement aimed at a speedy mass evangelisation of the whole country. According to the slogan, 'a million souls for Christ', the whole church participated in the campaign with faith and unparalleled enthusiasm. As W M Baird put it, "the Gospel was preached as never before, all over Korea. We do not know how many were saved, but we do know that a great multitude have been persuaded to enter the churches and express a desire to believe" (quoted by Yoo 1987:93).

The impressive growth of the Korean Protestant church was also articulated by the establishment of the first presbytery of the Korean Presbyterian Church. On September 17, 1907, thirty-three foreign missionaries and thirty-six Korean elders constituted the Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Korea. The first seven theological graduates were ordained at the first Presbytery (The Institute of Korean Church History Studies

1989:284). At the time, under the Presbytery there were 7 Korean ministers, 53 elders, 989 congregations, 19,000 communicants and 70,000 believers (Yoo 1987:99-100). In September 1912 the Presbytery formed a General Assembly with 7 presbyteries. At the time there were 65 Korean ministers, 225 elders, 224 helpers, 2,054 congregations, 53,088 communicants, and 144,260 believers (Brown 1997:50).

The North Methodist Mission organised the Korea Annual Conference in Seoul in 1908 and the South Methodist Mission in 1918. The two conferences were united into one body in 1930 (The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1989:288).

During the period of Protestant beginnings the membership trends of the Protestant church in Korea showed rapid growth: 250 believers (1890); 18,081 (1900); 167,352 (1910) (:261).

In brief, this period in the Korean Church demonstrates healthy growth in all dimensions: in membership, in the development of faith, in cooperative mission work, and in diaconial services for the people. Though the Christians numbered around one percent of the whole population in 1910, their influence was felt in society. In spite of its minority status, the Korean Church at the time was, in a real sense, the light in a dark age.

2.2.3 The Church in the Japanese Colonial Period (1910-1945)

The Korean Church entered a new era when Korea was annexed by the Japanese in 1910. The Japanese administrative policy toward the Korean Church was seemingly friendly at first but gradually developed into an open policy of oppression and hostility since the Church was assumed to be the political agent of the Western powers (Kim, A E 1995:42). The church was in fact the most powerful organisation in Korea and appeared to be protected by Western missionaries. It thus became the first target of Japanese persecution.

One fabricated incident by which the Japanese authority attempted to weaken the Korean Church was the Conspiracy Trial of 1912. On a fabricated charge -- the planned assassination of the Japanese governor-general, Terauchi Masatake -- the government

arrested and tortured hundreds of teachers and students. Finally, 122 persons were accused, 107 of whom were Christians, mostly prominent Christian leaders. This incident linked Christianity closely with Korean nationalism (The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1989:308-322).

After the above incident, all church ministries, including not only medical and educational ministries but also evangelism, and even the content of teaching in the church and the ordination of the ministers, came under the strict control of the Japanese government (Kim, A E 1995:42-43). The Japanese policy of oppression of the Church and the Christian schools began to be expressed more openly. In 1915 two religious laws were promulgated. One was the Private School Law, which prohibited the Christian mission schools from teaching the Bible and Korean history or worshipping in the chapel (Yi 1987:228). The pro-Japanese Methodist schools immediately obeyed this law and stopped their religious activities, while the Presbyterian schools appealed to the government for reconsideration and prayed that the law would be withdrawn (Rhee 1995:263). The other law was the Religious Propaganda Law, which commanded that the church obtain the government's permission for establishing new churches and to report church statistics and activities. This ensured tight control of the Church (Yi 1985:157).

In the March First Movement of 1919, the Korean people eventually stood up against Japanese rule, proclaimed the Declaration of Independence signed by 33 representatives of the people, and engaged in a nationwide peaceful protest demonstration for one year. The Church's preparation for the Movement was very self-governed and secret: there was no prior consultation of the missionaries. From the first demonstration on 1 March 1919 in Seoul, more than two million people participated in 1,542 demonstrations (Rhee 1995:263). The Korean Church also participated actively in this anti-imperialist resistance. Of the 33 signatories of the Declaration of Independence, 16 were Christians. In almost all towns and villages, it was at the churches that Koreans gathered to read the Declaration and to begin their demonstrations (Yang 1993:179). More importantly, it was the Christians who insisted on non-violence. The protest was essentially a pacifist movement, for the Korean demonstrators did not have any weapons. Nevertheless, the Japanese soldiers and policemen responded to the peaceful demonstrations in a most brutal way. They violently killed 7,509 Korean people, injured 15,961, and arrested about 47,000 (Rhee 1995:263). According to the statistics of the military police at the end of that year,

the Christians numbered 3,426 among 19,525 arrested Koreans, which was 17.6 percent of the whole (Yi 1985:163). This means that the Christians were the largest group of all those arrested. Considering that the Christian population was about 1.5 percent of the whole population at the time, the number shows that the Church played a great role in the Movement (:164). As a result, the Church suffered severe persecution from the Japanese government via the police and military forces.

After the Movement, many Korean Christian politicians and intellectuals went abroad to continue promoting the independence movement (The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1990:59-63). Korean Christians also left Korea for China, Manchuria, Russia and the USA, where they lived and established many Korean churches (:99-146).

Generally speaking, church ministries in Korea were discouraged after the Movement. Church membership thus swiftly declined. Church statistics, which summed up the membership of Methodist and Presbyterian churches after the movement, showed 2,177 congregations and 179,544 believers which were 88 congregations and 22,409 believers fewer in comparison with the statistics of the previous year (:38). By actively participating in the movement, however, the Korean Church was able to attain not only a priceless tradition of deep sympathy with the nation's suffering, but also great confidence from the Korean people, who began to recognise Christianity as a religion for the people (:40).

After the 1920s the Korean Church began to separate religion from politics for many reasons: the missionaries were theologically conservative and the sending mission boards demanded that the missionaries should preserve political neutrality. Further, the Korean Church's situation was exacerbated due to the infiltration of Russian communism and the ongoing political oppression and economic exploitation of the Japanese government.

During the 1920s and 1930s Japan changed her policy toward the Korean Church and became more tolerant in order to recover its status in international relations. The Japanese government needed to relieve international pressure that had condemned its brutality toward the Independence Movement of 1919. Moreover, Japan planned to conquer the whole of Asia and thus wanted to have a good relationship with the USA government, which ultimately supported the Japanese imperial quest in Asia. Under these circumstances, the USA government and the mission boards demanded that the

missionaries in Korea would not be involved in 'political affairs' against the Japanese government. The demand was easily acceded to the missionaries, whose theological position tended to be conservative both theologically and politically. They were thus concerned with purely "church affairs", in order to avoid political conflict with the Japanese government (:42-46). The Japanese government encouraged the Korean Church and the missionaries to promote so-called "pure social movements" or "transforming people's lives" such as village movement for farmers, abstinence from smoking and drinking, prohibition of the use of opium, and abolition of licensed prostitution (:215-241). At a stage when the freedom of publishing was permitted to a certain extent, the Korean Church published various church newspapers and periodicals, which had to be indifferent to "political affairs" (:71-83).

The revival movement also abandoned "political affairs" such as the immediate national liberation, and instead delimited itself to work for personal salvation. It thus tended to be futuristic, transcendental and mystical (Yi 1985:173-174). Even though this kind of futuristic, transcendental faith played an important role in preventing the corruption of a small minority of the Church from being perverted in the 1930s and 1940s when the majority of the Church accommodated Japanese Shintoism, it caused the Korean Church to be threatened by Communism. A small group of church members who were disappointed with the church's non-radical attitude to "political affairs", left the church, and joined the Communist resistance movement against Japanese rule. This group bitterly criticised and attacked the Church for not participating actively in the liberation of the nation. Soon other anti-Christian organisations arose and exerted antagonistic action against the Church. Many intellectuals and patriotic leaders, openly published writings against the Church (Min [1982] 1993:454-458). Korean Christianity thus came to be surrounded by hostile forces. In time the Korean Church learned that the radical Communistic ideology could never co-exist with the Christian Gospel. The Church also learned that it should preserve a distance from nationalism; it believed that real patriotism was to build a Christian nation like the USA.

In the meantime ecumenical endeavours which had been promoted actively in the early Korean Church withered due to conflicting denominational interests and exclusivity resulting from 'denominational theology', and provincial clericalism (The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1990:149-169).

During the 1930s and early 40s, the Korean Church encountered its last great crisis under Japanese rule: the confrontation with Japanese Shintoism (:258-301). At the time Japan needed the Korean people to actively support and take part in its imperialistic war which aimed at the unification of the whole of Asia under Japanese rule. Under the banner of war, the Japanese government confiscated materials, buildings and facilities belonging to Koreans and conscripted all available men and women workers, sending them to war camps. Under the Japanisation programme, the use of the Japanese language was strictly enforced in all schools and meetings, including Christian services, while the Korean language was thoroughly suppressed. Korean culture was to be eradicated as well. Further, all Koreans were ordered to change their Korean names to Japanese names. The names of churches were also to bear Japanese titles (:274-278). Finally, all Koreans, including Christians, were compelled to worship 'Kami' and 'Amaterasu' at Japanese Shinto shrines. 'Kami' designates a deity which the Japanese believe to be revealed in awesome natural phenomena, mythological figures, historical heroes, and the spirits of their ancestors. Shintoism, therefore, can be said to be a polytheistic religion (:285). Among all the gods, 'Amaterasu', the sun-goddess, was worshipped as the highest deity, and at the time was identified with the ancestor-deity of the imperial family of Japan.

From the early 1930s the Japanese nationalists realised that they needed not only an army but also a faith in order to accomplish their vision of the Asian conquest (Kim, A E 1995:43). To this end, Japan attempted to impose Shintoism on the Koreans, as well as the Japanese. In 1935 the Japanese government ordered all schools, including Christian schools, to participate in Shinto shrine ceremonies and to bow down to the gods. While the missionaries at first refused to allow students and teachers at Christian schools to attend Shinto rituals, they could do nothing in the end to resist other than to close the schools or accept the Japanese government order under pressure and harassment. Many Christian schools were abolished. The Pyong-Yang Theological Seminary which had been established by the Presbyterian missions was closed on account of its refusal to accept shrine worship in 1938. Missionary works were also restricted. Many missionaries were deported to their home countries (The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1990:294-299).

In contrast to this protest, the Korean Catholic church accepted the Japanese government

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order according to the Vatican ruling in May 1936 that Christians might worship in the Shinto shrine, which was considered no more than a ritual expressing patriotism and loyalty to the state. A month later, the Korean Methodist Church also allowed their congregations to attend the shrine worship as a duty for every citizen (:299-300; Kim, S K 1991:438-444).

Finally, the Korean Presbyterian Church, the largest denomination in Korea, decided to comply with the government order, at the Presbyterian General Assembly in February 1938. A few leaders and their followers, however, planned the Anti-Shrine Worship Movement, and strongly protested against Shinto worship (Kim, H K 1998:103). On the other side, the liberals in the Korean Presbyterian Church who had appeared in the middle of the 1920s opened the Chosun Theological Academy for "liberty from the dominion of the Western missionaries and from conservative theology" in Seoul in 1940. This Academy trained people to be faithful ministers for the Japanese government (:109): "To the liberals, the issue of shrine worship and the assimilation of the Christian faith with Shintoism was really not a serious matter to be dealt with" (:112). The shrine-worship issue resulted especially in the polarisation of the Presbyterian Church and its theology: the conservatives are still distinct to date, from the liberals. The difference was too wide and extreme to permit dialogue with each other (:111-112).

In the early 1940s the Japanese authorities became hostile to the Korean churches. The authorities ordered the placement of portable Shinto shrines in churches and used many church buildings as lodging for soldiers. The churches could not even hold meetings without police permission. Nearly 200 local churches closed their doors. About two thousand Christian leaders who were involved in the Anti-Shrine Worship Movement were imprisoned for professing their faith. More than 50 Christians suffered martyrdom (The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1990:337-338). On July 29, 1945, about a month before the end of the war, all the Protestant churches discarded their denominational distinctions and were combined into the pro-Japanese Korean Church, "the united Korean Japanese Christian Church", by government order (Kim, A E 1995:45). On August 15, 1945, the Japanese emperor announced Japanese surrender, and Korea was liberated.

Table 1

Membership Trends in the Korean Church under Japanese Rule[5]

Church	1907	1909	1911	1913	1915	1917	1919	1921	1923
Cathol.						80,613	81,504	91,941	85,508
Presbyt.	69,098	119,273	144,261			114,106	141,044	181,298	186,785
Method	33,319	38,390	37,035			53,638	43,856	60,030	63,787
Others						22,341	25,747	16,100	21,807
Total						270,698	292,141	349,399	375,887

Church	1925	1927	1929	1931	1933	1935	1937	1939	1941
Cathol.	89,798	48,760	58,699	66,626	94,387	105,324	112,610	113,562	108,079
Presbyt.	182,650	144,898	174,312	197,528	239,127	260,821	287,082	286,268	256,575
Method	58,434	46,528	47,831	45,142	48,278	53,634	54,574	53,002	50,286
Others	11,834	18,891	26,020	29,167	32,850	39,650	37,837	49,456	32,475
Total	342,716	259,077	306,862	338,463	414,642	459,429	492,103	502,288	447,415

Cathol.=Catholics, Presbyt.=The Korean Presbyterian Church, Method.=The Korean Methodist Church. Others includes the Salvation Army, the Korean Holiness Church, the Baptist Church, the Pentecostal churches, and the Christian sects.

2.2.4 The Church in a Whirl (1945-1960)

With the liberation from Japanese rule, Korea faced the great task in the restoration of its sovereignty. The Korean Church also primarily needed to restore itself. Fulfilling such tasks, however, did not come easily.

At the time, Korea faced great political and social upheaval. The agreement between the USA and the Soviet Union to participate jointly in the surrender of Japan in Korea split the country into two opposing sides. With the USA forces in the south and the Soviet counterpart in the north, the two camps brought about the establishment of two separate governments in Korea in 1948: the communist government of the North and the democratic government of the South. The division of the two Koreas was perpetuated through the Korean War (1950-1953) caused by the struggle between the two Super

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[5] The following statistics are drawn from several sources: (The Institute of Korean Church History 1989:254, 1990:96-97, 260-261; *Yearbook of Religions in Korea* 1993, 1995, 1996-7).

Powers (Kim, A E 1995:45).

Under these harassing conditions, the Church in the North could not avoid suffering. The North Communist government severely persecuted Christianity in its territory since it viewed the church as a great threat to its rule. The government interfered with all church activities. In 1948, the government created the Christian League to which all church leaders were required to belong. By 1950, most church workers who had not joined the league were arrested, tortured and executed for opposing the government's religious policy. Shortly before and at the outbreak of the Korean War many Christians in the North fled the South for freedom of faith. The Communist invasion of the South, however, took place so quickly that many church leaders were killed or carried off (ibid; Clark [1971] 1992:247).

Meanwhile the First Republic of Korea in the South was initiated by Christians. Rhee Syng-Man, a devout Christian elder and patriot who had returned to Korea after 33 years of political exile, was elected as the first President in 1948. Most seats in the Cabinet and Parliament and other important positions were filled by Christians, this being achieved through the President's personal favour and the democratic ability of those trained in church activities; as well as through the powerful support of the missionaries who had returned to Korea or had been newly sent from the American mission bodies. It could be said that Korea at the time had a 'Christian' government (cf Kang 1996). This shows that the South Korean Churches had high privilege and status in spite of the fact that Christians numbered less than 5% of population (Rhee 1995:270).

Unfortunately, however, the South Korean Churches (SKCs) failed to relate properly to the government for the following two reasons. Firstly, the SKCs were not yet mature enough to understand, theologically, the spiritual nature of the state or political power, and to criticise the sinful ambition for political power of the 'Christian elder' President. Eventually, in 1960, the first government was overthrown by the Student Revolution for its massive injustice and decay. Thereafter, the SKCs were often accused of being 'a pro-government group' that was loyal to any government (ibid).

Secondly, the SKCs could not afford to pay attention to political affairs, since they had a primary inner issue to resolve. This issue was the reformation of the Churches concerning

the serious and public repentance of the sin which they had committed by officially supporting the Shinto shrine worship (Kim, Y J 1992:237-246). In the process of a national reorganisation of the Presbyterian Church there was strong disagreement between the former pro-Japanese 'collaborators' who wanted to retain the Japanese-imposed structure of church union and the advocates of the Church Rehabilitation Movement supported by church leaders who had been incarcerated by the Japanese. The former group still had the initiative in the church government and made the Chosun Theological Seminary the seminary of the South Division General Assembly in June, 1946. The latter group clearly recognised that the Church should be reformed not only spiritually, through repentance and renewal, from the sin of apostasy, but also theologically from Chosun Seminary's liberal theology (Conn 1967:40).

In September 1946 the Kyungnam Presbytery, supported by the Church Rehabilitation Movement, opened the Korea Theological Seminary in Pusan which would continue the strong conservative, Calvinistic, Reformed tradition of the Pyong-Yang Theological Seminary (Kim, Y J 1992:249-250). The founders of the seminary were Rev Han Sang-Dong and Rev Joo Nam-Sun. The first principal was Dr Park Yun-Sun. A year later, the Korea Theological Seminary invited Dr Park Hyung-Yong from Manchuria to be the new president of the faculty. His coming encouraged all conservative leaders to join the Korea Theological Seminary for the reformation task of the Church (Kim, H K 1998:132).

There were some differences amongst the leaders concerning the way in which the seminary would proceed with Church renovation. The differences were most marked between Rev Han Sang-Dong and Dr Park Hyung-Yong. The latter wanted to have the seminary in Seoul along with the cooperation of the four former foreign Missions and in support of the General Assembly so that the school could contribute towards rebuilding a nationwide conservative Presbyterian Church. Dr Park Hyung-Yong emphasised the union of the Presbyterian Church and its propagation more than its purification. But Rev Han did not quite agree with Park. He could not trust the Missions whose theology had become modernist or liberal, nor the leaders in the General Assembly who did not actively advocate the Church Rehabilitation Movement. He thus thought that it was not opportune for the seminary to transfer to Seoul and be supported by the General Assembly. He intensified the sincere and public repentance of the Presbyterian Church (:134-136).

Eventually, in 1948, Dr Park left the school in Pusan and established another conservative seminary in Seoul in support of the many moderate conservative leaders in the General Assembly. At the time, the General Assembly refused to recognise the Korea Theological Seminary. In 1951, the Kyungnam Presbytery, which still supported the Korea Theological Seminary, was not permitted to participate in the General Assembly (Kim, Y J 1992:252). As a result, the reformed group which strongly supported the Korea Theological Seminary was forced to form its own body: the Koshin Presbyterian Church (PCKK). In 1953 the General Assembly ostracised Rev Kim Jae-Joon who continued criticising orthodox theology. He and his followers thus organised the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PCROK). In 1959 the Korean Presbyterian Church suffered the third division, a major Presbyterian split, caused by complex reasons, such as controversies concerning the ecumenical movement, a power struggle for hegemony in church government and the control of mission financial support. The split was even at the time of the division: the Tong-Hap Presbyterian Church (PCKT: the Ecumenical or KNCC group) and the Hap-Tong Presbyterian Church (PCKH: the NAE group) (Brown 1997:86-87). In the meanwhile the Korean Methodist Church was also floundering in internal disputes of the church (Kim, Y J 1992:246-248). The internal disputes in the SKCs prevented them from taking a leadership role in a society in turmoil.

The outbreak of the Korean War on June 25, 1950, drove the Korean Church, as well as the nation-state and the whole society, into even worse turmoil. The War was an ideological fight, thus causing lifelong enmity between the two Koreas. About five million people were killed during the War and the whole country was devastated. Millions of war refugees suffered physical injury and impoverishment. The North Communist Army singled out Christians as being anti-communist and sympathetic to American imperialism; hence, ten of thousands of Christians perished. The War engraved on the consciousness of the Korean Church a deep awareness that communists were the unforgivable enemies of Christianity. Fortunately, the period immediately following the war provided a most opportune time for evangelisation. Huge amounts of foreign aid poured into Korea from "Christian countries", particularly the USA, further fuelling the Koreans' favourable perception of Christianity. The Catholic and Protestant mission-related agencies brought into Korea millions of dollars worth of relief supplies, ranging from food and clothing to medicines, which were distributed to needy people. The mission bodies' relief supplies and their relief programmes, therefore, became a "badge" of charity and compassion for

Christianity, which presented a striking contrast to traditional religions, such as Buddhism and Confucianism (Kim, A E 1995:46). In the period from 1953-1960, both the Catholic and Protestant churches grew rapidly in membership from 500,000 Protestants and 166,400 Catholics in 1953 to 700,000 Protestants and 451,000 Catholics in 1960 (Rhee 1995:228).

Kang (1996:270-274) insists that the Korean Protestant church was decisively influenced by the USA churches and their missionaries in this period [1945 to 1960]: the American missionaries deeply planted anti-communism and pro-Americanism in the SKCs. Under the auspices of the USA government, they also influenced the South government's decisions on religious matters: they helped the SKCs to obtain far more benefits and autonomous status from the government in contrast to those obtained by other religions. They also helped Korean Christian elites to hold political power. The Churches remained loyal to the government. In other words, all the Korean Protestant churches, whether theologically conservative or liberal, maintained a conservative political position (:259-270).

Furthermore, the missionaries who were in the highest positions in the church power structure, by providing financial resources for the SKCs, controlled all spheres of church structure and activities: they were deeply involved in the theological education of seminaries so that they implemented their particular theological tradition, such as theological exclusivism, denominationalism and religious triumphalism. They governed the planning of church activities such as evangelism and social ministries. They also intervened in structuring church organisations. They drove out anti-Americanists and religious nationalists from the Churches. In brief, the powerful intervention of the USA churches and missionaries in the SKCs encouraged the Churches to establish the following socio-political tradition: anti-communist, pro-American and pro-government (:309-310). Since then, this tradition has impacted continuously on the formation of the theological tradition of the SKCs.

2.2.5 The Church in the "Conversion Boom" Period during Military Dictatorship, Modernisation and Industrialisation in Korean Society (1960-1987)

Korean society in this period can be described as an unstable society due to political instability and rapid economical and social changes. Even though the SKCs experienced rapid growth in membership, they suffered setbacks in the other dimensions of church growth, namely conceptual, organic, and incarnational growth.

The SKCs failed to respond soundly to national political issues. The social disorder of the 1950s after the Korean War stimulated Korean people to long for the strong power of the nation-state. Most people thus welcomed the military coup by General Park Chung-Hee, in May 1960. The SKCs also welcomed his rule (Kim, Y J 1992:276). Park who had been inaugurated as president in December 1963, promoted the power of his military regime by means of an anti-Communist ideology on the one hand, and a growth-centred economic policy on the other. The two policies fulfilled the people's expectation of security and material richness to some extent. Unfortunately, Park indulged his insatiable appetite for power into a prolonged dictatorship until he was assassinated in 1979. The military government continued under President Jun Doo-Hwan and Ro Tae-woo.

During the period of military dictatorship [1961-1987] the SKCs were polarised into two groups: the KNCC (Korean National Christian Council) and Catholic group and the non-KNCC group. The conservative non-KNCC group actively supported the government by prohibiting any criticism against it within the church, and even by publishing support documents for the controversial matters of the government. On the other hand, the KNCC and Catholic group protested against the extension of the military regime. But the latter group also fell into political secularisation by uncritically identifying with any anti-government group, employing some Marxist methods of violent protest and labour instigation in the name of 'Minjung Theology' (Rhee 1995:271).

Ironically, both groups were greatly influenced by Western churches and their theologies, i.e., American conservative evangelicalism or the WCC's political theology. In other

words, the SKCs lacked theological, critical reflection on national political issues. The rapid numerical growth of the conservative evangelical churches was not caused by their sound theological foundation, but by their socio-psychological situation: the churches accommodated themselves well to the Korean people's need. The people who had long suffered social turmoils, yearned for a calm society, but postponed the realisation of a just society.

The process of industrialisation and urbanisation were accelerated by the Economic Development plans of the government since the 1960s. The primary-industry-centred society became changed into a tertiary-industry-centred society in the 1980s (Han 1998:15). Job alteration was common. Such a shift in the structure of industry encouraged people to move into cities (Ro, C J 1998:18-19). In 1961, the population of Korea was about 75% rural and 25% urban. By the late 1980s, the figures had been reversed (Steinberg 1995:402).

Even though the urban middle classes enjoyed an increase in income caused by the rapid economical growth of the nation, they suffered feelings of deprivation, alienation and insecurity (Lee, W K 1992:72). They desired more possessions for the sake of future security. Such a desire to possess created in people a sense of relative deprivation through comparison with others who enjoyed higher status or living standards, or by being disappointed in their desires. Furthermore, conflicts amongst people were deepened by distributive inequality. In the process of urbanisation many immigrants from the rural areas also felt a sense of alienation through losing their sense of belonging to a local community. Rapid industrialisation and urbanisation finally resulted in social and psychological insecurity among the people. Uninterrupted political disturbance, as well as the hostile confrontation of the two Koreas aggravated people's anxiety about an uncertain future (Ro, C J 1998:19-20).

Thus political, economic, and social insecurity resulted unsurprisingly in the rapid numerical growth of the SKCs. Speaking in terms of the sociology of religion, such insecurity usually operates as a powerful "pushing factor" which drives people towards religion (:21). Lots of Korean people regarded Christianity as the most powerful religion which could deal effectively with their insecure situations. They could not trust traditional religions, which had not adapted to the process of modernisation of Korean society (cf Lee,

W K 1992:32).

Many Korean people were also amicable to Christianity, because they believed that Christianity had led the modernisation of Korea since the advent of the first American missionaries. The Korean government also equated modernisation with Americanisation (Ro, C J 1998:26-27). The government planted in Korean society the American way of modernisation, whose two ideological axioms were the free market system of capitalism and anti-Communism. Most Korean people thus believed easily that both capitalism and anti-Communism were the necessary ideological foundations on which Korean society could be well developed. At the same time, they presumed that to become a powerful country Korea should become a Christian country like America.

By seeing the united mammoth meetings of the SKCs, Korean people considered the Church as the most powerful organisation in Korea. In Seoul's Youido Plaza, the public square which is the main site for mass rallies, five mass evangelism crusades were held: the Billy Graham Crusade of 1973, Explo '74, the '77 Holy Assembly Crusade, 1980 World Evangelization Crusade and Protestant Centenary Celebration in 1984. In August 1984, for example, the Protestant Centenary Celebration drew about 3.5 million Christians to a number of rallies to hear sermons by well-known world Christian leaders, including Billy Graham (Kim, A E 1995:48). These mass crusades had a great impact on the SKCs, which exploded into zeal for soul-winning. Yoo (1987:219) insists that particularly the two crusades, Explo '74 and the 1980 World Evangelization Crusade, "were a spiritual turning point in the nation": through the crusades, he says, the suppressed *Han* of the "Pentecostal *Minjung*" whose mind had been in a desperate state caused by long national suffering from wars and political and economical instability, was resolved into a new vision towards national salvation. In other words, the crusades led the national evangelisation movement of the SKCs. Explo '74 held by the KCCC (Korean Campus Crusade for Christ; president: Rev Kim, Joon-Gon) led around 272,000 people to the decision to believe in Christ. Also in the 1980 Crusade, it was reported that about one million people became new Christian believers (Kim, J G 1995:59).

The Catholic church also showed people its united strength through constant prophetic protest against the military regime, and through the bicentennial mass event in 1984, at which Pope John Paul II canonised 103 martyrs from early Korean Catholic history (Kim,

A E 1995:48). The Korean people were also astonished to see the prominent activities of Christians in every sphere of Korean Society. The people thus assumed that Christianity could effectively fulfil their needs for socio-psychological security and satisfaction.

In this period the SKCs experienced a conspicuous increase in membership. The Churches focused on the self-fulfilment, self-gratification or self-realisation of its members. Various Christian church communities which primarily tried to provide psychological comfort and rest for their members who were weary and burdened with the trials of life, stimulated people to come into the church. The so-called "conversion boom" occurred in the SKCs (:47-48). In 1960, South Korea's Protestant population numbered only about 700,000. In 1970 membership exceeded 3 million, which was more than four times the number of members in 1960. The 1970s and 1980s were no less remarkable for membership growth of the Protestant church: 7 million in 1980, and 12 million in 1990, according to the statistics which summed up denominational reports. The Catholic church also roughly doubled every decade: around 400,000 (1960); around 777,000 (1970); 1,321,293 (1980); 2,711,566 (1990) (Rhee 1995:228; cf Table 2 in this dissertation). According to the census by the government in 1985, whose data were more reliable than the denominational statistics, Christians numbered around 8,354,679, which comprised 20.7% of the total Korean population (40,419,652) (cf Table 2.1 in this dissertation). The Gallup survey of 1989 showed that Christians were 26.2% of the total population (Gallup Korea 1998:218; cf Table 9.4 in this dissertation).

The SKCs, however, lacked the sound understanding of the Gospel, through which they should have evaluated capitalistic ideologies, such as materialism, quantitativism, individualism and group egotism, and should also have shown Korean society the new direction the Gospel proposes. Instead, by uncritically assimilating modernism and secularism, they neglected to fulfil faithfully its mission of transforming Korean society in the light of the Gospel. The SKCs' assimilation of such capitalistic, modernistic secular ideologies has led them to be confronted with serious moral problems (Rhee 1995:276-281).

A problem facing the SKCs was their negligence of social responsibility and services. C J Ro (1998:191) presents statistical data from his analysis of church financial expenditure in 1992, as an example of this problem: 201 churches (81.7%) in 246 sampled churches

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expended less than 5% of their gross receipts on social service expenses including almsgiving expenses; only 4 churches (1.6%) expended more than 10% of their gross receipts on them.

Notwithstanding, most congregations made every effort to maintain and extend their membership and physical asserts. This church extensionalism to which special attention was paid, has produced the so-called "super-church": over ten churches in Korea have a constituency of over 10,000 (the Full Gospel Church in Seoul claims approximately 800,000) and many more have between 5,000 and 10,000 (Underwood 1994:74).

Rhee (1995:279) voices the criticism that the Mega-Church Movement in the SKCs lacks sound theology: some evangelical pastors and churches have copied David (Paul) Yong-Ki Cho's "Prosperity Theology". Another evangelical group has tried to use several techniques and methodologies that achieved quite a quantitative success in America. Yet other groups have attempted to develop different methods of attracting people, such as Christian versions of Shamanistic demonology, psychological mass hypnotism, spiritual surgery and imminent eschatology which is involved in unsound charismatic movements. In brief, it is correct to say that most Korean churches are oriented towards individualistic success and quantitative growth (Son 1995:258).

The success-oriented Korean churches had a serious problem, because they were "not only a product of materialism but also an inherent cause of separatism and individualism" (Rhee 1995:279). Evangelism, group Bible study, discipleship training, preaching and even prayer were mostly focused on their numerical growth. This local church extensionalism was based on competitive individualism or "capitalistic composition" (Son 1995:266ff). Such churches could not help competing with each other. As a result, many congregations suffered divisions. Denominations were also easily divided. It is notable that church division is most acutely represented in the Presbyterian churches in Korea (Park 1986:613). In 1980, the PCKH (Hapdong) which was the biggest denomination in Korea was divided into many denominations due to conflicts caused by a hegemonic power struggle among denominational leaders. There was only one Presbyterian church body in Korea before the Second World War but by 1991 there were 67 different Presbyterian denominations; the total number of denominations in Korea being 97 (The Korean Christianity Great Annual of 1991:215-216, quoted by Kim, Y J 1992:356-358).

Church division aggravated vicious regionalism and individualism in Korean society. But a more serious problem facing the SKCs was that they tended to attribute the troubles caused by local church extensionalism and competition and church division to Divine providence in the belief that this might rather accelerate growth in membership. The tendency in the Churches was thus to postpone repentance and the endeavour for church unity.

In this period, another problem facing the SKCs was the impoverished condition of the rural churches in contrast to the urban churches which, as a result of urbanisation, were growing in membership, finances, and church activities. According to a report, in 1989, a rural congregation averaged 44 members, while a congregation in Seoul averaged 556 members. Most of the rural churches could hardly support themselves but the urban churches were not active in helping them (Lee, W K 1994:62-71). Instead, an overseas missionary boom emerged in the urban churches [see 6.2.3.4 in this dissertation]. As Leo Oosterom (1990:114-115) puts it, the successful ministry and the material affluence of the urban churches brought them to a position of self-complacency or "the triumphant mood" in running overseas missionary works.

In sum, rapid social changes that were spurred by the processes of industrialisation, modernisation and urbanisation generated culture shock among the masses, many of whom turned to Christianity as an alternative belief system that could ameliorate their feelings of anxiety. However, we conclude that the growth of the SKCs was not healthy and balanced during this period: church growth in dimensions other than numerical growth was greatly impeded.

TABLE 2: Membership for Protestants and Catholics: 1960-1995 (Denominational Figures)[6]

Years	Protestants	Catholics	Total
1960	1,040,114	401,750	1,441,864
1964	2,152,540	748,818	2,901,358
1969	3,192,621	751,217	3,943,838
1971	3,217,996	779,000	3,996,996
1974	3,720,000	1,012,000	4,732,000
1975	4,019,313	1,012,209	5,031,522
1977	5,001,491	1,093,829	6,095,320
1980	7,180,627	1,321,293	8,501,920
1982	7,637,010	1,439,778	9,076,788
1984	8,460,135	1,590,625	10,050,760
1985	10,312,813	2,423,181	12,735,994
1989	11,888,374	2,632,990	14,521,364
1993	14,463,301	3,057,822	17,521,123
1994	15,055,609	3,296,451	18,352,060
1995	13,909,284	3,560,113	17,487,397

FIGURE 1. Membership for Protestants and Catholics: 1960-1995 (Denominational Figures)

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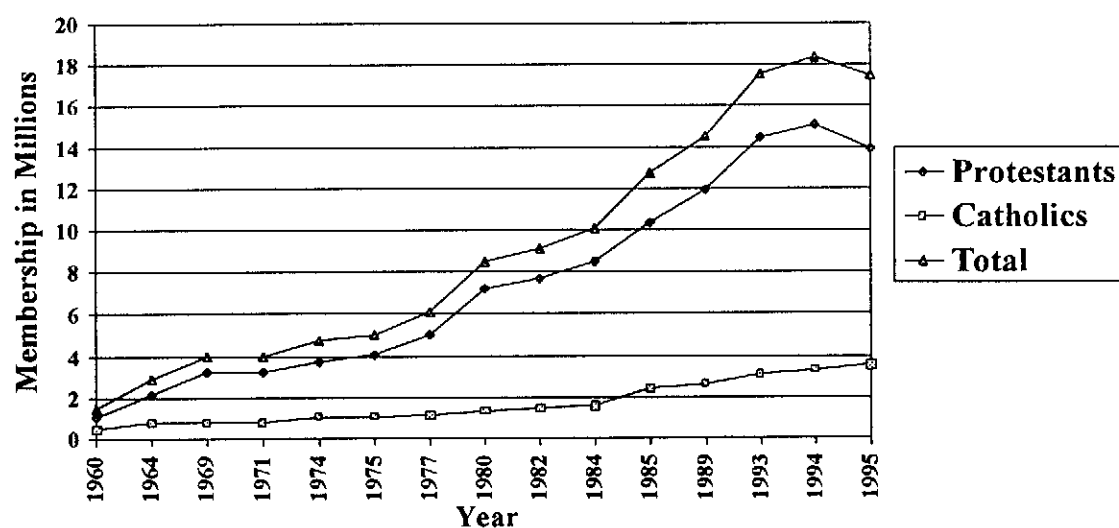
[6] The following statistics are drawn from several sources: (The Institute of Korean Church History 1989:254, 1990:96-97, 260-261; *Yearbook of Religions in Korea* 1993, 1995, 1996-7).

The above data (Table 2 or Figure 1) show the SKCs' rapid growth in membership in the 1970s and 1980s: the data are drawn from several sources, such as Yearbook of the Government Bureau of Religion, Yearbook of Korean Christianity (1965, 1985), and Yearbook of Religions in Korea (1993, 1995, 1996-1997). The sources were compiled from the statistical data that the various denominations in Korea had submitted.

The following government census (Table 2.1) also shows that Korean Protestantism steadily grew in membership during 1985-1995.

Table 2.1

Trends of Population and Membership Trends of Christianity and Other Religions in Korea: 1985-1995 (Government Census Data)

Religious Adherents	1985. 11. 1 Census	1995. 11. 1 Census
Buddhists	8,060,000 (19.9%)	10,321,000 (23.2%)
Confucianists	483,366 (1.2%)	211,000 (0.5%)
Catholics	1,865,000 (4.6%)	2,951,000 (6.6%)
Protestants	6,489,000 (16.0%)	8,760,000 (19.7%)
Other Religionists	305,627 (0.76%)	355,000 (0.82%)
Non-Religious	23,216,356 (57.44%)	21,953,000 (49.3%)
Total Population	40,419,652	44,554,000

2.2.6 Summary

Through reviewing the history of Korean Christianity, it becomes clear that certain circumstances of Korean history had a great influence on the formation and growth of the Korean Church, namely, Korea's long history of vulnerability to Chinese and Japanese control, Japanese colonialism and the Korean War and the profound social structural shift in the industrialisation and modernisation process in Korea after the Second World War (Kim, A E 1995:34-47).

Korea's long unrest situation heightened the Korean people's receptivity of Western Christianity, in particular that of the American church. The American church has been the predominant influence on the growth of the Korean Church.

Briefly speaking, in terms of church growth, the early Korean Protestant Church [1884-1919] grew steadily and soundly in all dimensions. In contrast, since 1960 the growth of the Church has been arrested in all dimensions except numerical growth. This unhealthy growth of the SKCs might have been caused by their uncritical accommodation of the theologies, and paricularly the ecclesiology, of the American churches.

2.3 The SKCs Have Been Facing Decline in Membership Since the 1990s

This section aims to expose recent membership decline in the SKCs and to describe the SKCs' general responses to the decline.

2.3.1 Arrested Church Growth in All Dimensions

S Guthrie (1996:198-199), in reference to T W Lee, says that the membership growth rate of the Korean Church has declined since the mid-1980s.

> According to David Tai-Woong Lee, director of the Global Ministry Training Center, Seoul, the average annual growth rate of South Korea's churches was 8.4 percent from 1960 to 1985, falling to 6.7 percent from 1985 to 1990. Figures from the government ministry of information are even more unsettling, pointing to an absolute decline of 4 percent in 1993.

A recent report of the membership growth rate of the Korean Church is as follows (Ro 1995:40):

Table 3: Recent Annual Membership Growth of the Korean Church

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
9.0%	5.8%	3.9%	0.6%	-4.0%

According to the above figures, in the early 1990s membership growth shows stagnation, and furthermore, in 1992 and 1993, it could virtually be regarded as downward in comparison with the population growth of South Korea.

Various phenomena come to the fore: Most rural churches are losing their members and becoming smaller and weaker as a result of migration from rural areas to the cities. Many

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small churches in the cities are also in crisis, since middle class Christians are moving away from those churches and are joining the big churches in new, better residential areas. The numerical growth of the big churches is thus not a result of conversion, but a result of transfer from other congregations (Cheong 1994:44).

Young people are leaving the churches (Guthrie 1996:200). The below data (Table 4) by Gallup Korea show that the members of young Christians between 25 and 29 years of age are fast decreasing, while Christians between 40 and 49 years are fast increasing.

TABLE 4

The Percentage Protestant Membership of the Population According to Age Groups

	18-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-
'84 Data	20.1%	19.9%	19.0%	13.5%	13.1%
'89 Data	20.5%	22.2%	20.6%	17.7%	16.3%
'97 Data	21.3%	17.6%	22.1%	22.1%	18.0%

(Gallup Korea 1998:57)

The following data (Table 5) of the change of religion surveyed by Gallup Korea in 1984, 1989, and 1997 show that the people who changed from Christianity to other religions numbered more or less half of the people who have changed their religions.

TABLE 5: Change of Religion

A question to ask the respondent who has changed his (her) religion: 'What former religion did you adhere to?'

Religion	'84 Data	'89 Data	'97 Data
Protestantism	47.5 %	50.0 %	58.4 %
Buddhism	32.1 %	34.9 %	32.8 %
Catholicism	11.4 %	12.0 %	9.6 %
Confucianism	3.1 %	3.6 %	-
Others	6.2 %	7.8 %	5.3 %

(Gallup Korea 1998:66)

Table 6 below also shows that the attitudes of the unchurched towards the churched are deteriorating. This tendency might be closely related to the loss of Christianity's

credibility to Korean society, and might impact highly on the decline in church membership.

TABLE 6: The Attitudes of Non-Religionists towards Religions

Questions	'84 Data	'89 Data	'97 Data
Religions are not important.	39.8%	48.9%	61.3%
RGs have lost their real meanings.	69.3%	66.4%	75.6%
RGs stress numbers rather than faithfulness.	76.4%	80.8%	86.5%
RGs have failed to give real answers to people's lives.	57.0%	59.0%	68.7%
RGs are not friendly to other religions and non-believers.	33.5%	41.5%	43.5%
RGs stress the strict observance of their rules.	38.1%	42.7%	48.9%
RGs are split very easily.	81.0%	81.0%	89.3%

RG = Religious Group   (Gallup Korea 1998:228)

2.3.2 The SKCs' General Reactions to Recent Membership Decline

In his recent article, 'The Stagnation Phenomenon in the Numerical Growth of the Korean Church: Its Reasons and Countermeasures', S K Lee (1995:3), Professor of the Church History faculty in a Korean theological school, presented a very good summary of the Korean Church's interpretations of the reasons behind the growth and decline in its membership:

What then is the reason why the Korean Church has been stagnant in its numerical growth since the second half of the 1980s and why has the rate of church attendance declined so remarkably? There are probably many reasons, and not any one reason can give an adequate explanation. The analysis of the reasons behind the stagnation phenomenon of the Korean Church growth will be made clear by an examination of the reasons for the rapid growth of the Korean Church in the past. The issue of why the Korean Church grew in the past can give a reflective answer on why it is declining now.

Although the reason for the Korean Church's growth was basically God's will and divine providence, some explanations have been given for its levelling out: (1) It originated in the mission policy of the early missionaries in Korea, which undertook mission by means of education and medical aid, the Nevius Method, the division of the mission field and so on. This assertion was strongly made by the missionaries in Korea, such as C A Clark and

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Samuel Moffett. (2) It was caused by the Korean mentality - religiosity, religious emotion and peculiar religious zeal. This was emphasised by the Methodist theologians, such as S B Yoon and D S Ryu, and S Palmer who had worked as a missionary in Asia. (3) Another opinion is held by those who explain the growth in terms of religious syncretism in the Korean churches, which accommodated an understanding of the Korean traditional religions with the Shamanistic world-view. This view is represented by David Chung, who argued for it in his dissertation, entitled "Religious syncretism in Korean Society" in 1959. ... (4) The most persuasive reason of all is that of the social contextualisation or historical contextualisation theory. This explains the Korean people's receptivity of Christianity in the context of the historical lives of Koreans. A representative of this contention is Dr. C S Chung[7] with whom the author agrees. The theory that the growth of the church has a deep relationship with the contemporary social context ... has already been ratified in the history of the Western Church as well as of the Korean Church. [my translation]

Consensus has been reached that the rapid numerical growth of the Korean Church was caused by complex issues, arising from not only a spiritual or theological dimension,[8] but also, and especially, from the sociological or contextual dimension: the political and social instability of Korean society greatly affected the numerical growth of the Korean Church (Lee, Chun & Nelson 1986:291).

At the same time, there is agreement that the decisive factor in this numerical growth is that the Korean Church had adapted quite well to the Korean context until the end of 1980, even if, using the theological perspective, the Church cannot be evaluated as always having coped correctly with the problems in the Korean situation.[9]

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[7] Chung, C S 1964. Protestantism and the formation of modern Korea 1884-1894. Dissertation, Boston University; and 1997. *Korea: the encounter between the Gospel and Neo-Confucian culture*. Geneva: WCC Publication. Likewise, W K Lee has written much on the analysis of the Korean Church from the perspective of the sociology of religion (cf Lee 1984. 1989a, 1989b, 1989c, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1992, 1994). *Sociology of Korean Protestant Church* written by C J Ro (1998) can be especially recommended as a well researched work on that perspective. Kang (1996) analyses the SKC by means of a socio-political point of view.

[8] Spiritual factors in the rapid growth of the Korean Church, are enumerated by B R Ro (1995:26-36) as follows: strength of the local church, spirit-filled and hard-working pastors, the emphasis on prayers for spiritual renewal such as pre-dawn prayer meetings, all-night prayer meetings, prayer mountains, annual revival prayer meetings, audible prayer etc, witnessing church, cell group weekday meeting (see Cho & Hurston 1995:111-131), abundant supply of Christian workers through theological education, rising missionary movement and stewardship of all church members.

[9] In a theological reflection on the problems accompanying the rapid growth of the Korean Church, Rhee (1995:276-279) indicates the materialism, quantitativism, and separatism of the Korean Church. "The Korean Church has been a channel for the capitalistic materialism of the West, and in addition the indigenous Shamanistic tradition has gradually infiltrated the Church to develop a secular concept of 'blessing' among the Christians. ... The Korean people have a long and strong tradition of this 'religion,' that

Recently, however, the SKCs have been faced with a numerical as well as a spiritual crisis. The awareness of these crises has been heightened by the fact that the membership in the SKCs has declined markedly, in spite of their earnest endeavour to promote growth in membership.

Facing their first decline in membership the SKCs have vigorously sought their shortcomings, as well as the reasons behind the decline. Accordingly, writings on church growth have been plentiful. In his article, B K Cheong (1994:45) summarises various reflections on the recent membership decline in the SKCs as follows:

> [W]hat are the reasons that its numerical growth has stagnated so suddenly ...? If there are various reasons, one of the most fundamental is, surely, that the Korean Church did not prepare, and failed to cope correctly and effectively, with transmission of the Gospel in the time of transition. The problem does not lie with the Gospel itself, but in the wrong understandings and practices of the transmitter of the Gospel. In this respect, we must admit that the Korean Church has wholeheartedly gone in pursuit of tactics or skill development, which is superficial and sporadical, for the purpose of numerical growth only, and without sound principles and methods of church growth. [my translation]

Cheong's diagnosis is that the failures of the SKCs result from the following four factors (:45-46). Firstly, the SKCs have forgotten the multi-dimensional growth of the church: they have emphasised numerical growth only. Secondly, the SKCs have lacked understanding and discernment regarding the Korean socio-cultural context, which has been undergoing rapid change. Thirdly, extremely defensive theology has hindered continuous numerical growth in the Churches: it has influenced both the conservative churches and the radicals. Fourthly, the manifold principles and methods of church growth have not been developed properly and effectively. Other reflections on the SKCs are quite similar to Cheong's diagnosis.

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is, a this-worldly, selfish and amoral religiosity, and therefore hardly understand Christian love or sacrificial suffering for God and others, unless it is accompanied by a promise of 'reward'" (:277). "What they desire is their own family's physical health, material blessing, social success, and the like, including the happiness of life after death" (:278). Rhee regards this as the Shamanistic attitude as Korean Christianity has been compromised by Shamanism, one of the traditional Korean religions (:236-237). "This Shamanistic perspective holds that we can achieve physical and material prosperity by mystical power and has secularised the Korean Church so that they have become worshippers of both God and Mammon" (:278). In this respect, there is no doubt that fervent prayers in the Korean Church focus on the individual dimension rather than the communal. Along with this, cell group meetings in the Korean Church, even though they contribute to improving identity formation, and a sense of belonging and security within the small-group, also foster ingroup-oriented spirituality: 'me-first religion', 'an anything-goes form of spirituality', and 'cheap-grace spirituality' (cf Wuthnow 1994a:356-361, 1994b).

Despite its intense reflections on church growth, the SKCs still tend to display a positive bias regarding numerical, quantitative, or visible growth. Far more than before, seminary students and pastors in Korea are now making a desperate effort to learn pragmatic skills and methods in order to foster rapid growth in membership. They are thus heavily engaged in various seminars, such as on expository preaching, church growth, pastoral counselling or cure, evangelism, power healing, Bible study, cell-group meeting, Christian education, leadership training, discipleship training, prayer, worship renewal, worship dance and song, Christian home-making, stewardship, mission, and church renewal. Besides all this, they are also taking part, in a most spectacular way, in worship or church growth seminars in the USA and are visiting many successful mega-churches and institutes like the Calvary Chapel, the Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Anaheim, the Lake Avenue Congregational Church, the Willow Creek Community Church, the Grace Community Church, the Church on the Way, the Crenshaw Christian Center, the Saddleback Baptist Church, the Focus on the Family, the Moody Bible Institutes and the Billy Graham Center. All this has been arranged by several Christian agencies in Korea. One of the agencies advertises these seminars in a monthly periodical (*Ministry & Theology* 1996:15) as follows:

> It is incorrect to say that the American Church is dead. The correct assessment is rather that the Church is reviving. Every pastor and minister who has carefully looked at the American Church has said that they received a wonderful surprise, were deeply challenged and obtained new insights into Christian ministry. [my translation]

The so-called successful churches in the contemporary USA thus serve as an alternative model and provide a way forward for the restoration of growth within the SKCs.

This way forward requires an understanding of two problems: on the one hand, most Korean churches are oriented towards materialistic success and quantitative growth (Son 1995:258; Rhee 1995:278-279), and on the other hand, the SKCs have copied American ecclesiological models without proper critical reflection. Even though most Christian leaders and theologians have built many organisations for church renewals and have cried out for ecclesiological reformation, they in fact fail to be deeply involved in critical reflection on inherent flaws in their ecclesiology.

2.4 Conclusion and Some Remarks for the Next Chapter

The growth of the SKCs has not been healthy except in their early stages. Even numerical growth has been stagnant since the late 1980s. The SKCs have suffered a 'decline crisis' in all dimensions. In addition, the problems facing the SKCs have been exposed openly to society. This has resulted in the loss of the Churches' credibility to the Korean people.

To recover the healthy growth and credibility of the SKCs, we believe that their self-reflection should result primarily in a more serious 'attitudinal shift' and, at a deeper level, should move towards a critical, theological reflection. Ecclesial change towards healthy growth of the church could begin with theological reflection on the church's whole life: identity, vision, mission, and practices. The most fundamental need is for theological reflection on ecclesiology, which is our particular concern. Our evaluation is that the reflection of the SKCs on ecclesiology, as a rule, is not adequate and thorough. The focus has been on diagnosing symptoms from ecclesial pathology. In other words, there has been a failure to find the root of ecclesial problems. Therefore, a fundamental question is raised: 'What is the root of ecclesial pathologies suffered by the SKCs?'

An answer to that question can be given within the framework of a practical ecclesiology, which deals with the church in relation to the Gospel and the world. A practical ecclesiology focuses on God's praxis and mission, which lead the praxis and mission of the church in a situation of specific time and space. This implies that a practical ecclesiology helps the church primarily to reflect critically on itself, its traditions, and life in the light of God's praxis and mission. It makes the church seriously investigate whether it is accommodating itself to contemporary cultures and ideologies without the necessary critical reflection. Accordingly, such reflection in view of a practical ecclesiology must be a foundation upon which the church builds and stands firm. Further, such reflection helps the church to seek ecclesiological models pertinent to God's calling in its present contextual situation. A practical ecclesiology thus promotes church growth in all dimensions. In this respect, we believe that the most important issue for the healthy growth of the SKCs is to develop a biblical and contextual ecclesiology (practical theological ecclesiology) which will explain soundly the realities of the SKCs, which include their membership trends, and propose a new direction in their context.

The SKCs' theological reflection, particularly their ecclesiological reflection, also requires sound methods in theological reasoning. Research done by the Korean conservative evangelical churches which comprise more than three quarters of all Korean Christians, tends to follow unilaterally the model of the Fuller church growth theory. Their analyses of membership trends in the SKCs have also been largely naive and shallow. Accordingly, the SKCs urgently need to seek a sound theological method for obtaining a more accurate analysis of their realities.

Before proposing a sound theological method, as well as a sound practical ecclesiology, we shall analyse in the following chapter three ecclesiological models of the churches in the USA which have strongly influenced the SKCs. Through the analysis we shall attempt to ascertain whether that the SKCs have become infected or not with the same fundamental flaws that the American ecclesiological models preserve inherently in their ecclesiology and theological reasoning.

CHAPTER III. American Ecclesiological Models and Their Inherent Inadequacies

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter it was confirmed that the SKCs have been greatly influenced in all spheres by the churches in the USA. In fact, the SKCs have copied American ecclesiological models uncritically, even though the context of the SKCs is far different from that of the American churches. Thus one of the problems facing the SKCs is that they have neglected to create ecclesiological models contextual to the Korean situation. The SKCs have also neglected to reflect theologically and critically on their dominant ecclesiology. Such negligence might have undermined the healthy growth of the SKCs.

To direct the SKCs towards healthy growth, it is necessary to seek an ecclesiological model which is theologically sound and contextually sensitive. For that, a critical analysis of the contemporary ecclesiological models is basically needed. In other words, the (re)construction of practical ecclesiology, the main subject of this dissertation which aims to provide critical analysis and a creative proposal of ecclesiological models, is urgently needed for the SKCs.

This chapter aims to examine critically American ecclesiological models copied by the SKCs. The reason for examining the American churches is to learn from the research they have conducted on the theological soundness of different approaches to ministry. It is hoped that this examination will reveal the fundamental ecclesiological problems facing the SKCs because they copied the American models. In addition, some valuable insights can be gained from the critical self-reflection of the churches in the USA, which has produced useful resources for church renewal.

To pursue this aim, the focus will be on describing and criticising three American ecclesiological models that have greatly impacted on the SKCs: the American Protestant prototype which was transmitted to the SKCs by the early American missionaries; the Fuller church growth model; and the mainline model.

Each model is examined from three perspectives: 1) a description of the historical and cultural context in which it is situated; 2) a critical evaluation of its characteristics, its understanding of the nature and mission of the church, its concern about God's praxis and mission, and its relation to the world (culture) and the Gospel; and 3) its impact on the SKCs.

Finally, it will be noted that new models are emerging which have been proposed by small groups in the American churches, who critically reflect on their traditional, dominant ecclesiological models.

3.2 The Ecclesiological Prototype of the USA Protestant Church

The Protestant churches in Korea were developed by the missionary work of the Protestant churches in the USA in the late nineteenth century. Accordingly, ecclesiology in the Korean Protestant churches was virtually formed under the influence of American missionaries. In this section, the ecclesiology which dominated the American Protestant churches during the period from the formation of the New World to the early twentieth century will be analysed.

3.2.1 The Historical Context and Cultural-Religious Traditions

3.2.1.1 Disestablishment and a 'Functional Christendom'

The United States were founded by Protestant immigrants who came from all over Europe for the sake of freedom of religion. From the beginning, multiple Protestant churches were formed there in accordance with diverse patterns of migration, class and racial lines, and religious traditions. Various denominations were successively organised. "No one church could establish complete dominion throughout the colonies" (Guder 1998:50).

The pluralistic religious situation fostered the formation of a disestablishment, which resulted in promoting a privileged position for the church. "The separation of church and state insured that persons would have full rights to practice their religion without interference from the state" (:51). Hence the vitality of the church was promoted. The protestant churches "considered it their responsibility to infuse society with the gospel and to plant congregations of their denominations throughout the expanding nation", during the nineteenth century (ibid). To fulfil this dual task, they corporately and individually, expressed their efforts through various methods, "including revivals, camp meetings, Christian schools and colleges, and morality movements such as temperance and abolition" (:51-52).

In the formative period between the early seventeenth and late eighteenth centuries, the Protestant churches had a united vision to found the new American nation on Protestantism. In 1776, the vision was realised, and since then Protestantism has always played a dominant role in shaping the social order. Various denominations competed with one another for adherents and suffered conflicts due to their different religious and ethnic lines. But they shared the same, major voice in forming public policy and morality. While significant diversity existed among these Protestant denominations, they generally accepted one another's legitimacy and entered into various coalitions. In effect, they cooperated with one another in founding a democratic and Christian nation.

The new nation was formed on a churched or Christian culture, called a functional Christendom (:51). "Such a culture placed the churches clearly at the center of public life, where they attempted to influence policy, morals, and institutions" (:50). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries diverse religious traditions were introduced by Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish immigrants. But the dominant group still comprised the Protestant churches (:52). The Protestant churches "maintained as an important goal of their work the full Christianization of America. They believed that God would continue to lead his chosen people to fulfill their mission in the nation of destiny" (Handy 1971:80). Such ideas as "Christian civilization" or "the Christianization of America" were derived from Puritan and Reformed traditions, which viewed cultural transformation and "a political force" as important roles of the church in the world (Guder 1998:33; Bauswein & Vischer 1999:10).

American missionaries who came to Korea in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries tried to plant a Christian culture in Korean society. They were proud of transmitting their Christian culture. Such a 'functional Christendom' mentality has been preserved throughout the history of American missionaries, as well as in the USA, by the American Protestant churches (Guder 1998:6, 53-54).

3.2.1.2 Free Market Religious Situation and Denominationalism

Sociologically speaking, a denominational structure generally appears to give expression to free and voluntary religion in a country without an established church. In the case of America, there were suitable conditions for this denominational structure to develop. It was impossible for the various streams of immigrants from Europe to form one church organisation or denomination. They all had their particular roots and history, and developed as separate communities each with its individual history. Further, urbanisation, industrialisation and massive immigration accelerated religious diversity and pluralism. Cities, in particular, provided the free market religious environment, which made churches relentlessly competitive. At the time, that was a dilemma for the church. Part of the solution of the dilemma was the denomination as a new organisational structure in which congregations could develop a logic for building their identity around the shared traditions, structures and programmes that shaped their church lives (Guder 1998:49-50, 65). Church history, however, showed that the Protestant denominations continued to be divided sectionally, racially, and theologically (Handy 1971:68-73).

From colonial times, the denominational structure formed a cultural pattern, called denominationalism, which has existed ever since as the dominant form of the church throughout the entire history of the USA. Denominationalism provides the framework for religious pluralism and identity. In other words, it builds norms of tolerance for religious diversity while at the same time encouraging a sense of belonging. Each denomination forms its distinctive culture, passed on over time. By a denominational culture is meant the persistent set of beliefs, values, norms, symbols, stories, and style that make a denomination distinctive. The distinctiveness of a denomination reflects the identity and meaning of the denomination and creates a sense of belonging (Carroll & Roof 1993:15-16). On the other hand, such identity formation of denominations also brings about frustration, controversy, confusion, and compromise through the many conflicts

caused by the different identities (Mead [1956] 1988:87-88). In brief, the denominational culture and denominationalism of the USA promoted the division of the church and social fragmentation.

3.2.1.3 Congregationalism, Pietism, Revivalism, and the Missionary Movement

Congregationalists who emigrated to America had a considerable impact on American church history. They insisted that the local church should exercise the ultimate authority in church life. Congregationalism appreciated the freedom of personal choice of religion and supported disestablishment. Because of this stance Congregationalists were persecuted by the established religious leaders of their home countries in Europe. Many thus escaped to America to find freedom of faith and religion (Bauswein & Vischer 1999:10).

Not surprisingly, many Congregationalists were deeply engaged in the rising revival movement (:11). In the period between the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, new religious movements arose in all parts of the Protestant world placing primary emphasis on personal conversion, spiritual renewal and sharing in fellowship: Pietism in Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands; Methodism in Britain; and the Great Awakening in America (:14). In the course of the 19th century the Revival Movement reoccurred. The movement swept through the European countries and was paralleled also in America. Its most famous representative in the United States was Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875) (:15-16).

The revival movement was evangelical and charismatic in nature. It was founded upon the Bible and a religious experience of the Holy Spirit. Called by Marsden (1980:224) "Biblical primitivism", revivalists were convinced that a new order of the nation as well as the church could be built through a return to the primitive community of the New Testament.

The revival movement was also characterised by a strong commitment to evangelism and mission. In the 18th and 19th centuries, intensive missionary activity developed and many mission societies were established in Europe and America. Most mission societies, whether denominational or non-denominational agencies, saw as their primary task bringing the Gospel to the people of the world. This missionary movement resulted in the

founding of churches in all continents. Many of these churches bore the characteristics of the Revival Movement. As a rule, missionary efforts were carried out without much concern for thorough coordination. In many countries, therefore, these efforts led to the foundation of separate churches within the same country. Often divisions which had occurred in the home country were reproduced on the mission field. Such a tendency towards division was derived from Congregationalism, religious voluntarism, Pietism and Revivalism, which emphasised the free choice of religion and the salvation of the souls of individuals. In brief, the revival movement strengthened religious individualism and accelerated the fragmentation of the church (Bauswein & Vischer 1999:17-19).

3.2.1.4 Modernism, Liberalism and Fundamentalism

North American church history can be understood within the story of modernity (Guder 1998:47). Modernism developed from the Enlightenment, which originated in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe. The Enlightenment movement emphasised achieving personal freedom from established monarchies and religious hierarchies, as well as from traditional thinking, by presenting three alternatives: the human being as an autonomous self, the claim of truth based on human reason and rationality, and social order formed by social contract, which autonomous individuals freely decide and make on the grounds of their self-interest (:20-25). Further, the movement made the modern individual believe that society would reveal endless, successful progress: "modernity marks the breakup of traditional society and its displacement by the new" (Shenk 1997:154).

During the period of the nation's formation, the United States could form its national identity by applying modernity to the building of a new nation (Guder 1998:33). During this period, the frontier was settled, industry developed, and cities were built. The people of the USA believed that such 'modern projects' would not only lead the way towards the future of a prosperous nation but would also attain the middle-class ideal through hard work. This 'progress ideology' thus became a significant component of the American dream. The American dream was positively supported by a belief that God would directly intervene to create a new world, America. This sense of destiny was a powerful force in the construction of the United States' national identity. Modernisation became the national vision and story to control the whole life of the nation (:32-34).

After 1900, some groups of Protestants came to refocus their efforts to shape a Christian moral society, paying attention to problems facing the growing cities in the midst of industrialisation, urbanisation, and immigration. The complexity of urban society led some Protestants to think about the Gospel in social, structural, and institutional terms. They were the advocates of the so-called social gospel movement. They attempted to address the more systematic nature of evil as it was lodged within society's institutional structures. They were convinced that the structural problems would and should be solved for the future of the Christian nation. They became aggressively involved in social works to express their conviction (:52-53).

Since most social-gospel activists were liberals who doubted biblical authority, their theological ideas were criticised by many conservatives, known as fundamentalists. Fundamentalists eventually turned inward and focused once more on faith in individual terms. They believed that personal salvation and individual moral transformation was the only biblical way to remedy social problems (:53; Marsden 1980:223-224).

By the mid-twentieth century, after two world wars, the diverse religious traditions of Protestant, Catholic, and Jew, along with the various theological streams within these communities, gave birth to a civil religion fully developed from the earlier notions of divine destiny. This new civil religion formulated a renewed version of the coalescence of God, country, and democracy. Such a civil faith caused the American people to engrave a kind of triumphalism on their hearts. They came to regard as God's will the fact that world peace or order should be driven by the United States. This civil religion made the divided churches recover and strengthen the old common vision that the world as well as American society should reflect God's agenda. In other words, most religions in America, which included fundamentalism as well as liberalism, considered modernisation as the primary principle for fulfilling the construction of the Christian nation (Guder 1998:53-54).

3.2.2 A Critical Evaluation of the Ecclesiological Characteristics of the USA Protestant Prototypical Model

As stated earlier, the particular religious, ethnic pluralistic situation could not but make the churches in the USA found and develop denominational structures. In other words, denominational organisations might be the only way for American churches to exist.

American denominationalism can be explained by the following three characteristics. Firstly, American Protestant churches positively appreciate denominational or religious diversity, which they regard as indispensable for a democratic society. As Van der Ven (1993a:23-25) explains, a denomination functions as a societal institution among other societal institutions, and emphasises dialogue and communication with other religious communities within and outside of Christianity.

Secondly, American denominations also function as associations that play a role in strengthening a sense of identity and belonging. In the situation of disestablishment and religious pluralism, a church or a denomination is maintained and developed by the voluntary participation and contribution of its members. This means that the denomination is a kind of voluntary association. The church as denomination tends to focus on its institutional aspect rather than its koinonial aspect. That tendency prevents the church from promoting real fellowship as the body of Christ. In other words, this denominationalism made the American churches fail to relate the church as an association to the church as a community of believers in a critical sense. By emphasising the freedom of their individual members, the churches approved of individualism, which resulted in an incredible multiplication of denominational bodies, and eventually in social fragmentation. Castro (1995:175) correctly points out that the spreading individualism and social fragmentation of USA society has been considerably influenced by the combination of Calvinism and Anabaptism, which focused on the Reformation principle of Christian freedom: this principle initially meant the right of individuals to enjoy civic freedom, but later it was understood as religious freedom for a unified denominational state.

Thirdly, American denominations have tried to accord with one another to fulfil the common vision that the church should lead the world according to God's decree. Until the

19th century the dominant ecclesiological model in the USA can be described by the term used by Van der Ven (1993a:28) "modern denomination". In this model the church or the denomination fully accepts modernisation: development/progress and grace are not in opposition, since rationalisation and faith can be harmonised. Its members appreciate institutional differentiation. They recognise the limits of the church's religious function and authority within the wider society. They thus tend to adapt to such cultural trends without any distancing of the dominant culture.

The common mission that the American Protestant churches generally pursued at the time was fourfold: at a congregational level, the churches aimed at membership growth by providing a sense of identity and belonging for their members; at a denominational level, they tried to extend their influence on society and their domain by establishing congregations and spreading them more broadly; at a national level, they corporately pursued the goal of achieving a Christian America and culture; and at a global level, they sought to actively help the USA achieve world order.

The American Protestant churches identified Christian culture with Western civilisation and modernisation, and considered the American dream as their common vision. The churches directed the national cultural current; they made 'a functional Christendom' culture dominant. Such a Christian culture prevented them from criticising the dominant culture of the world. They tended to maintain an uncritical view of culture and by engaging in the culture without critically reflecting on it, they were eventually controlled by it (Guder 1998:116).

These characteristics of the American Protestant ecclesiological prototype show that the churches at the time failed to take into careful consideration their fundamental nature as distinct from the world. They were not sensitive to God's praxis. Rather, they identified God's praxis with the church's praxis, or made it subject to the church's praxis. Social influence and domain extension through the church's mission were both regarded as the extension of God's kingdom. The churches thus came to lose their distinctive identity. Worldly power eventually invaded the lives of the churches and undermined their genuine spirituality.

In addition, the fact that the churches accepted religious diversity induced them to justify

church division and competition with one another. To win the game of increasing membership, the church began to be a vending church, which sells religious goods to religious consumers. The vitality which flows from such competition can in all likelihood create problems for the church. This religious consumerism accelerated the secularisation of the church: the church became compromised by the dominant secular culture and ideologies.

In sum, the American Protestant churches at the time were dominated by an ecclesio-centric ecclesiology and modernism, which produced secular humanism and progress ideology. Such an ecclesio- and anthropo-centric ecclesiology has been embedded in most churches in the USA: that ecclesiology lies at the root of all the American ecclesiological models, which will be dealt with in the following sections.

3.2.3 Impact on the Korean Church

The Korean Protestant churches were initially formed by the American missionaries who had been sent to Korea following the missionary movement which was active at the end of the 19th and in the early 20th centuries. Accordingly, American church traditions and theological and ideological thinking virtually underlay the traditions of the SKCs, which will be referred to in Chapter V.

Among the positive lessons that the Korean Church, at the time, learned from the American missionaries, was a sensitive adaptability to its uneasy hostile situation: a situation of religious pluralism, dominant traditional culture, and political, economical, and social subordination to Japanese rule. The Church was able to achieve the effective functioning and structuring of the church in that situation particularly through the following two responses.

On the one hand, the early Korean Church willingly accepted the Nevius Method which is primarily concerned with the church's inward life. This method greatly influenced church growth at the time. Strictly speaking, the Nevius Method originated in American congregationalism. From the beginning the Korean Church primarily focused on the

growth of congregations. Later, such congregationalism fostered competition and division among the churches in order to support denominationalism.

On the other hand, the early Korean Church tried to gain social credibility, outwardly. The Church participated so actively in the medical and educational works led by the American missionaries that it could provide hope for the future for the Korean people. The majority of national leaders who were deeply involved in the patriotic, independent, and social improvement movements were Christians. They believed that the only way in which their country could be rescued from Japanese rule was to rely on the power of Christianity and rapid accommodation to Western modernisation. Their belief resulted in the Korean accommodation to 'divine destiny' or 'God's providence' that American Puritanism and Calvinism had advocated to build a Christian America. Further, when the whole history of Korean Christianity is examined, it can easily be perceived that this Christianity continued to keep in Korean Christian minds a 'functional Christendom' mentality.

In conclusion, the ecclesiological prototype of the American Protestant churches became the root of ecclesiology in the SKCs.

3.3 The Fuller Church Growth Model

The proponents of the Fuller church growth movement often assume that the astronomical numerical growth of the SKCs proves the reliability of their theories (cf Wagner 1984:50). Most churches in South Korea warmly support and accept the theories. In contrast to these churches, in this section there will be a critical reflection on the ecclesiological model that the movement has produced.

3.3.1 The Historical Context and Cultural-Religious Traditions

3.3.1.1 The New Evangelical Movement and the Fuller Seminary

American evangelicals who had been socially dominant had been confronted by modernist,

liberal theologians since the 1920s. The former formed the 'Fundamental' group to respond more effectively to liberal theology. By the 1920s, Fundamentalists had a considerably strong influence on society, as well as within the church. After the 1930s, they declined due to inner conflict and division, and were considered to be separationists, anti-intellectualists and anti-culturalists. In this situation, yearning to restore and rehabilitate evangelicalism, young Fundamentalists formed the NAE (National Association of Evangelicals) in 1942. The NAE was supported so quickly by the churches on a national scale that it eventually became an influential Christian movement, which was called the New Evangelical Movement. Since the 1950s, this movement has played an important role in leading the American Protestant churches to achieve the following: the evangelistic campaign of Billy Graham; the establishment of the Fuller theological seminary; and the publication of a Christian journal, Christianity Today. The NAE continued to grow in its membership. At the present, it is a huge organisation, comprising about thirty denominations (Marsden 1987:4, 5, 7, 13). The NAE has also had great influence on the churches of the world (Park, Y K 1998a:281, 301-306).

The New Evangelical Movement still preserves the fundamental truths of faith that the old Fundamentalists confirmed, such as the inerrancy and inspiration of the Bible and justification. By tolerating the differences on other theological issues apart from the fundamental truths, however, the movement attempts to enhance the church unity. Moreover, it also focuses on the academical development of theology and the social responsibility of the church. In 1973, the NAE proclaimed 'The Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern', which affirmed the equation of both mandates of the church, evangelism and social responsibility. At the Lausanne Congress (1974), the declaration was confirmed again. But evangelicals almost immediately began to divide over the issue of priority. Most evangelicals, who include advocates of the church growth movement, have given priority to evangelism (cf Wagner 1987:101-111).

David F Wells (1993) points out the inner weakness of American evangelicalism, which shows signs of having been influenced by two prominent features of American popular democratic culture, individualism and conformity. His assessment is that evangelical theology can no longer function as a unifying power for faith, spirituality and service: it thereby loses its "sense of wonder" and "productive connections" (:292). Faced by the forces of consumerism, the evangelical churches focus on their own survival and the

therapeutic and relational concerns of their constituency (:221, 233, 237). In other words, "evangelicals have become remarkably worldly, accepting without debate, without question -- often without notice -- the assumptions, practices, and world-view of the larger American culture" (Noll, Plantinga & Wells 1995:497), under the impact of a coalition of forces represented by technology, urbanisation, democracy and capitalism which constitute modernity. The forces of modernity have dissolved community, the moral matrix of virtue, obligation, responsibility, and vision (Rasmussen 1993; Wells 1993, 1994).

3.3.1.2 The Church Growth Movement

Since 1965, Fuller Theological Seminary has developed a theory of mission and church growth under the guidance of Professor Donald McGavran, a central figure of the School of World Mission, and his colleagues. McGavran has published books on church growth, based on thirty years of missionary experience: *The Bridges of God* (1955) and *How Churches Grow* (1959). After that, he modified his missiology (which had been based on the 'People Movements', the theory of 'Receptivity', the differentiation of 'Discipling' and 'Perfecting', and the 'Homogeneous Unit Principle') into the church growth theory. This theory was well presented in his book, *Understanding church growth* ([1980] 1986). Since 1972, together with Professor C. Peter Wagner, he has started to apply the church growth theory to the American Church (Lee, Chun & Nelson 1986:228). McGavran's church growth theories have received much criticism as well as appreciation from the liberals, the evangelicals, and the reformed alike.

According to Charles R Taber (1983:118), the Fuller Church Growth model is founded uncompromisingly on the evangelical approach in mission: the church is seen as central to the purpose of God in the world. It is therefore not enough to convert individuals: these converts must *"become His disciples and dependable members of His ·Church"* (McGavran [1980] 1986:26. Italics in original). The multiplication of congregations and the numerical increase of each one thus become the central goal of mission and the single criterion of success, and even of faithfulness.

According to holistic church growth as described in Chapter 2.1 of this dissertation, the Fuller church growth model prefers the numerical dimension to any other dimensions of

church growth. This preference is also advocated by P Wagner, who leads the Fuller church growth theology at present. Wagner accepts the integral mission concept which was set out by the Lausanne Congress (1974): the affirmation of evangelism and socio-political involvement as part of Christian duty and the church's mission. He strongly recommends, however, that the priority should be given to evangelism for planning strategies of church growth (Wagner 1987:101-111).

Wagner (:108) demonstrates this recommendation through the examples of growth in membership in the American Protestant churches as follows:

> While there have been numerous cases of Christian social ministries and evangelism enjoying a symbiotic relationship, each helping the other, there are also some cases where it has not worked out well and where social activity has actually hindered church growth. I will grant that there may be unusual circumstances in which, due to disastrous social conditions, the best Christian decision might be to reverse the priorities temporarily. The rule is that we attempt to avoid involvement in social activities which predictably can reduce our evangelistic effectiveness. We cannot afford to sell our birthright for a pot of stew.

Following McGavran and Wagner, most advocates of the Church Growth movement are impatient to develop programmes and techniques that can promote effective evangelism and church growth. These advocates emphasise that all activities planned for church growth should be focused upon effective evangelism: the people movements; the Homogeneous Unit Principle; the relational evangelism; and receptivity concern (Mulholland 1991:68-69).

The crisis in consciousness, provoked by Kelley ([1972] 1986), regarding the membership decline in the mainline Protestant denominations and the Church Growth Movement of the Fuller Seminary has led to an avalanche of church growth studies, specialists, and organisations since 1972 (cf. Costas 1983:95; Towns, Vaughn & Seifert 1981). The Fuller Church Growth model has been developed within the following organisations, among others, (the principle leaders are indicated in parentheses): Barna Research Group, Ltd., Glendale, California (George Barna), Charles E. Fuller Institute, Pasadena, California (Carl George), Church Growth, Inc., Monrovia, California (Win Arn), Church Growth Institute, Lynchburg, Virginia (Elmer Towns), Willow Creek Association, Barrington, Illinois (Bill Hybels), and Christian Management Association, Diamond Bar, California (Barna [1988] 1992:170). These organisations advocate the contemporary popular ecclesiological model, referred to in the following section 3.3.1.4.

Briefly, the church growth movement regards the church as central to the purpose of God in the world (McGavran [1980] 1986:57-58). The movement gives priority particularly to evangelism over social responsibility. For the church growth movement evangelism aims at numerical growth. The movement is thus concerned with the Pentecostal churches and mega-churches which continue to grow markedly in membership.

3.3.1.3 The Pentecostal Movement

The Fuller church growth movement is deeply interested in the Pentecostal movement, since the Pentecostal churches have succeeded in growing rapidly in numbers. J Moltmann (Moltmann & Kuschel 1996:vii) refers to their success:

> Whereas the membership of the traditional churches is declining, that of the Pentecostal churches is rising -- all over the world. From the insignificant beginnings of a Black community in Azusa Street, Los Angeles, these churches have now developed into a mass movement with more than 400 million adherents, represented -- particularly, in great urban centers from New York through Mexico City to Seoul.

In his book on the growth and impact of the Pentecostal movement, *Fire from heaven*, H Cox (1995) writes in the same vein as Moltmann. Castro (1995:177) also says that "[o]bviously the phenomenal growth in its numbers, in its geographical spread and in the diversity of its autonomous organizations, requires us to take this movement very seriously".

The Pentecostal movement places emphasis on the recovery of the immediacy of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the gathered community and of the believers, which the early New Testament church experienced. The movement argues that the only key to the renewal of the church is the power of the Holy Spirit, which confronts the power of the devil and of evil spirits who lead the world to darkness and cause the church to go astray. Accordingly, the movement emphasises "a militant, spiritually aggressive church life, aimed at the redemption, healing and rescue of the whole world" with the Spirit of God who is struggling against the evil spirits (:ibid).

This movement is closely related to Congregationalism and the American revival movement: the Pentecostal movement takes into careful consideration the freedom of

personal faith and communal life in a congregation as Congregationalism does. Like the revival movement the Pentecostal movement focuses on personal spiritual experience. Therefore, by sharing similar religious experiences with one another, people become one in the movement regardless not only of theological differences but also of all kinds of human differences. H Cox (1995:45) describes the early stage of the Pentecostal movement as it started at Azusa Street in 1906 as follows:

> [M]any visitors reported that in the Azusa Street revival blacks and whites and Asians and Mexicans sang and prayed together. ... [T]he fact that blacks and whites, men and women, embraced each other at the tiny altar as they wept and prayed. ... [T]he color line was washed away by the blood.

This community united in the Holy Spirit was understood as the sign of a new messianic community, which would anticipate the restoration of the church and the coming of a new society (Hunter, H 1996:19-21). Such a community stretches out its hands particularly to the poor, the oppressed and the marginalised, and believes that the Holy Spirit is willing to liberate them from any kind of bondage through the miracle of healing and deliverance. As C B Johns (1996:45) says, for Pentecostals, healing and demonic deliverance are considered to be the manifestations of the power of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit, which means "transformational encounters through which sin-sick souls find *shalom*; where people marked by abandonment, solitude and impotency find a community that, without conditions, accepts them as one of their own. This new reality is one in which the untouchable are touched, not only by human hands, but by the divine". Pentecostal communities thus play the roles of healing and liberation.

In summary, along with listening to the 'third force' of Pentecostals, evangelicals are increasingly developing an adequate trinitarian mission theology and church growth theory based on the kingdom of God, and their mission includes all human concerns in this world (Glasser 1987:63).

By particularly encouraging ordinary church members to positively use spiritual gifts for productive growth of the church, the Fuller church growth movement embraces the Pentecostal charismatic movement (Glasser 1986:412-413; McClung 1985; McGavran 1986:120-123; Wagner 1986:124-132). R G Hutcheson (1981:107) says that "a very high percentage of the students at Fuller Theological Seminary are charismatic". The seminary hosted the special lectures of John Wimber's 'Signs and Wonders' and 'Power

Evangelism' for a long time (Glasser 1986:413-415).

3.3.1.4 The Contemporary Popular Ecclesiology: Various Movements Toward Effectiveness

The Fuller church growth model has encouraged the emergence of contemporary church movements with a disposition towards effectiveness-centred ecclesiology such as the entrepreneurial church, the full-service church, the therapeutic church, the purpose-driven church, the seekers-sensitive church and the marketing-oriented church (cf Kenneson & Street 1997:17-21). These movements, along with the Fuller model positively, utilise various skills, insights, and social sciences such as sociology, pedagogy, communication theory, organisational theory, systems theory, management theory, and marketing theory. They are thus scientific-method-oriented and tend to focus on effective growth in membership rather than on the faithfulness of ecclesiology.

As posited by George R Hunsberger (1998:5), such a contemporary effectiveness-oriented ecclesiology in the USA church comes from the dominant religious heritage of religious consumerism.

> [A] church is basically a vendor of religious goods and services in a competitive religious marketplace. Members and non-members alike are viewed as religious consumers and church staff and governance structures are assumed to be responsible for producing programs and offering services that supply what the body of consumers wants and needs.

3.3.2 A Critical Evaluation of the Ecclesiological Characteristics of the Fuller Church Growth Model

The Fuller church growth model is sociological, missional and evangelical-charismatic in its nature. Towns (1986:67-70) summarises Church Growth theology and its methodology as follows: 1) The Church Growth theology aims to carry out the Great Commission, Mt 28:18-20. 2) The Church Growth theology is based on biblical principles. 3) The biblical principles of Church Growth are complemented by results to be confirmed through scientific research. These results must be in harmony with the biblical principles. Church Growth is an interdisciplinary area which draws its content from several fields: history, education, sociology, anthropology, theology, etc. 4) The biblical principles of Church

Growth lead to programmes and techniques which tend to change with time and culture. Therefore, Church Growth workers must be grounded in Biblical principles and yet be flexible to determine what programmes and techniques will best solve their problems and cause their church to grow. 5) Finally, a biblical model of the church which directs effective church growth is proposed for a specific church in a particular situation.

Arthur F Glasser (1987:55-56) asserts that Donald A McGavran made a significant contribution to the development of Evangelical mission theology by proposing a different emphasis in mission from that of the traditional concept which gives priority to soul-saving and evangelism.

> What counted in the Evangelical mission theology of the late 1940s and early 1950s was personal discipleship for the fulfillment of the Great Commission. This truncated and individualistic nature of evangelical Christianity began to be transformed into the first consideration of the multiplication of churches by McGavran who was a pioneer of the church growth movement.

The contribution of the Fuller church growth school to the theology of church growth can be described as follows: Firstly, it stimulated the church, and made it take a greater interest in its life and growth. Secondly, it emphasised the positive factors of the church rather than the negative, thereby helping the church to propagate constructively the word of salvation. Thirdly, it developed various strategies of church growth utilising social sciences, such as sociology and anthropology. Fourthly, it had a beneficial influence on the church's evangelism (Wright 1977:12-13; Shenk 1983:vii)

But many theologians have concluded that the basis for Fuller's theories is biblically and theologically weak. These critiques indicate that Fuller church growth theology is number-oriented, is driven by American pragmatism, and commits a serious error in that it clearly divides human beings into spiritual and socio-political dimensions. Its Homogeneous Unit Principle is also criticised for being in discord with the concept of the universal church (Verkuyl 1978:185ff; Bosch 1983).

According to Taber's (1983:119) analysis, the Fuller church growth model works deductively from two foundations. One foundation is a narrowed-down version of the evangelical hermeneutic and theology. From this basis the model deduces that everywhere and in all circumstances the numerical increase of the church is the one goal for which

everything else may be sacrificed.

The other foundation for the Fuller church growth model is a structural-functional model of cultural anthropology. On this basis the model builds a set of definitions for certain concepts and a kit of pragmatic techniques for fostering the desired growth. Moreover, due to the static view of the world and the cultural relativism which are inherent in this model of anthropology, Church Growth theorists sometimes tend to be insufficiently critical of existing socio-cultural realities in context. David Bosch's (1983:237-240) critique of the Homogeneous Unit Principle is that the principle induces the church to align itself with the dominant culture of the world.

Acknowledging McGavran's significant contribution to the criticism of the 'mission station' strategy, Lesslie Newbigin ([1978] 1995:121-159) also criticises McGavran's church growth theory on the following three counts: 1) the relationship of numerical church growth to the message of the kingdom; 2) the meaning of conversion and the relation between discipling and perfecting; and 3) the relation of Gospel and church to culture. Newbigin points out that the New Testament does not support McGavran's insistence upon numerical growth as the criterion of success in mission (:125-129). He also reveals that McGavran misunderstands the essential witness of the church by differentiating between 'discipling' (or conducting evangelism for conversion) and 'perfecting' (or teaching ethical obedience). Instead, Newbigin insists that the church's struggle towards 'perfecting' in the sense of being more perfectly conformed to the model of the suffering Servant of the Lord can never be in competition with the work of 'discipling', which in fact is not human work but that of the Holy Spirit himself (:141). Finally, Newbigin criticises the Fuller church growth model because it preserves a neutral position towards culture and entices the church into a compromise with the dominant culture and ideologies which undermine a serious commitment to the message of the Gospel (:141-159).

These critiques prompted a response from the Pasadena team of the Fuller Seminary. Academics like Alan Tippett, Paul G Hiebert, Charles Kraft and Arthur Glasser tried to correct McGavran's theories. A Glasser (1986:418-419) proposes the revised contemporary tasks of church growth movement as follows: 1) focusing on church renewal; 2) critical reflection on the uncritical acceptance of cultural Christianity and the

toleration of the idolatry of nationalism; 3) redefining the nature and mission of the church in relation to the kingdom of God; 4) maintaining the God-given priority to preach the liberating gospel and make disciples of all nations; and 5) evangelising the world's huge urban centres as the central task of churches and missions today.

But C Peter Wagner has emerged increasingly as McGavran's successor, both in style and interests (Conn 1983:80-85). Further, Wagner fully welcomes the emergence of the contemporary effectiveness-oriented ecclesiology, viewing them as the sound development of the Fuller church growth model (cf Barna 1990, [1988] 1992, 1993).

In contrast to Wagner who advocates the contemporary popular ecclesiology, some scholars question whether this ecclesiology can lead the church in the right direction: they presume that the ecclesiology can provide quick solutions, but tend to fail in proposing sustained church growth. Instead, a sound ecclesiology is recommended -- one which keeps the balance between its faithfulness and its effectiveness and considers ecclesial change at a deeper level concerning the identity, vision, and direction of the church (Dietterich [1989] 1993; Hadaway & Roozen 1995:65; Dietterich & Ziemer 1998:16; Webster 1992; Dawn 1995; Wells 1994; Kenneson & Street 1997).

In brief, the Fuller church growth model virtually supports ecclesiocentric and anthropocentric ecclesiology: the meanings of the church, the church's mission, the Gospel, and salvation are narrowly understood and applied (Guder 1994:146-153). Even though the new evangelical movement appreciates that both social actions and evangelism are the mandate of God in the church's mission, the advocates of the Fuller church growth model still give priority, in effect, to evangelism which results in the numerical growth of church membership and the multiplication of congregations. The Fuller church growth model, thus, tends to neglect any other dimension of church growth besides the numerical one. It is no wonder that the model is number-oriented, church-centred, and method-centred. Michael Griffith (1980:145-146) correctly indicates that the Fuller's theories are method-centred, program-centred, success-oriented, and lacking in theologising. Os Guinness (1993) argues that the megachurch / church growth movement virtually flirts with modernity, which is contrary to the Gospel.

3.3.3 Impact of the Fuller Church Growth Model on the SKCs

The Fuller church growth movement has greatly influenced the SKCs. Researches done by the Korean conservative evangelical churches show that they particularly tend to follow the Fuller church growth theory unequivocally. Many of McGavran and Wagner's books were translated into Korean and published in Korea, and their theories have been propounded by most theological schools for evangelicals, for example, ACTS (Asian Center for Theological Studies), a seminary in Seoul (Lee, Chun & Nelson 1986:242), and the Institute of Church Growth in Korea (Director: S H Myung). The SKCs have enthusiastically learned and practised the movement's theories without any critical reflection.

Even though the SKCs, recently facing decline in every dimension of church growth, have been reflecting on their problems, they are still driven by the desire for numerical, quantitative, and visible growth. It is correct to say that most Korean churches are oriented towards success and quantitative growth under the influence of the Fuller church growth movement and the contemporary popular (effectiveness-centred) ecclesiology in the American churches.

3.4 The American Mainline Model

3.4.1 The Historical Context and Cultural-Religious Traditions

3.4.1.1 Liberalism, the Social Gospel Movement and the Ecumenical Movement

R G Hutcheson (1981:39, italics original) defines the American mainline in the Protestant churches as "the *large historical denominations having memberships reflecting great diversity, but leadership and official positions putting them generally in the liberal, ecumenically inclined and socially concerned wing of Christianity*".

Historically speaking, the nineteenth century consensus in American Protestantism was

evangelical (:40). In the early twentieth century, through paying attention to problems in growing cities due to urbanisation in the USA, the social gospel movement emerged. The movement was led by the left-liberals, who maintained that the church has a responsibility towards the common good of society. The liberals or modernists were aggressively involved in social work to eliminate social structural problems and to uphold a stable society. Throughout the modernist-fundamentalist controversy of the first third of the twentieth century the liberals were clearly in control in the American Protestant churches. However, mainline leadership did not long remain far to the left. The trauma of the Second World War made the mainline churches cluster in the religious centre. Since the 1940s they have leaned on neo-orthodoxy theologically, which presented a genuine return to the middle under the influence of K Barth (:39). Due to the emergence of the 'death of God' theology in the 1960s, the neo-orthodox consensus of the middle began to break up. As a result, the relative positioning of the mainline churches today shows the following two trends: one is a more liberal-left direction, and the other is a swing back toward the centre (:40). Generally speaking, American Protestant 'mainline' means "liberal, ecumenical, and social activist" (:36-38).

The American mainline churches which also assumed the leadership in the world church following the position of the USA as a world power, have led the ecumenical movement since the WCC was formed in 1948 (cf Costas 1993). The ecumenical movement understands mission as the missio Dei, implying God's total activity, His hidden activity, and His direct renewing action in the world. Accordingly, the movement emphasises that God also works outside of the church, and that the church must be involved in a radical renewal of the world as part of God's work, such as, the remedying of the structural ills of the world and the reconstruction of an ideal human society or shalom community. In its method of mission the emphasis is laid on word, namely, the Christian message for liberation, and deed, the struggle for justice, peace, and a new order. The mission of the church is focused on social actions which promote the incarnational dimension of church growth. The American mainline churches tend not to evangelise, or to plant new churches, or to increase church membership (cf Brooks 1990:177-197; Warner 1990:198-223).

3.4.1.2 Predicaments in the Mainline Churches

In 1972, Dean Kelley published a very influential book entitled *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*. In it, he documented a striking shift in the fortunes of America's oldest and largest Protestant denominations. After two centuries of growth which culminated in the 1950s, virtually all mainline Protestant denominations began losing members. The losses, however, were far from uniform. Liberal denominations were declining much more rapidly than conservative denominations, and most conservative churches were in fact growing (cf Iannaccone [1989] 1994:1180). Even though Kelley's book has been criticised by some sociologists in the mainline churches, nevertheless, according to Iannaccone's (:1181) evaluation, more than twenty years have done nothing to weaken the force of Kelley's argument. The book has indeed evoked a great interest in church growth and decline throughout the USA church.

3.4.1.3 The Congregational Studies Movement and the Project Team for Congregational Studies (PTCS)

Wade Clark Roof (1996:450-451) refers to some fundamental questions, which provoked the USA church to launch the congregational studies movement, as follows:

> The fact that many evangelical churches were growing while many liberal churches were losing members especially during the 1970s prompted a new research agenda: Was religious growth, or decline, linked to institutional dynamics? What about demographic and social context? Might there be a mix of these two sets of factors that was optimal to the health of religious organizations?

Initial answers to the questions were provided by Kelley's book and the Fuller church growth movement (see section 3.3) which stimulated the USA church to launch the congregational studies movement, and accelerated the development of methodologies for church growth theory.

The congregational studies movement was initiated by James Hopewell and has been strongly advocated by some sociology of religion scholars (see Introduction to this dissertation 1.6) who devote their attention to congregational life and attempt to develop methods for increasing the disciplined understanding of congregations (Dietterich, I T 1991:13).

Then, for two decades there has been an avalanche of books and articles on congregational studies written by scholars who belong to the mainline church, as well as by proponents of the congregational studies movement[10]. This has resulted in the remarkable development of a methodology in the congregational studies movement in the USA.

The basic content of congregational studies is competently introduced in the book entitled *Handbook for Congregational Studies*, produced by the Project Team for Congregational Studies (Carroll, Dudley & McKinney 1986). This book explains how to analyse a congregation sociologically, anthropologically, and demographically and how to apply congregational studies to the congregation. In other words, the book provides techniques for studying the congregation as well as a framework for understanding the nature of the congregation. Dealing with a congregation's identity, social context, process, and programme, the book, according to the authors, focuses primarily on the congregation in its complexity, and secondarily on the effective application of particular approaches to the study of a particular congregation (:3).

According to Nieder-Heitmann's (1999) study, the PTCS has the following characteristics: firstly, the PTCS aims to help congregations to primarily analyse their own micro contexts in the light of the mega-trends of the macro context. Emphasis is given to the analysis of the local context (:85). Hence the PTCS proposes a contextual (or local) ecclesiology.

Secondly, the PTCS positively considers social scientific methods as analytical tools, by which congregations can analyse their contexts for themselves (:84). Stokes & Roozen (1991:186-187) argue that the PTCS rediscovered the importance of the social sciences for the analysis of congregations and their context:

> The establishment of congregational studies was contingent upon the coming into being of the disciplines of sociology and anthropology, in particular. It simply never occurred to anyone to rigorously examine the local congregation in its concrete particularity until social scientific methods were applied to analyzing human and organizational behaviour.

Thirdly, the PTCS encourages congregations to discover their own identity, which has

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[10] The following congregational studies conducted in the USA can be recommended: Carroll 1978; Hoge & Roozen 1979; Dudley 1979, 1983; Coalter et al 1990a, 1990b, 1992; Finke & Stark 1992; Roozen & Hadaway 1993; Carroll, Dudley & McKinney 1986; Ammerman et al 1998.

been formed by their traditions and the American culture (Nieder-Heitmann 1999:101). The PTCS's "strong preference is that congregations should not isolate themselves from their environment" (ibid): it assumes it to be natural that the traditions of congregations and their identity reflect core values of American culture. Hence the PTCS espouses a 'natural' ecclesiology, "which views the Christian congregation as an immediate microcosm of all society's attempts to associate -- in essence merely another human institution" (:108; cf Dietterich [1989] 1993:357). The PTCS thus concentrates on the understanding of the sociological trends that influence congregations (Nieder-Heitmann 1999:93), and tends to encourage the congregations to accommodate themselves to the American dominant culture (:102, 106). Emphasis is placed on the church's sociological dimension and its complementary relationship to the world. The church is regarded as a subsystem of society: it exists on the same plane as other human communities.

Fourthly, the PTCS's tendency towards accommodating the dominant modern culture results in an anthropocentric ecclesiology (:98, 106; cf Ammerman et al 1998:9). The PTCS tends to theologise within the framework of modernistic thinking: the human being is understood as intrinsically capable of moral improvement and able to accomplish the steady progress of society. As a result, God's mission is presumed to be identified with and even subjected to human praxis. The PTCS is thus concerned with gradual church development or problem-solving rather than with church transformation in accordance with God's mission and praxis.

Fifthly, the PTCS does not explicitly or fully affirm the normative authority of the Bible in constructing its ecclesiology: recently "it has virtually stopped referring to Scripture for its ecclesiology" (Nieder-Heitmann 1999:100). Instead, it prefers to speak of a 'faith tradition' that has different 'carriers', of which 'holy books' form but one category (ibid; cf Ammerman et al 1998).

Sixthly, referring to *Studying congregations* (Ammerman et al 1998), Nieder-Heitmann (1999:108) notes that the PTCS's natural and anthropocentric ecclesiology has recently tended to proceed towards relativism in its theology of religions. "The PTCS has recently made a dramatic shift" from the particular Christian story or confessional stance to the common-truth-seeking stance in inter-religious dialogue: "congregations are viewed as people voluntarily associating on the basis of shared values, and serving the community

on the basis of generally accepted cultural values" (:109). He continues that "[t]his leads to a functional ecclesiology shaped by the basic tenets of American culture" (:118-119). Here, the uniqueness of the Christian congregations is disregarded.

Finally, Nieder-Heitmann (:121) argues that "the PTCS has been part of a wider movement where issues of management and effectiveness have been central". Hence, an effectiveness-centred ecclesiology is advocated.

In sum, the PTCS focuses on a multi-disciplinary approach to ecclesiology in context. "It conceives of itself as practising a new brand of practical theology. This *theological discipline* aims at enabling congregations to develop a contextual ecclesiology in North America" (:125), and their own ecclesiology, in particular (:126).

3.4.2 A Critical Evaluation of the Ecclesiological Characteristics of the American Mainline Model

The ecclesiological model of the American mainline churches stems in part from perceived weaknesses in the evangelical model: its pietism, its moralism, its privatism, and its social irrelevance. The mainline model focuses on the mission of the church to address and remedy directly the structural ills of the world (Taber 1983:118).

Even though the mainline or ecumenical model views the contemporary world much more seriously, it is nevertheless founded on modern ideas and thinking patterns which derive from Western liberal or radical philosophical traditions (:119). The model sees the mission of the church within the framework of modernistic thinking: the proponents of the model believe that human endeavour in human rational thinking and scientific research can enable human beings to analyse all human problems, remedy the problems effectively, and eventually achieve the good society. In other words, the model views humans as intrinsically capable of moral improvement, and sees the Kingdom of God as the crown of the steady progression of Christianity under the orientation of the Enlightenment (Bosch 1991:334). The model emphasises God's immanence rather than His transcendence, and the immediate betterment of the contemporary world by human praxis rather than the

eschatological transformation of the world by God's praxis. It thus tends to equate salvation with human solutions to the world's social problems and to make free use of the Marxist analysis of these problems and, often, of the Marxist prescriptions for their solution (Taber 1983:118). As a result, God's mission is identified with and even subjected to human praxis. Hence, according to Charles L Campbell (1997:38), the primary content of theology in this model becomes anthropological.

Realising that, contrary to their expectation, structural problems in society could not be easily solved, the mainline churches lost vitality and membership, and the congregation studies movement emerged from within them. This movement assumed that the restoration of the mainline churches might depend on the vitality of each congregation. It thus refocused on the healthy growth of congregations.

The congregational studies movement has contributed towards the deeper understanding of the nature of the congregation itself, and of its sociological reality, in particular. The movement has helped congregations to gain a critical and appreciative perspective on their dilemmas and strengths (Hopewell 1987:xi). It has tended to focus on local contextual and local institutional factors which influence the ethos and life of a particular congregation. Accordingly, it has also contributed to "a responsive and productive dialogue with the needs of American society and the commitment of local church members to live out their faith in relation to the social concerns of their local communities" (Dietterich 1991:23). In brief, the movement proposes a contextual ecclesiology for the USA church.

In spite of such contributions, the congregational studies movement tends to lack explicit theological reflection. The proponents of the movement do indeed share the theological conviction "that congregations are key bearers and shapers of the faith tradition and that God is at work in and through them" (Carroll, Dudley & McKinney 1986:19). They also affirm an incarnational view of the church: "God's presence to the world in the ministry and mission of Jesus is continued in and through the life and ministry of local congregations" (ibid). In this respect, the proponents believe that congregational studies can make a contribution "to congregations as they seek to be faithful in continuing the ministry of Jesus in their particular time and place" (ibid). However, the movement has emphasised the sociological reality and the descriptive analysis of the congregation rather than the congregation's theological reality and normative direction (Dietterich 1991:23).

Recently, the congregational studies movement has paid some attention to the theological reality of congregations. Nancy T Ammerman and her associates (1997:355-366) define congregations as "particular spaces of sociability", "connected communities", and "generators of social capital". These definitions imply that a congregation is far more complex: it is "not merely a collection of individual consumers but a community, a public, a collective, a piece of the larger society" (:354). What is more important is that Ammerman et al (:370) give expression to the theological distinctiveness of the congregations as follows:

> What happens in congregations is different from what happens in other social gatherings, then. Because they are religious, transcendent experiences and ideas about God are central to the values congregations protect and disseminate among their members.

In *Studying congregations: a new handbook* (Ammerman et al 1998:16), the authors recognise that congregational studies can be fundamentally "a theological task". The new handbook thus includes a chapter on theology and introduces a practical theological methodology. The first chapter of the book, entitled 'Theology in the congregation', is written by Robert Schreiter (1998:23-39), and bears witness to a theological development in the congregational studies movement. Schreiter (cf 1985, 1997) is a renowned author in the field of local (or contextual) theology. He points to the 'praxis' approach of the new practical theology in studying congregations:

> Practical theology is tied closely to the lives of congregations and individuals. Rather than moving from faith to life (theory to practice), it moves from life to faith and then back to life (practice to theory to practice). Practical theology begins, therefore, by describing the situation of the congregation and then correlates that situation with the faith and the beliefs of the congregation. From there, practical theology moves back to the life of the congregation to a refocused practice (Schreiter 1998:24).

Nevertheless, the congregational studies movement still needs to pay more attention to the theological dimension of the congregations. The uniqueness of Christian congregations should be considered, their distinctiveness from other communities. A critical ecclesiology should also be emphasised, which engages itself in critical reflection on cultural trends in the dominant American culture. Furthermore, the movement should endeavour to propose a constructive ecclesiology, which is both relevant to the context of the congregations and faithful to the Gospel and God's mission and praxis.

The movement's lack of explicit theological reflection tends to lead it to an uncritical

accommodation of itself to the dominant modern culture which emphasises the right of individuals and the primacy of personal choice (Hall 1997:24). According to Brueggemann (1978:11-13), the congregational studies movement reflects the ethos of consumerism founded in scientism and the Enlightenment, and thus hesitates to proceed to an "alternative consciousness" for the prophetic ministry of the church. Inagrace T Dietterich (1991:22-23) argues that the movement emphasises continuity more than innovation, and a developmental progress of direction rather than a substitution, alteration or transformation of fundamental character. Stokes & Roozen (1991:189) also recognise that the movement tends to reflect "a built-in conservatism in uncritically accepting the perspectives of any particular subculture".

In the search for ways to describe and understand the concrete and practical life of the congregation, the advocates of the congregational studies movement tend to admit the social sciences to be decisively and positively appropriate, without a critical sense of either how scientific they actually are or whether their normative presuppositions are philosophically sound or theologically defensible.

Inagrace T Dietterich ([1989] 1993:357-361) outlines the historical development of methodology in congregational studies: the currently popular area of congregational studies is firmly entrenched within the perspective of modernity and oriented to the recognition of and appreciation for the social reality of the congregation. Owing to the development of social science, the congregation has become an object to be observed, dissected, analysed, and criticised in order to further academic goals by the application of social scientific methods. This orientation fits well within the subject/object split of modernity. While acknowledging "the pitfall of reductionism", many theologians now show a tendency to accept positively the notion that theology must rely upon the methodology, presuppositions and conclusions of social sciences such as sociology, economy, psychology, anthropology and ethnography. This reliance is necessary because theology deals with "questions of ultimate causation and meaning" rather than with the concrete, practical dynamics of church life (cf Dudley & Hilgert 1987:7). Thus understanding and describing congregations is left to the social sciences which are viewed as impartial and value-neutral disciplines, in contrast to theology which is normative and prescriptive (Dietterich, I T 1991:52). Briefly, most advocates of the congregational studies movement seem to reduce ecclesiology to sociology: a congregation can be

comprehensively analysed by social scientific methods alone.

What is need therefore are discussions which will challenge the presuppositions of social sciences, as Bellah and his associates (1985:301) indicate:

> Social science is not a disembodied cognitive enterprise. It is a tradition, or a set of traditions, deeply rooted in the philosophical and humanistic (and, to more than a small extent, the religious) history of the West. Social science makes assumptions about the nature of persons, the nature of society, and the relation between persons and society. It also, whether it admits it or not, makes assumptions about the good person and a good society and considers how far these conceptions are embodied in our actual society. Becoming conscious of the cultural roots of these assumptions would remind the social scientists that these assumptions are contestable and the choice of assumptions involves controversies that lie deep in the history of Western thought.

A critical and sustained discussion of the relation of theology to the social sciences is thus greatly needed, because theologians and churches have increasingly both used, and envied, the human sciences. "Theological understandings of the church and its calling must be in service as the criteria by which the discoveries of the social sciences are critically analysed and utilized" (Dietterich, I T [1989] 1993:350; cf Browning 1994). But theologians are also prone to reductionism (Hendriks 1995:36). In this respect, theology and the social sciences must stand in a mutually critical and constructive relationship in order to construct a comprehensive ecclesiology (Dietterich, I T [1989] 1993:350).

At the same time, the congregational studies movement should be supplemented by the research on the Third World church, whose situation is very different from the situation in the USA. The Third World church, situated at the periphery of the world religious order, has been greatly influenced by the First World church, which provided the mission churches to the Third World and has been at the core of the world religious order. On the other hand, the Third World church which operates in the context of a weak civil-society, but within a strong authoritarian nation-state, cannot escape the powerful influence of the nation-state power. Therefore, in the case of congregational research regarding the Third World church, the global situation and the nation-state's influence on the church should be given careful consideration. In this respect, the given hypotheses and methods provided by congregational studies in the USA, should be revised considerably by those and be proposed anew in the light of research on the church in the Third World (cf Stokes & Roozen 1991:189; Augsburger 1986).

3.4.3 Impact of the Mainline Model on the SKCs

The American mainline model has not influenced the SKCs to a great extent and the congregational studies movement, in particular, has not been introduced to any great extent in the SKCs, since conservative evangelicalism has always predominated in mainline Korean Protestantism. In contrast, the mainline model has directly influenced the formation of *Minjung* theology among the liberals in the SKCs. Considering that every mainline church exhibits a similarity in its thinking and cultural patterns, particularly with regard to the modernistic mentality and world-views, it can be presumed that the ecclesiological problems facing the American mainline model may also appear in the mainline of the SKCs. In this respect, a critical self-reflection on ecclesiology in relation to culture, which has emerged in the American mainline churches, provides good insight for the SKCs' self-analysis and for finding a new direction for their future [See the following section 3.5.2].

3.5 Summary and Conclusion

3.5.1 Commonality in the American Ecclesiological Models

In the above-mentioned dominant American ecclesiological models, three commonalities can be detected: firstly, American Protestantism has generally forged a compromise with the dominant culture. This compromise is called "the Protestant declension" or "the Protestant Deformation" by James Kurth, since American Protestantism has tended to replace the worship of God with the expression of the self (Kurth 1998:227-230, 235-236, 238). Discerning the process of the Protestant declension, Kurth (:227-230) critically indicates that most American Protestant churches have been held captive by the dominant secular culture. In the first half of the twentieth century, he contends, the churches positively supported the secular American Creed: free markets and equal opportunity, free elections and liberal democracy, and constitutionalism and the rule of the law. The various Protestant creeds were replaced by the American Creed. Since the 1970s, elements of the American Creed have been generalised into universal human rights. US intervention in all

international affairs has been sacralised in the name of the American Creed to pursue universal human rights. "Today, with the United States left as the sole superpower, this deformation enjoys its greatest global influence" (:221). The American Creed is doubtlessly a creation of the functional Christendom mentality of American Protestantism.

However, following the cultural shift, America has been pervaded by an extreme form of individualism. Such individualism has also been promoted by American Protestantism, which always gives priority to individual freedom over community formation.

> It was changing from an industrial to a post-industrial economy and thus from a producer to a consumer mentality. It was also changing from a modern to a postmodern society and thus from an ideology of "possessive individualism" to an ideology of "expressive individualism," the new post-industrial, consumer, postmodern, expressive individualist. America was embodied in the "me generation" -- the baby boomer generation: the rights (definitely not the responsibility) of the individual (definitely not of the community) were the highest, indeed the only, good (:235-236).

> The individual's rights are independent of any hierarchy or community, traditions or customs, in which that individual might be situated. ... Numerous social analysts have noted that the United States has become in the past two decades a new kind of political society, what has been called "the republic of choice." ... The ideology of expressive individualism thus reaches all aspects of society; it is a total philosophy. The result appears to be totally opposite from the totalitarianism of the state, but it is a sort of totalitarianism of the self (:236).

> Expressive individualism ... represents the logical conclusion and the *ultima ratio* of the secularization of the Protestant religion. The Holy Trinity of original Protestantism, the Supreme Being of Unitarianism, and finally the United States of the American Creed have all been dethroned and replaced by the imperial self. The long declension of the Protestant Reformation has reached its end point in the Protestant Deformation. The Protestant Deformation is a Protestantism without God, a reformation against all forms (ibid).

In his book, *Selling God*, R L Moore (1994:220) is also critical of the tendency that most American churches have been more concerned with profits than prophets: they have "lost the capacity to be critical of the mores of American business and society, so assimilated were they into the culture of the market-place and business" (Pattison 1997:164).

Secondly, a common ecclesiological characteristic of the above-mentioned models is that they are effectiveness- and success-oriented. H Stadelmann (1998:223) attests that *success* is the norm, for most American churches, whether they focus on traditional confession or context or social science. He calls this dominant tendency of practical theology in the USA church a merely 'pragmatic theology' (:219).

We do not mean to imply that effective functioning and successful results in church ministry are not important. Further, we believe that traditions, social science and context should be seriously considered. However, our insistence is that not any one of them -- tradition, social science, context nor even success, - can be the norm of practical theology. Instead, the norm of practical theology must be God's praxis and mission, which we shall refer to in the following chapter.

The final commonality is that there are inherent flaws in the dominant American ecclesiological models. They are not adequate to our concern about a practical theological ecclesiology, which deals seriously with the relationship between the church, the Gospel, and the world-culture in the light of God's praxis and mission. We shall discuss a practical theological ecclesiology in the following chapter 4.3.

In sum, the biggest problem facing the USA church is its inadequate understanding of practical theology. The primary issue for the church is to rebuild an ecclesiology in the light of a sound understanding of practical theology. The SKCs also face the same problem: sound understanding of practical theology and the (re)construction of a practical ecclesiology are urgently needed.

3.5.2 The USA Church's Self-Reflection: towards a Sound Practical Ecclesiology

Careful investigation of a sound understanding of practical theology and the construction of a practical ecclesiology are being undertaken by the following three groups in the American churches: the Gospel and Our Culture Network (GOCN); the Alban Institution, and the Center for Parish Development (CPD). These groups, which have an important influence on the American churches today, aim at the renewal of the church through a combination of sound theology with right practice.

As referred to in the Introduction of this dissertation [1.6], the GOCN, the Alban Institute, and the CPD provide concrete consultations for a congregation or a denomination to

confirm its new vision and clear mission. Further, they help it to make a faithful mission statement and to plan effective strategies for practice. If necessary, they even evaluate the results produced by the congregation (cf Dietterich & Ziemer 1998:15-28; Granberg-Michaeslon 1998:29-36).

Since the above three groups will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter VII [7.4.5, 7.4.6 & 7.4.7], this section delimits the following commonalities in the three groups:

1) All of them try to read the current American context and to predict the change of the context. To interpret a situation they use social scientific methods, as well as theological methods.

2) By critically reflecting on the dominant ecclesiology in the American churches and the cultural currents on the basis of solid theological views, they redefine the nature and identity of the church.

3) They also seek the best direction which the church should pursue and their contextual mission in the light of God's praxis and mission.

4) They encourage the church to grow healthily and holistically in every dimension.

3.5.3 Some Remarks for the Next Chapters

The three groups mentioned in the last section [3.5.2] focus on the same theme that is the concern of our study: the sound understanding of practical theology and the (re)construction of a practical ecclesiology. Accordingly, the following chapters will positively appropriate the endeavours the groups have made. The next chapter (IV) deals with the sound understanding of a practical theology and the (re)construction of practical ecclesiology as a theoretical framework for healthy church growth. Then, in Chapter V, VI and VII the theoretical framework is applied concretely to the SKCs.

CHAPTER IV. A New Approach to Church Growth Studies for the SKCs: towards a Sound Theological Method and a Base Theory for Church Growth

4.1 Introduction: Church Growth Studies for the SKCs

Church growth studies can be described as a sub-discipline of practical theology, which aims not only to analyse the growth of a particular church, whether at a congregational, a denominational or a national level, but also to propose an alternative model or direction for the church's healthy growth. In line with these aims, this section proposes that church growth studies should be developed within the framework of practical theology and a practical ecclesiology, by which the church's growth is well analysed and rightly directed. For our study, practical theology will serve as a sound method of theologising and practical ecclesiology as a base theory.

This study favours the term 'practical theology' to represent an activity in which theory and praxis are hermeneutically interrelated, and where church and society are contextually interrelated. A 'practical ecclesiology' is defined as an approach to formulating a contextual systematic theory of what the church is and should do. Accordingly, practical ecclesiology serves as a base theory for church growth studies. A practical ecclesiology concentrates on the praxis and functions of the church in a specific context and not on a more general formulation of the nature of the church and the church's dogma, which is the main concern of systematic theology. A practical ecclesiology also concerns itself with ecclesiological models, which are developed within a specific context. This implies that the church is only truly the church when it is constantly in the process of being reformed according to the Gospel within a specific context. In an ecclesiology there is always the danger of taking a specific pattern from the Bible and applying it directly to the present time without keeping in mind the differences in time, culture and context. It is important to keep in mind the historic difference between then and now: no pattern or model can exist permanently. In this respect, a practical ecclesiology helps the church to seek ecclesiological models pertinent to God's calling of the church in its present contextual situation.

This chapter will first undertake a sound understanding of practical theology: its historical development and current trends; and a definition of practical theology and its characteristics and methodologies. Then, a practical ecclesiology will be described: the place of a practical ecclesiology in practical theology; a definition, the characteristics and contents of a practical ecclesiology. Finally, church growth studies will be explained in the light of a practical ecclesiology.

4.2 Practical Theology

4.2.1 A Historical Overview of Practical Theology

In his paper presented at the conference of the International Academy of Practical Theology, 1995, James W Fowler (1995:1) describes the contemporary movement of practical theology as "a quiet but deep-going revolution":

> For the last two decades we have been involved in a quiet but deep-going revolution in the self-understanding and work of practical theology. This is leading to changes in theological education and in the role of theology in the churches and societies from which the members of this conference come. This revolution centers in the recovery and re-emergence of practical theology as a discipline.

The revolution in practical theology which Fowler referred to, must be deeply involved in the history of theology as a whole. By examining the evolution of theology, it is possible to trace the historical change of practical theology.

This evolution of theology can be briefly sketched according to three phases. The first period began with the New Testament church and continued up to the rise of medieval universities. In this era, Farley (1983a) attests, theology was "*theologia*". '*Theologia*' has two senses: theology as *habitus* and theology as discipline. Theology as *habitus* refers to "an actual, individual cognition of God and things related to God" (:31), ingrained as a disposition or habit (*habitus*) of the soul, which attains faith and has eternal happiness as its goal. In other words, this concept of theology which conveys the comprehensive knowledge of God aims to help believers develop wisdom in every sphere of their lives.

Theology as *habitus* thus seeks for *sapientia*. On the other hand, theology as discipline (science) evolved from the intellectual responses of the church to the challenges of heresies within and of competitive intellectual ideologies from without in the second through the fourth centuries (Fowler 1995:2). Theology as discipline is a self-conscious scholarly enterprise of understanding (Farley 1983a:31), which accompanies and enlarges theology as *habitus*, generating the tradition of Christian thought over the ages. Put simply, what matters in the first phase is that there was a thematisation of theology as sapiential knowledge based on an inner unity of theology as *habitus* and discipline.

The second phase lasted from the rise of the medieval universities of the 12th and 13th centuries to the Enlightenment. During this period, there was a subtle shift in the emphasis of theology: from knowledge of God to knowledge about God. Farley (1983b:25) calls this shift "a fundamental equivocation in the genre of theology" which resulted in "the modern narrowing of theology".

> Theology/habitus and theology/science more or less coincided from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century, and this coincidence constituted a fundamental equivocation in the genre of theology.

In the third phase, from the Enlightenment to the present, Farley (1983a:39-44) explains, the unifying rubric of *theologia* disappears. Theology as *habitus* has been transformed into "the practical know-how necessary to ministerial work" (:39). Theology as discipline disintegrates into many separated and self-sufficient academic disciplines. The loss of both theology as *habitus* and theology as a unified discipline was deepened by the 'theological encyclopedia movement', which emerged in early nineteenth-century Germany and in later nineteenth-century America, and produced the fourfold pattern of the theological curriculum: the Bible, church history, dogmatics, and practical theology, which is still found today in nearly every seminary prospectus in the world.

Next to be dealt with is the evolution of practical theology, that forms the core of this section. The discussion begins with Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), who exerted a major influence on practical theology.

Schleiermacher envisioned a new sequence and integration for the study of theology in his time (Burkhart 1983:43). When he was appointed Professor Extraordinary of Theology and Philosophy at Halle, theological education was in disarray. The theological curriculum

was a relatively incoherent conglomerate of diverse specialties under the influence of the 'theological encyclopedia movement' (ibid). Furthermore, the theological faculties were struggling to maintain their place in the university. It was Schleiermacher who proposed the solution to these problems in his book, *Brief outline of the study of theology*. Farley (1983b:25-26) praises the contribution of this work of Schleiermacher in these words:

> [I]t proposes a way of conceiving theological study that justifies its presence in a modern university, retains the independence of fields of scholarship, and founds it in the church and ministry.

Farley, (:26-31) however, argues that Schleiermacher failed to offer a fundamental solution to the disunity of theological disciplines and to the narrowing of the nature of theology. In other words, Schleiermacher's elaboration of the renewal of theological study did not succeed in recovering *'theologia'* -- theology as *habitus* and as a single science. Rather, his revision of the unity of theological disciplines was to direct them toward the *telos* as the support of clerical activities.

Hence, Schleiermacher's solution resulted in the further narrowing of theology with "the parochialization or even the clericalization of theology" (:26-28). In the "clerical paradigm" as it is called by Farley (1983b), theology became separated from the life of the congregation and of Christian people. The reason for the existence of theology in the university lay simply in its requirement for the professional training of ordained ministers, analogous to the role of the faculties of Law and Medicine. The restriction of theology to ministerial education distorted the fundamental understanding of the theological task in both academy and church. This reflected the loss of theology as *habitus*.

The narrowing of theology also brought about the "alienation of theology and practice", initiated by the narrowed understanding of practice, which Schleiermacher did not discard (:29-30). According to Farley (:30), three dimensions of practice are especially prominent and they correspond to the renewal of theology. They are: the personal-existential, the social-political, and the ecclesiastical. Through these dimensions the aim of theology is articulated: to understand and embody comprehensively these dimensions of practice. But the problem in theological education, from the time of Schleiermacher until now, is that the ecclesiastical dimension of practice or the clerical paradigm has so dominated theology as to exclude the other two dimensions (:31).

The limitation of Schleiermacher's understanding of practice was also exposed by his understanding of practical theology, which was closely related to the narrowing of theology. He divided theology into three fields: philosophical theology being the root of the theological tree; historical theology, the stem or body of the tree; and practical theology, the crown of the theological tree (Dingemans 1996:82). Schleiermacher's division of theology indicates the normal order of theologising: the best way to theologise is to start with philosophical theology, to proceed via historical theology, and to end by applying theories to practical theology. In other words, he argued that theoretical theologies (philosophical and historical theology) cannot become really theological until they are applied to practical theology (Burkhart 1983:55). But in reverse, his argument implied that if philosophical and historical theologies could provide sufficient and valid theories for church ministry, then practical theology did not have to elaborate its own theories but could effectively utilise theories constructed by theoretical theologies. Accordingly, the main task of practical theology was to develop ministerial skills and methods pertinent to the proposed theories. Schleiermacher was correct in viewing theology as practical in its nature, but the way in which he divided it into three fields prevented theology form recovering 'theologia'.

In brief, Schleiermacher realised correctly that the contemporary theology had not paid attention to the historical present. He thus envisioned the new horizon of practical theology so that it could fulfil its distinctive tasks precisely by inquiring into and attempting to explicate the 'chief end' of humankind, and by proposing concrete practices effective and faithful to this end (:65). But in fact, he limited himself from enlarging the horizon of practical theology widely. He failed to understand that practice influences theory. He did not possess any understanding of the interpretive dimensions of *praxis*. As a result, he presumed that practical theology does not affect philosophical or historical theology (:52-53) but seems to be a kind of 'applied theology'. Regretfully, by burying even the vision of Schleiermacher that theology should deal positively and practically with all issues of humankind, theology has till now helped to play the role of a wall which protects and isolates the church from the threat of the world.

Farley (1987:2-5) argues that the understanding of practical theology has proceeded via two stages of narrowing, following Schleiermacher: The first narrowing left moral theology behind. Moral theology (ethics) was assigned along with dogmatics to systematic

theology. And practical theology was proposed as the science of the church and pastoral activities. The second narrowing was from pastoral activities in the context of church activities to the discrete activities of the minister. Practical theology still did not attain the status of a single science, but developed into five or more areas of clerical activities, such as homiletics, catechetics, liturgics, church administration, and pastoral care, each of which became a relatively independent academic and pedagogical undertaking. This narrowing process is still largely operative in present-day theological schools.

By running counter to the situation in which both theology and practical theology were increasingly being narrowed, 'a revolution' has occurred in theology and among theologians on an international scale for the past three decades. Naming this revolution "the practical theology movement", Don Browning (1988:83) characterises some features of the movement as follows:

> [T]he movement has attempted to go beyond, while still including, what Edward Farley has called "the clerical paradigm." Whereas the older practical theology was seen primarily as theological reflection on the practices of the ordained minister, the newer movement ... sees practical theology as primarily reflection on the church's practice in the world. The movement to varying degrees also strongly emphasizes beginning theological reflection with descriptions of contemporary practices and the situations of these practices, correlates these descriptions of practices and situations with normative Christian sources, tries to be critical in its practical reflection, and sees theological ethics as a core component to the larger practical theological enterprise.

Dingemans (1996:83), a Dutch practical theologian, writes that an important shift took place with regard to the inner direction of practical theological study.

> Whereas formerly, practical theologians had first studied the Bible and the doctrine of the church in order to apply the results of their findings to the practice of the church, more recently, under the influence of social studies they have changed their approach: in recent decades practical theologians worldwide have agreed on starting their investigations *in practice itself.* Practical theology has become description of and reflection on the "self-understanding of a particular religious tradition." This approach moves from practice to theory, then back to practice.

Dingemans (:84-87) also classifies the practical theology movement into three streams: the mainstream emphasises the internal and external functioning of the church; some theologians lay an important accent on the liberating work of the Gospel in the world; and in the life of the individual believers.

In addition, this practical theology movement has affected the so-called revisionist or constructive theologians. They have tried to recover '*theologia*'. They no longer view

practical theology as a sort of applied discipline. Rather, they appreciate the practical features of theology. Hence they avoid the traditional fourfold division of theology, and prefer to seek a comprehensive understanding of theology.

In view of the new understandings of theology, the following three revisionist theologians can be compared with the proponents of the practical theology movement: Peter C Hodgson, Douglas John Hall, and David Tracy. In his book 'Winds of the Spirit', Peter C Hodgson (1994:10) defines theology as follows: "Theology, as a practice of the Christian community, is a constructive activity that requires critical interpretation and practical appropriations of faith's language about God in the context of contemporary cultural challenges and their theological implication." Hodgson's definition shows that theology employs two closely and constructively related ways of thinking: critical reflection and practical application. The reasoning involved in theological thinking is thus both theological and practical (:6). The definition also shows the importance of the context in theological thinking.

Douglas John Hall (1993), in 'Professing the Faith', also proposes a renewal of theology which for him requires the reordering of theological thinking (:32-39). While formerly theological thinking has tended to flow from theoretical thinking to application, for Hall it consists of the following three dimensions which are not divided from one another: historical theology, critical theology, and constructive theology. Historical theology deals with recollection of the Christian tradition within contemporary ecclesiastical context; critical theology points out flaws and problematic elements within the received tradition; and constructive theology proposes ways in which the faith might be professed responsibly under the present socio-historical context (:32). In summary, Hall emphasises the integration of these three dimensions in theological thinking: the historical, critical, and constructive dimensions should be exposed altogether in creative tension with one another.

David Tracy (1983:62) defines theology as "the discipline that articulates mutually critical correlations between the meaning and truth of an interpretation of the Christian faith and the meaning and truth of an interpretation of the contemporary situation".

The understanding of theology by the above-mentioned three revisionist theologians as

well as by the contemporary practical theologians of the practical theology movement could be summarised by the understanding of theologising that D J Louw (1998a:21), a practical theologian in South Africa, contends:

> Theologizing needs all three: *scientia, sapientia,* and *intelligentia* -- i.e. experiential analyses, devotion, and logical-philosophical analyses. Faith and life, experience, faith and reason, faith and devotion, are all part of the dynamic tension which is inherently part of the process of theologizing.

In conclusion, the contemporary 'practical theology movement' has stemmed from a reflection on the nature and task of theology and has led to a reformation of theological thinking. The direction of theological reformation should be to recover *'theologia'*. Theology is reformed continuously within "the healthy and constructive theological tension between *scientia* and *sapientia*" (Louw 1998a:19). Theology as discipline (science) and theology as *habitus* must be preserved for these aspects to be unity in creative tension.

4.2.2 A Definition of Practical Theology and Its Characteristics

As implied in the previous section, in a certain sense all theology must become 'practical theology'. D Browning (1991) refers to fundamental practical theology as the very core of theology. He defines fundamental practical theology as "critical reflection on the Church's dialogue with Christian sources and other communities of experience and interpretation with the aim of guiding its action toward social and individual transformation" (:36). This process of critical reflection has four theological elements or submoments: descriptive, historical, systematic, and strategic (or fully practical). The four elements must by all means interrelate. In a word, by fundamental practical theology Browning means the whole process of theological reasoning. For him, the distinction between practical theology and theology as a whole disappears. Even though strategic or fully practical theology is differentiated from fundamental practical theology by him, it is part of the whole movement of theologising.

Herewith, we pose some crucial questions about the nature and tasks of practical theology, insofar as practical theology is distinctive from theology as a whole: 'Is practical theology possible? How is it possible? What are its nature and distinctive characteristics?' These

questions are very important and should be answered in our discussion. However, they are not easily answered since the discussion should deal with many subjects, and could proceed differently according to various methods.

In attempting to answer these questions, a preliminary definition of practical theology is first proposed. Then some implications of the definition will be explored clearly and in detail so that a comprehensive understanding of the distinctive nature and tasks of practical theology might be reached.

Practical theology could be defined as '*critical reflection on the formation of Christian community and personhood in the world, constructed through God's praxis, which inspires people, whether individual or corporate, to respond with the practice of faith*'.

In this definition, the terms 'formation', 'reflection', 'God's praxis' and 'practice of faith' are taken into serious consideration. 'Formation' may mean the act of giving shape to something, or the manner in which it is formed: by its past, its circumstances, and its inherent structure. As used in this discussion, 'formation' is the total process by which a given expression of Christian faith comes to be and endures in the world. To be grasped, the complex elements in any given case of Christian formation must be differentiated by use of the appropriate images, models, and concepts. Hence, the element of 'reflection' (Mudge & Poling 1987:xvii). By 'reflection' is meant the critical interpretation of important events which happened in the process of the formation of Christian community and personhood. The term also includes a revisioning process towards the new direction of that formation. 'God's praxis' refers to God's salvific acts in history and God's active, working presence in time. Hence the encounter between God and human beings (Louw 1998a:31). From that encounter the 'practice of faith' emerges. 'Practice of faith' thus means faith experiences and faith actions, which are revealed through the human being's response to God's praxis (:28).

We now address six characteristics which our definition of practical theology embraces: they will clearly reveal the nature and tasks of practical theology. Firstly, the primary goal of practical theology is the 'formation of Christian community and personhood'. Practical theology aims to help congregations to be healthy communities of faith, and individual believers to develop their faith. However, practical theology concerns not only the internal

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life of the church and believers, but also their public image in 'the world'. In other words, practical theology is extended to critical dialogue with a view to transforming society beyond the clerical paradigm. An important task of practical theology is to develop the ethical norms for society, while focusing on both social and individual transformation. Ethics thus becomes an integral part of practical theology (Louw 1998b:91). This transformation of individuals, congregations, and society is closely related to God's vision for all creation of a Kingdom of peace and justice, wholeness and completion, happiness and freedom. This Kingdom of God comes and is to come as a gift by the mighty power of God (Groome 1980:38). The vision of God's Kingdom thus brings eschatological hope to the people of God. At the same time, the vision demands of the people active responses within time and history: *metanoia, koinonia, diakonia* and proclamation (:49-50).

Secondly, practical theology focuses on practice in theology. Practice in theology should be understood as praxis. It should not be regarded merely as applied theory with the emphasis on techniques, skills, and strategies for church ministry or community service. Rather, praxis is 'theory-laden' practice.

> The difference between practice and praxis is that in the latter the theory has been made self-conscious and reflected upon critically. ... It is precisely the task of theology to make explicit in the Christian life so that this life can be more self-consciously directed and appraised (Browning 1983:13).

Praxis thus transcends the duality. It pursues an integration and interdependence between theory and practice, understanding and doing, contemplation and action, reason and emotion, and especially between knowing and loving. Praxis is about the ongoing integration of action and reflection (Louw 1998b:91). Praxis is designated as creative action, inspired by critical reflection, that gives rise to both change and insight (Maddox 1991:166). This means that theory and praxis should be neither identical nor totally separate. Whereas theory requires a constant critical evaluation from praxis, praxis must be transcended by theory (Van Wyk 1995:100).

Louw (1998a:28-30) articulates some characteristics of the actual praxis of practical theology: the praxis of practical theology refers to encounter and relationship between God and human beings (:28). But God has the initiative in the encounter and in the relationship between the two. The praxis of theology should thus be linked to God's praxis. If practical theology is *theo-logia*, understanding or interpretation of God's being and

work (*fides quaerens intellectum* and *verbum*), it should primarily concentrate on God's praxis that God has disclosed through time by His will and actions in the world. Furthermore, God's praxis also implies our faith actions and faith experiences (practice of faith) because God's redemptive work is carried out for human beings, and causes them to respond. Hence, the praxis of practical theology is concerned with ethical problems. In this respect, practical theology helps theology to seek various ways of *doing*, of *right/proper/ethical* doing and disposition/*habitus* (:28). Practical theology orients orthodoxy towards orthopraxis -- the correct conduct and action (*fides quaerens actum*) (:27). When a dialectical unity or a critical correlation between praxis and theory is maintained, then theology can recover its nature of *theologia* -- theology as both *habitus* and *scientia*, and the dichotomous gap between *ecclesia* and *academia* can be narrowed more and more.

Thirdly, practical theology deals seriously with situations because it is commendable that the manner in which Christian community and personhood take shape will depend upon the context (Mudge & Poling 1987:xix). The context is cultural, sociological and ecological: it consists of class, race, gender, geography, ethnicity, nationality, and so on. In fact, human beings are conditioned from birth to have a world-view of their surroundings.

Farley (1987:12) describes the situation as follows:

> A situation is the way various items, power, and events in the environment gather together so as to require responses from participants. In this sense, any living, perhaps any actual, entity exists in situations. Situations like reality itself are never static. Living beings, we might say, live in their environments (contexts) in continuing responses to ever-changing, ever-forming situations. ... Participants in situations need not be simply individuals, Groups, communities, collectives, societies all exist in situations.

Nowadays there is a new recognition of pluralism and locality. It is being realised that 'humanity' comprehends many communities, self-identified and discerned, on the basis of many different rationales. Reality itself is many things, depending on the angle from which it is viewed. It is easy to discern that there are big differences in perspectives, and divergent ways of conceiving what the Gospel is about. This pluralism reveals the importance of contextuality. In a word, it is necessary to have a sound understanding of pluralistic culture and society and religious pluralism.

On the other hand, through easy mass-communication this earthly planet has become a global village. This globalisation has influenced human whole lives including world-views and ideologies. Without the new recognition of globalisation, it is not possible to discern the local context correctly. Human situations can no longer be separated from the global situation.

Fourthly, methodologically speaking, practical theology is a hermeneutical science. Whitehead (1987:37) views practical theology as a hermeneutical science and reasons thus: Christian life is formed by three elements, Christian tradition, cultural information, and personal experiences, which overlap and influence one another; and because each of the elements is plural and ambiguous, they must be interpreted as the correlation between them is being sought. As this interpretative process becomes reflective and critical, misapprehensions of the elements are overcome. Because of this factor of critical reflection and reinterpretation practical theology by its nature is a *hermeneutical science*.

Louw (1998a:26) explains the hermeneutical circle which theological hermeneutics involves as follows:

> This circle consists of three elements: a pre-text (events), a text (medium), and context (situation). In other words: a message, a source and a concrete living situation. Within this circle two movements develop. The first is a critical, analytical, interpretative movement backward from the interpreter, via the text (medium) to the revelation's root events and the intended message. This shift presumes a process of critical distance (objectivizing, detachment). The second shift is a practical reflection of application (doing reflection and implying meaning) which takes place existentially. This is a movement forward from the basic experience and message, via the text, to the interpreter and the context. This generates a process of self-understanding and influencing which affects the interpreter's concrete situation.

Through this hermeneutical circle, both the backward and forward movement, new meaning and vision for the future are engendered. Theological hermeneutics thus has a dual function: hermeneutic of suspicion and hermeneutic of retrieval (Groome 1987:68).

As a rule, practical theology is involved in three kinds of hermeneutics: a hermeneutics of situations (Farley 1987:1-26), a pastoral hermeneutics (Louw 1998b:98-100), and an ecclesial hermeneutics (Mudge 1987:103-119).

Farley (1987:14-18) argues that the greatest contribution that practical theology makes to

theology as a whole is the theological interpretation of situations. He indicates, correctly, a weak point in the traditional and mainstream approach of theological hermeneutics:

In the theory-to-practice, authoritative-text-(applied)-to-life paradigm, there is high awareness of the text, its meaning and content, and low awareness of the meaning and content of the situation (:10).

Instead, Farley (:17) proposes a hermeneutics of situations as an important task of practical theology: a hermeneutic of situations will uncover the distinctive contents of the situation, will probe its repressed past, will explore its relation to other situations with which it is interlinked, and will also explore the 'demand' of the situation through consideration of corruption and redemption.

In the process of this hermeneutics of situation, Farley (:13-14) intensifies the role of theological perspectives and criticism which must be operative in discerning the situation's demand. A situation is not a neutral series of objects. It might be a concentration of powers which impinge upon human beings as individual agents or as communities. The situation thus places certain demands on people, and they should respond. Because of this demand-response feature, the interpretation of situations includes the task of discerning the situation's demand, which poses to human beings occasions for corruption and for redemption. The discernment of this dimension of the demand-response is at the very heart of a theological hermeneutic of situations.

To propose a pastoral hermeneutics, Louw (1998b:95) defines practical theology as the hermeneutics of God's encounter with human beings and their world. In pastoral care, he emphasises a process of theological assessment, which leads to "pastoral diagnosis": determining and assessing the character of a person's faith. Pastoral diagnosis aims at analysing the person's concepts, images, and views of God for his/her ultimate spirituality (:99)

An ecclesial hermeneutics seeks to describe and analyse critically the spirituality, ecclesiology, and practices of the church, and to propose new models for them. This hermeneutics will be explained in the following section (4.3.1), in which a practical ecclesiology will be dealt with.

A fifth characteristic of practical theology is the functional dimension of ecclesial

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practices (Fowler 1995:8). The fundamental form and structure within which the encounter between God and human beings is manifest, is the church as the body of Christ, the fellowship of believers. Hence, practical theology focuses on the church as a point of departure for a practical-theological base theory (Louw 1998a:32). In order for practical theology to be 'practical' it must be concerned with the portrayal of church ministry: the service of faith (*diakonia*). The faith community's *diakonia*, which is the central theological-practical portrayal of salvation, can be classified as follows: witnessing (proclamation); celebration (liturgy); teaching (catechetics); care/help/compassion (pastoral care); building up/edification/expansion (mission and church growth); and fellowship (*koinonia*, ecclesiology) / habitual change and transformation (ethics) (:28-29). Briefly, practical theology stresses the praxis of the church.

Finally, practical theology should be regarded as an academic discipline in view of the following three conceptions: practical theology as a hermeneutical enterprise, as an empirical-analytical discipline, and as a critical-political science (Dingemans 1996:87-91).

Practical theology is deeply involved in hermeneutics, as discussed above. Generally speaking, theologising attempts to follow scientific methodological criteria such as validity, perception, observation, description, classification, explanation, conceptualization, and testability, since theologising consists of *scientia* (rational-historical analyses of experiential data), *sapientia* (wisdom and reflection/contemplation about the transcendent dimension of faith), and *intelligentia* (cognitive analysis along the lines of a logical and philosophical argumentation). Theology is about both faith and understanding (Louw 1998a:13, 20-21). Should understanding be considered a valid criterion for scientific validity, then theology definitely is a science in its own right (:25). Such understanding could be called hermeneutical activity.

Practical theology as an empirical-analytical discipline is advocated by many practical theological scholars who try to use proven methods and results derived from the social sciences. Poling & Miller (1985:66-69) stress the need for empirical and phenomenological theology due to the importance of experience in theologising: experience, in fact, provides the source for all reflection, including theology. And God's immanent activity has a particular referent within experience. Therefore, theology could

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be defined as a form of disciplined reflection upon experience designed to sensitise the theologian to the activity of God: His self-disclosure, and revelation. In the reflective process, which includes abstractions and generalisations, caution should always be exercised so as not to trivialise living experiences and not to reduce total experiences.

The most striking example of this advocacy in the Netherlands is the work of the Nijmegen research group of J A van der Ven (Dingemans 1996:88). Van der Ven (1988:7, 1993a, 1993b) proposes the reinterpretation of practical theology in terms of 'empirical theology'. He contends that empirical techniques (regarding data collection, data analysis, etc) and methods, including both qualitative and quantitative, are very important, since the primary object of practical theology is not biblical or historical but present religious praxis. Van der Ven (1988:18), however, recommends the critical use of the social sciences: he prefers intradisciplinarity to interdisciplinarity with respect to the relation of theology to the social sciences. This means that the research tools and findings of the empirical sciences should be used critically in the light of theological questions and aims. Van der Ven (ibid) thus develops the idea of the formal object of empirical theology which consists of the dialectical relation between what religious praxis is and what it should be. In other words, religious praxis should be reinterpreted by theological normativity.

Practical theology as a critical-political science has emerged from the recognition that theology as a whole distanced itself from society's problem areas in the post-war years of this century (Ziebertz 1998:4). This recognition has been concretised by the so-called liberation theology movement, which successfully penetrates the academic world. The movement, which includes feminist theology and eco-theology, has pleaded for the awakening and 'conscientisation' of the people and for the development of independent theological reflection on contemporary situations in order to achieve a just and righteous society. Therefore the movement looks to critical analyses of society for support (Dingemans 1996:90).

In conclusion, practical theology plays two important roles in theology as a whole. On the one hand, methodologically speaking, practical theology is involved deeply and widely in unceasing dialogue to maintain a critical correlation among disciplines in theology, as well as between praxis and theory, the present situation and Christian fact or tradition, individuals and community, society and congregation, academia and ecclesia, Christianity

and other religions, theology and the social sciences, hermeneutic of suspicion and hermeneutic of retrieval etc.

On the other hand, teleologically speaking, practical theology leads theology as a whole to recover *'theologia'* -- theology both as *habitus* and as theological science. This is the ultimate purpose of practical theology. Therefore, it seems clear that the above critical correlational method should serve this ultimate purpose. There is no doubt that practical theology is really theological in that it is concerned with the Triune God and His praxis. God's praxis was revealed in Jesus Christ in history (Christ Event). God's praxis also continues to operate in the human world through the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's immanent and working presence reaches beyond the church (the ecclesiastical factor). Since this presence works through the entire creation, the whole social context (the social factor) and natural environment (the ecological factor) come within the scope of practical theology. Therefore, practical theology is a pneumatological science which attempts to link God's intention (salvation) to the intention of human behaviour (meaning) (Louw 1998a:32).

Concerning the distinctiveness of practical theology from other theological disciplines, R R Osmer (1997:66-72) describes the general orientation of practical theology. He describes it as having three dimensions, in particular: (1) Practical theology moves toward the performance of some action or practice in the midst of a concrete set of circumstances. (2) Practical theology aims at the construction of a theory of formation and transformation that can guide the praxis of the Christian life over time. (3) Practical theology is deeply involved in a theological hermeneutic of the field in which an action or practice takes place.

However, Osmer (:67) stresses that these three dimensions should be integrated and interrelated in terms of "the rationality of discernment".

> *This is a form of rationality that attempts to provide reasons for how and why to perform an action or practice in a manner that corresponds to and participates in the praxis of God* [italics in original].

Osmer (:64) thus defines practical theology as the reflection of the church as a community of faith on how well its confession and action correspond to God's praxis. In other words, the purpose of the church as well as that of practical theology is to point to God's creating,

reconciling, and redeeming praxis. In this respect, he proposes the missio Dei -- the mission of God, who is a dynamic and active being, whose very nature is love -- as the hermeneutical key to a comprehensive understanding of God's praxis in the world and the nature and purpose of the church (:64).

In brief, we agree with Osmer's argument that the primary task of practical theology is to construct a practical theological hermeneutics, which employs two closely related forms of rationality: critical thinking and eschatological thinking.

> One is based on an acknowledgment of the reality of sin and the fall from right-relatedness with God and neighbour into deep divisions of idol worship. The other proceeds on the basis of hope born of God's conquest of sin in Christ and the promise of sin's complete eradication at the end of time. ... J Moltmann (1971:178) once wrote: "Unless hope has been roused and is alive there can be no stimulation for planning ... but without planning, there can be no realistic hope." Practical theology lives between hope and planning. ... Animated by this hope, waiting confidently for its fulfillment, practical theology works and plans, seeking to discern that which is historically possible, opening up our time and space to the praxis of the triune God (Osmer 1997:72-73).

There is no doubt that this practical theological hermeneutics includes critical reflection on theories by the praxis of the church. Therefore, practical theology should orient itself towards 'doing theology'.

4.2.3 Methodologies of Practical Theology

We could follow, in general, the theological methodology in which Jacques Ellul (1970) proposes two guidelines for constructing a Christian theology, even though we do not share his scepticism regarding cooperative solidarity and communal actions as the resolution of ecclesial or social problems. One of his guidelines is to use Christian realism for the analysis of Christianity in its context.

> I believe that the first thing the Christian must do in relation to problems of social ethics is to be completely realistic, to get as clear and exact an understanding of the facts as possible. Realism is the basis for Christian thinking on society (Ellul 1970:81).

It would thus be necessary to study and analyse the facts by using the theories and methods of the social sciences, in addition to those of theology. In fact, most practical theologians currently try to cooperate with social scientists in an interdisciplinary way for a mutual, interdependent, and correlational discussion between theology and the social

sciences (Dingemans 1996:91).

Ellul (1970) proposes the principle of Christian radicalism as the alternative to guide Christian action, in contrast to the principle of Christian realism which is used to understand reality. Ellul believes that the principle of Christian radicalism must be used in a theologically sound approach in order to propose distinctive answers, which are based on Christian revelation and faith.

> The Christian must indeed see things as they are, but he will not derive his principles of actions from them (:83). Once Christianity gives way to accommodating or humanistic interpretation, the revelation is gone. Christian faith is radical, decisive, like the very word of God, or else it is nothing (:146). ... Obviously, God intervenes radically only in response to a radical attitude on the part of the believer, radical not in regard to political means but in regard to faith; and the believer who is radical in his faith has rejected all means other than those of faith (:149).

This principle of Christian radicalism is related to a critical correlation method in theologising, which means that theological perspectives and criticism must be operative in all discussions between theology and the social sciences. It also implies that theology, in its rationality (thinking activity), is obliged to leave room for the mystery of God. Proposing a revised (critical) correlational method in theologising, Tracy (1983:77-78) argues that theologians must have theological discernment to criticise the social sciences. This theological discernment must be preserved as a central element within a hermeneutics of situations as well as within a proposal for new direction (Farley 1987:13-14). It is not only because a critical distance is a prerequisite for a meaningful relationship in the dialogue between theology and the social sciences, but because it is an important task of theology to liberate people from the bondage of corruptive ideologies which hold the social sciences, as well as theology itself, captive.

The most important consensus on methodology has been formed by some modern theologians, who propose a consistent series of steps or movements in theological reasoning or pedagogical praxis in order to guide people in the *habitus* of doing theology (Groome 1987:67-68). Joseph Holland and Peter Henriot (1984) introduce the "pastoral circle" approach that includes the moments of insertion, social analysis, theological reflection, and personal planning. Don Browning (1991) proposes five levels for practical moral thinking: a visional level (narratives and deep metaphors), an obligational level (normative ethical claims), a tendency and need level (basic human needs and premoral

means of meeting these needs), and a rule role level (concrete patterns of enactment in praxis). Farley (1983a:165-168) offers four pedagogical steps: attending to the concrete historical situation of people; applying a hermeneutics of suspicion to the situation by the faith tradition; applying a hermeneutics of suspicion towards the faith tradition itself; and re-engaging the situation through a hermeneutics of retrieval in terms of God's Kingdom. Thomas Groome (1980:207-222, 1987:69-75) structures a shared praxis approach in terms of the following five movements: expressing/naming present praxis; critical reflection on present praxis; encounter with the Christian story and vision; a dialectical hermeneutic between praxis and story/vision; and an invitation to a new or renewed praxis.

By trying to summarise the concurrence of the above-mentioned ideas which today's practical theologians agree on, Dingemans (1996:92-93) provides a research methodology for practical theology, which consists of four phases: descriptive phase; explanatory phase; normative phase; and strategic phase. This four-phased methodology, which will be used in our study, is elaborated as follows:

1) <u>Descriptive phase</u>. This first phase consists simply of identifying the praxis itself or the situation and describing its distinctive and constituent features (Farley 1987:12). In this stage the input of various social sciences is necessary. This step aims at a sound description of the praxis and the situation.

2) <u>Explanatory phase</u>. This step is to seek a critical explanation of the praxis or the situation. At this stage a hermeneutic of suspicion is brought toward the praxis itself or the situation. In other words, the faith tradition, i.e., the essence of Christianity, the primary symbols, the themes of proclamation, the dogmas of tradition, is used as a hermeneutical key, which criticises the life situation or the praxis and the normative ideas of people and the social sciences (Farley 1983a:166). Through this hermeneutic process, the hidden ideologies, world-views, and power structures behind the praxis or the situation are unmasked.

3) <u>Normative phase</u>. This phase aims to redefine the normativity of the faith tradition in order to remedy the problems behind the practice or the situation, and to provide new direction and vision. Unless the faith tradition is redefined, the present understanding of it would become an object of idolatry. Hence, a similar hermeneutics of suspicion is directed

on the expression of the tradition itself (Farley 1987:67-68). However, a hermeneutics of suspicion toward the tradition, as well as the praxis or the situation, must proceed to a hermeneutic of retrieval or trust (Theron 1997:12-13) in order to re-engage the praxis or the situation. This hermeneutic of trust is presupposed by a "proper confidence" (Newbigin 1995) and "a passion for truth" (McGrath 1996). In a word, this step is to renew the understanding of God's kingdom within a concrete praxis and situation. Here, it could be possible to find a way to remedy the problems, be caught by God's vision and the new direction for the future, and reconstruct clearly the identity and mission of the community of faith.

4) Strategic phase. The last step aims at making suggestions and recommendations pertinent to the proposed vision, direction, identity and mission in order to improve and transform the existing praxis. At this stage use could be made of theories and methods of change, with a critical evaluation of them, which have been developed in pedagogy, therapeutics, social development theories, and systems theory.

4.2.4 Conclusion

The four-phased methodology of practical theology which we proposed in the previous section 4.2.3, could also be used in church growth studies. Here, it is modified in terms of church growth as follows:

1) Descriptive phase. Research begins with an interdisciplinary description of the realities of the church by analysing factors impacting on church growth as well as the formation of the church's tradition. In this phase reasons for membership growth or decline in the church can also be investigated.

2) Explanatory phase. This step is to find the problems facing the church in terms of hermeneutical keys. It thus criticises traditional approaches, as well as contemporary dominant approaches to ecclesiology.

3) Normative phase. The third step is to redefine vision, identity, and direction

which emerge from the creative imagination on the basis of the nature and mission of the church in its context, and which make the objectives of the church's practices clear.

4) Strategic phase. The final step is to propose suggestions and recommendations in order to lead the church towards healthy growth according to the proposed vision, direction, identity, and objectives, as well as to improve and transform its existing practices.

4.3 Practical Ecclesiology

4.3.1 The Place of Practical Ecclesiology in Practical Theology

Some insights into the important place of ecclesiology in practical theology are indicated in the discussion of Poling & Miller (1985:29-61) on the types of practical theology. In their book entitled *Foundations for a Practical Theology of Ministry*, they outline six types of practical theology, with the recognition that each type has validity within some context, and also has inherent limits. These types revolve around two axes: one according to three critical methods, namely, critical scientific, critical correlational, and critical confessional; and the other according to the relationship between the church and society.

The six types of practical theology which are formed by combining these two axes are defined as follows:

Type IA. *Practical theology can take the form of a critical science whose purpose is the formation of society* (:36).

Type IB. *Practical theology can take the form of a critical science whose purpose is the formation of the church* (:38).

Type IIA. *Practical theology can take the form of a critical correlation of the*

Christian tradition and contemporary philosophy and science in its concern for the formation of society (:42).

Type IIB. *Practical theology can take the form of a critical correlation in terms of method which focuses primarily on the formation of the church as a community of faith (:47).*

Type IIIA. *Practical theology can take the form of critical confession with a primary emphasis upon the church's vision for the larger society* (:50).

Type IIIB. *Practical theology can take the form of critical confession that is centered in the practice of a concrete community of Christian faith in mission* (:57).

It is difficult to take up a position among the six types. To make a decision on our position depends on giving priority to norms, which will be determined not only by points of view of the Christian tradition and secular disciplines, but also by the concrete context of the church.

Our position initially excludes types IA and IB since we cannot accept that the Christian tradition plays a secondary role. As stated in the last section on critical methods [4.2.3 Methodologies of Practical Theology], we recommend using theological hermeneutics or theological discernment to criticise secular disciplines. To this end, we could choose either the critical correlation method, or the critical confession method. The difference between the two, we evaluate, is in their forms. In terms of content, there are only slight differences. Both methods appreciate the primary position of the Christian tradition in relation to secular disciplines. But while the former recognises the positive role of secular disciplines, the latter tends to be suspicious of and cautious about the role of secular disciplines (:50-51). At the same time, while the former stresses that the Christian tradition must be translated into public symbols, thereby establishing dialogue with other perspectives, the latter makes an effort to understand the depth of the Christian tradition so that modern faith will be continuous with the Christian story rather than continuous with the modern world (:51). If we take the view that a clear distinction between content and form is in effect hardly possible, and, on the contrary, that a (critical) relevance between the Christian tradition and secular disciplines should be preserved, we could use the two

critical methods in a creative tension. Therefore we could apply type II or type III of practical theology in our study.

To choose between type A and B, the concrete context of the church must be considered. If the church being dealt with is presumed to have lost its credibility to society by accommodating secularism and modernism, in other words, if its ecclesiology has been severely distorted, the primary concern should be for the church to recover the faithful community, which could result in the church influencing the modern world. This is, we assume, the case for most modern churches including the Korean Church. Therefore, our study has selected type B rather than type A. According to the above discussion, our study will take a balanced position between type IIB and IIIB, in its focus on ecclesiology in practical theology.

The definition of practical theology by Fowler (1983:149) is one which takes the same position as our study. He defines practical theology as "critical and constructive reflection on the praxis of the Christian community's life and work in its various dimensions". Ogletree (1983:90) describes practical theology in similar terms: practical theology, he states, "concerns our ways of enacting Christian faith in the building up of the church and in the implementation of its mission to the world". In a word, a new ecclesial theology of praxis is required. This means a theology seeking reflection on God's praxis and its relation to the praxis of the church (Müller 1992:2-3). Likewise, L S Mudge (1987:103-119) proposes an ecclesial hermeneutics which pursues thinking in the community of faith.

> To see the formation of the church as a gospel-shaped and shared exegesis of any given environing sign world may be not only to think better about theology as habitus (Farley's term for the practice of theological reflection in the life of faith), but also to begin the reconstruction of theology as a method of critical reflection within, and upon, this formative activity (:115).

No doubt this ecclesial hermeneutics includes a careful interest in the transformative character of faith in society. In other words, practical theology moves beyond the 'walls' (Müller 1992) of a fixed Christianity and classical theology's clerical paradigm. Don Browning (1983:10) stresses that Edward Farley's conception of "ecclesial presence" demonstrates the same vision of the new ecclesial theology of praxis:

Farley's emphasis upon centering practical theology on a phenomenology of "ecclesial

presence" is designed to shift away from exclusive concentration upon the internal life of the church and accentuate more the life of the church in the world.

However, we argue that the public transformative character may not always be evident (Poling & Miller 1987:50).

> The relationship of church and the larger society is more complex. Local Christian communities are called faithfully to express the historical confession in their shared life whether or not the transformation of society is immediately evident (:59).

In brief, the main issue of our study is the formation and the praxis of the church in the world. The unique concern of practical theology is about the commitment to the shared life of concrete communities of faith and the willingness to allow these concrete communities to judge the interpretation of the Christian tradition and to correlate its theology with other interpretations of human life (ibid). This could be regarded as the core subject of practical theology, and is called a 'practical (theological) ecclesiology' or an 'ecclesiology in a practical theological perspective'. Heyns and Pieterse (1990:57) consider a practical theological ecclesiology as a base theory of practical theology.

4.3.2 A Definition, Characteristics, and Contents of a Practical Ecclesiology

Considering that in the previous section a practical ecclesiology was assumed to take the core position in practical theology and to serve as a base theory of practical theology, we define a practical ecclesiology as '*a hermeneutical, ministerial endeavour in the community of the faithful about its identity as a new creation formed by the Triune God, as it confesses to and engages in God's ongoing praxis in the world at a particular time and place with an eschatological, faith-based, reality in view*'.

Some characteristics of a practical ecclesiology will be briefly described, taking care to avoid repeating those of practical theology referred to before.

Firstly, our definition of a practical ecclesiology implies that the church should be soundly understood. The church should be primarily understood as *the community of the faithful*: "not a therapeutic gathering, or a private sanctuary, or a voluntary association of like-minded individuals" (Dietterich, I T 1990:1), but *a new, distinct and unique*

community. According to Craig Dykstra (1985:197), the communal life of the church includes:

(1) telling the Christian story to one another; (2) interpreting together the meaning of that story for our life in the world; (3) worshiping God together: praising God and giving thanks for God's redemptive work in the world and for our lives together; (4) praying together; (5) listening and talking attentively to one another; (6) confessing to one another, and forgiving and reconciling with one another; (7) tolerating one another's failures and encouraging one another; (8) performing faithful acts of service and witness; (9) suffering for and with other people; (10) providing hospitality and care, not only to one another but also (perhaps especially) to strangers; and (11) criticizing and resisting all those powers and patterns (both within the church and in the world as a whole) which destroy human beings and corrode human community.

By *a new creation formed by the Triune God* we mean the Kingdom-oriented nature of the church: the church is called to be a sign, foretaste, and instrument of the coming reign of God.

As a sign, foretaste, and instrument, the church is called to be a contrast society which presents an alternative worldview, a worldview grounded in the reconciliation and transformation of human history accomplished in Jesus Christ. Formed by Christ and filled with the Spirit, the church is called to share with all the nations, in witness and service, the vision of the inaugurated reign of God (Dietterich, I T 1991:44).

The church should be a *confessing* community, by being a faithful witness to God's Word, the revelation and the church tradition as well as to the ethical element, by witnessing to current issues, and by giving guidance to the world on issues from a normative point of view.

The church is also called to live as *an eschatological community* that envisions a universal Shalom which God will bring to the world at the end of this time. The church as an eschatological community lives as a stranger and pilgrim in this world. Because the church foresees the Shalom to come, it cannot be satisfied with present reality. Therefore it ceaselessly prays and works for the fulfilment of God's Kingdom (Fackre 1984:157-159). The church is the community of faith that believes in the consummation of God's Kingdom.

As a community of eschatological expectation, the church pioneers the future of humankind. It is called to be the community of those committed to the Kingdom for the sake of humanity -- to the realization of promise, the hope, and the vision of a new heaven and a new earth when "God may be everything to everyone" (Dietterich, I T 1991:44).

The church should also be understood as a complex reality: "The church is both *a human and a divine institution.* ... As a sociological or human reality, the church is shaped and

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influenced by historical and cultural needs and structures. Yet the church is unique among human organisations in that it is also a theological or divine reality constituted and sustained by God's activity and intent" (Dietterich, I T 1990:1).

The second characteristic of a practical ecclesiology is the sound understanding of the nature of the church which emphasises *God's ongoing praxis* (mission). The church is not equated with the Kingdom of God. The church's praxis (mission) is led by God's praxis (mission), which is deeply and continuously engaged in the particular human context. God uses the church in His work while forgiving its sins in Jesus Christ, by empowering it with the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, the church lives by God's grace: that grace is seen in the fact that God is a God who acts throughout history and continues to do so.

The communal nature of the church should be understood not as a closed but an open assembly to which God is calling all peoples to be transformed into the people of God. This implies that the church is a community of engagement that seeks solidarity in the midst of diversity, enters into conflict in order to unmask illusions, and utilises the divergence of opinion as a springboard toward new truth. A practical ecclesiology thus orients a doing theology which is led by God's ongoing praxis and *engages faithfully in* transforming human society. The church is called to be engaged in mission in and for the world.

Thirdly, a practical ecclesiology, as a doing theology, is *contextual* in its nature. An important purpose of a practical ecclesiology is to articulate the evident nature and mission of the church in *a particular time and place*. Ecclesiology should always move "beyond the walls" because the outpouring of the Spirit of God always moves beyond the walls of a fixed ecclesiology, in order for the community of faith to cross boundaries into the world of social reality, of poverty and fear, injustice and suppression (Müller 1992:3). In this respect, a practical ecclesiology is seriously concerned about the dynamic relationship between the Gospel (the Christian story), the church and the world (culture). We believe that Hunsberger and Van Gelder's (1996) argument for the urgent necessity for a tripartite relationship between the Gospel, the church, and culture in the USA should also be applied to all churches the world over:

To assess our culture begs the question of discernment as we hear again the gospel. To be

led to new visions by the gospel implicates change in the way we live as church. Finding new forms for the church's life and witness can never happen apart from cultural assessment and gospel discernment because it is in the missionary encounter between gospel and culture that the Spirit creates us and forms us to be the genuinely missionary communities of Christ (Hunsberger & Van Gelder 1996:xvii-xviii).

Fourthly, a practical ecclesiology is a *hermeneutical* science. In order to fulfil God's calling in its specific context, the church should be primarily self-reflective and self-critical: the church should demonstrate the Gospel evidently in itself by living in a manner worthy of the Gospel, and by revealing the Christ, the core of the Gospel. The church should be the community of God's people, the body of Christ, and the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit, and should taste and reflect the kingdom of God.

This primary mission of the church intensifies the distinctiveness of the missionary nature of the church: the church has a distinctive identity which is not of the world, although it is in the world. The church is thus illustrated in the Bible as the light of the world, the salt of the earth, and a city on a hill (Mt 5:13-16). These images reveal that the church is called to be faithful in leading and serving the world according to God's will through the demonstration of its distinctive nature. In this regard, J M Mulder's (1991:217) proposal for "the re-forming of American Protestantism" demands attention:

> The central challenge for us ... is to fall back "on our own resources and on God." Our calling is to be the church -- to demonstrate in what we say and what we do that becoming a Christian makes a difference. It means a life of forgiveness, love, hope, compassion, and service. It is in this vision of a discipleship of faith and intellect, of piety and practice, of being in the world but not being consumed or compromised by it, that we as Reformed Christians have a distinctive and compelling word to say to a world in search of truth.

Fifthly, a practical ecclesiology is also *ministerial* (practical or functional) in its nature. The ultimate aim of a practical ecclesiology is to help the church to form the living, healthy community of faith in its specific context. In other words, a practical ecclesiology enhances the faithful and effective functioning of church ministry: *kerygma, koinonia, diakonia*, education, liturgy, pastoral care, evangelism, missionary work, and ethics. This implies that a practical theological ecclesiology seeks a balanced ecclesiological model to enable a particular community of faith to become more faithful to God's mission and more effective in its life and practice in a changing situation. The church is called to be faithful in its discernment and participation in God's mission. The church is also called to be effective in carrying out its mission (Dietterich, I T 1990:1).

Such a balanced model aims at church transformation. Church organisations are faced with the challenge of organising, structuring, and managing themselves in such a way that they are receptive and responsive to God's call within their unique situation. Amid changing circumstances, they are to discover new ways of perceiving, new ways of thinking, and new ways of behaving in order that they may become more faithful and effective in their ministry and mission. Inagrace Dietterich (ibid) posits the basic thesis of a practical theological ecclesiology as follows:

> [O]n the one hand, organizational issues cannot be confronted adequately in the church in isolation from the theological heritage and commitment. On the other hand, theological inquiry and discourse must move beyond the formation of doctrines into a lively interaction with the very real dilemmas and operational issues of the church as an organization.

Hence, the theological disciplines and the social sciences are interrelated and interdependent in the service of the church: all available resources from a variety of disciplines should be drawn upon in a critical and integrative manner in order to analyse the church's reality more soundly, and to seek a balanced ecclesiological model for church transformation. (Dietterich 1991:42). In brief, a practical ecclesiology is concerned about the effective functioning of church ministry and structure, through the application of ecclesiological models faithful to God's calling in its present contextual situation.

In sum, a practical ecclesiology carries out the following four tasks:

(1) *Descriptive ecclesiology*: a practical ecclesiology first engages itself in the 'interpretation of situation' surrounding the church (Farley 1987:11-13).

(2) *Critical ecclesiology*: this provides sound analysis of the realities of the church and the problems facing the church by means of hermeneutical keys. Hermeneutical keys could be provided for a practical ecclesiology in terms of God's kingdom, the body of Christ, the missionary nature of the church, holistic church growth, and faithfulness and effectiveness in ecclesiology.

(3) *Constructive ecclesiology*: a practical ecclesiology proposes an alternative model for promoting the healthy church, which can fundamentally remedy the problems facing the church. It is natural that the vision and direction in which the church should proceed, should be primarily discerned, since the alternative model is temporal, provisional, and tentative. The model also presents the distinctive identity of the church and the plain objectives for the church's practices. Briefly, the model, as an alternative, is proposed by making clear the vision and direction for the future of the church, the identity of the

church, and the objectives of the church's practices.

(4) *Functional ecclesiology*: a practical ecclesiology helps the church to set up practical strategies and to put into concrete practice those strategies which are faithful and effective in maintaining the proposed model of the church. A practical ecclesiology thus deals with the faith community's serving functions of ministry.

4.3.3 Summary

A practical ecclesiology implies not only hermeneutically sensitive empirical research that analyses the churches in their context, but also a 'doing theology' that constructs the praxis of the church. The tasks of a practical ecclesiology are to analyse the realities and problems facing the church, to find a model towards healthy church life appropriate to its distinctive context, and to provide process and strategies of concrete practices for the church. Accordingly, church growth studies will be developed more suitably when researched within a practical ecclesiology than when they are undertaken within any other discipline. In brief, interlinked with contextual, hermeneutical, and strategic aspects, a practical ecclesiology is a theological reflection on the church's life.

4.4 Conclusion and Remarks for the Next Chapters

In this chapter, with the understanding of practical theology, we constructed a practical ecclesiology which provides a four-phased methodology for a more comprehensive understanding of and a new direction for church growth. While practical theology is viewed as the sound scientific method of our theology, a practical ecclesiology is viewed as a base theory of our study which describes the process through which a particular church discovers and articulates its contextual identity and mission, the two aspects that align it with the one, holy, apostolic, catholic church of all ages. Therefore, a practical ecclesiology does not concentrate on a more general formulation of ecclesiology, with which systematic theology deals, but on the particular reality of the SKCs in the specific

context, which will be dealt in the following chapters.

A practical ecclesiology has the same characteristics as practical theology: hermeneutical, contextual and practical. A practical ecclesiology aims to interpret the realities of the church and to direct the church towards right practices for its healthy growth in relation to a particular context. In this respect, it is certain that our study of the growth of the SKCs is far more suitably based on a practical ecclesiology than on any other discipline.

In the following chapters we shall apply a practical ecclesiology to the study of the growth of the SKCs, by using the four-phased methodology: descriptive, explanatory, normative, and strategic phases. Through the description of membership growth and decline in the SKCs, Chapter V aims to investigate various factors which have affected membership trends in the Churches [the descriptive phase].

In Chapter VI the realities of growth in the SKCs will be interpreted from multi-dimensional angles: from the socio-political, religious, cultural, and theological traditions in the SKCs, and from an analysis of their recent dominant reaction to a sense of 'decline-crisis'. Through this interpretation the chapter will investigate theologically and, in particular, ecclesiologically, the fundamental root of the problem facing the SKCs [the explanatory phase].

Chapter VII will explore a new direction for the SKCs on the basis of the study of the models of the church: an alternative ecclesiological model will be tentatively proposed, which may help the SKCs remedy their root problem and encourage them to promote healthy growth [the normative phase]. The proposal will include the planning of some basic strategies through which the model can function faithfully and effectively [part of the strategic phase].

CHAPTER V. Describing the Realities of Recent Growth in the SKCs: the Descriptive Phase

5.1 Introduction

In dealing with the descriptive phase of the four-phased methodology of practical theology as proposed in the previous chapter [4.2.4], this chapter clearly reveals the realities of recent growth in the SKCs. This description focuses primarily on membership trends in the Korean Church as a whole and at a denominational level, these trends having been reformulated from various statistics. Next, the SKCs' general reactions to the recent changing contextual situation will be dealt with, as well as the reaction to their recent membership decline or stagnation.

This chapter aims to investigate various factors which have affected the growth of the SKCs in general, and their recent membership trends, in particular.

5.2 Analysing Membership Trends in the SKCs since the 1960s

The purpose is to investigate the relationship between the rapid growth in membership during the three decades since 1960 and the recent stagnation in membership in the SKCs. In this respect, the section aims to depict membership trends since the 1960s from various statistics of church membership, such as denominational statistics, governmental statistics. and statistics compiled by social research organisations.

As mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, it is extremely difficult to rely on church statistics. However, they have to be used since only two censuses have been held by the government in 1985 and 1995, which included very simple membership statistics of religions. In order to produce rather more reliable data from unreliable church statistics some use will be made of the statistics of social research organisations.

Data surveyed and produced by Gallup Korea are assumed to be reliable for this study.

Gallup Korea researched the religions and religious consciousness of Korean people three times, in 1984, 1989 and 1997. *'Religion in Korea'* was published in 1998 as a comparative survey of the three research projects, which included the religious realities of Koreans, the comprehensive understanding of the Korean people's views of religion and values and the trend of the people's consensus on various religious issues. The data were collected according to multi-stage stratified random sampling, from 1,613 respondents aged 18 years and older who were contacted personally by the trained interviewers and who answered the structured questionnaire.

On the other hand, to arrive at more reliable figures and trends than those derived from the data provided by the Government census reports, various religious denominations and social research organisations, two other approaches to measuring membership growth can be used: one focuses on 'growth rate', and the other on 'market share' (Roozen & Hadaway 1993:21). In this regard, the following longitudinal trends concerning church membership growth will be scrutinised: Religion in South Korea (1965-1995): Denominational Figures, Religious Adherents by Protestant Denominational Families, 1960, 1969, 1977 and 1984 (Percentage of Total Adherents), Membership of Selected (Major) Protestant Denominations (1965-1996), Membership of Selected (Major) Protestant Denominations as a Percentage of 1965 Membership (1965-1995), Five-Year Membership Growth Rates by Selected (Major) Protestant Denominations Compared with Their Theological and Political Propensity (1965-1995), and Recent Membership of Four (Major Protestant) Denominations as a Percentage of 1990 Membership (1990-1996).

5.2.1 Comparison of the Adherents of Christianity with Those of the Other Religions

5.2.1.1 Denominational Statistics

The various statistics in this section are drawn from several sources, such as *Yearbook of Korean Christianity* (1965, 1985), *the Korean Christianity Great Annual* (1991) and *Yearbook of Religions in Korea* (1993, 1995), all of which were based on the statistical data submitted by the denominations of various religions in Korea.

In Table 7 below can be seen numerical growth in ministers, congregations, and membership of religions in South Korea. The Protestant churches, in particular, have many more ministers and congregations than the other religions. This can be assumed to be related to the former's more rapid growth in membership.

TABLE 7: Numerical Growth Trends in Korean Religions: 1962-1995 (Denominational Statistics)[11]

Years		Buddhists	Protestants	Catholics	Confucians	Others	Total
1962	Con.	2,306	6,785	1,004	34	237	10,366
	Min.	9,185	20,897	2,254	207	1,191	33,774
	Mem	-	-	590,962	-	-	-
1969	Con.	2,135	12,866	2,299	231	963	18,494
	Min.	14,361	16,982	3,044	11,831	5,260	51,458
	Mem	4,943,059	3,192,621	751,217	4,423,000	2,392,139	15,702,036
1980	Con.	7,244	21,243	2,342	231	1,371	32,431
	Min.	22,260	31,740	4,529	11,828	13,319	83,676
	Mem	12,329,720	7,180,627	1,321,293	5,182,902	4,477,813	30,492,355
1989	Con.	9,231	34,407	-	231	2,840	47,553
	Min.	25,205	58,288	7,640	17,477	35,534	144,144
	Mem	20,699,948	11,888,374	2,632,990	10,184,976	6,230,730	51,634,018
1993	Con.	10,632	42,598	2,918	233	2,515	58,896
	Min.	30,811	84,554	8,516	18.240	37,126	179,301
	Mem	28,985,223	14,463,301	3,057,822	10,263,946	9,522,117	66,292,409
1995	Con.	12,197	46,603	-	234	8,786	-
	Min.	26,004	-	-	18.240	77,586	-
	Mem	22,400,050	13,909,284	3,578,113	10,185,001	18,296,904	68,369,352

<Others = Other Religions; Con. = Congregations; Min. = Ministers; Mem = Members>
Other religions include Korean traditional folk religions and the new religious movements which have emerged in Korea in this century, such as Chundogyo (Religion of the Heavenly Way), Won Buddhism, the Chungsando, the Taesunjillihoe and Taejonggyo.

Table 8 below shows membership changes in religions at five-year intervals from 1965 to 1995. The statistics show that the total number of religionists exceeded that of the total population in the early 1980s. This discrepancy exposes the unreliability of such denominational data, as mentioned before. It must be recognised that membership data presented by religious denominations are always inflated. Real membership in each religion cannot be calculated from this data.

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[11] The following statistics are drawn from several sources: (*Yearbook of Religions in Korea* 1993, 1995, 1996-7).

TABLE 8

Religion in South Korea (1965-1995): denominational figures[12]

	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995
Protestant	2,236,000	3,205,309	4,019,313	7,180,627	10,312,81	12,532,11	13,909,28
Catholics	595,900	765,109	1,012,209	1,321,293	2,423,181	2,739,200	3,580,113
Buddhist	4,551,370	6,024,539	11,972,93	12,329,72	19,897,36	22,769,02	22,400,05
Confucian	4,223,000	4,423,000	4,723,493	5,182,902	10,290,16	10,204,72	10,185,00
Others	2,311,720	2,412,242	3,548,208	4,477,813	5,164,210	7,053,580	18,294,90
Total	13,917,99	16,830,19	25,276,15	30,492,35	48,087,73	55,298,63	68,369,35

Total Pop.	28,578,00	30,720,00	33,949,00	37,440,10	40,419,65	42,790,00	44,554,00

<Pop = Population> Total population is drawn from governmental statistics.

Figure 2. Religion in South Korea (1965-1985): denominational figures
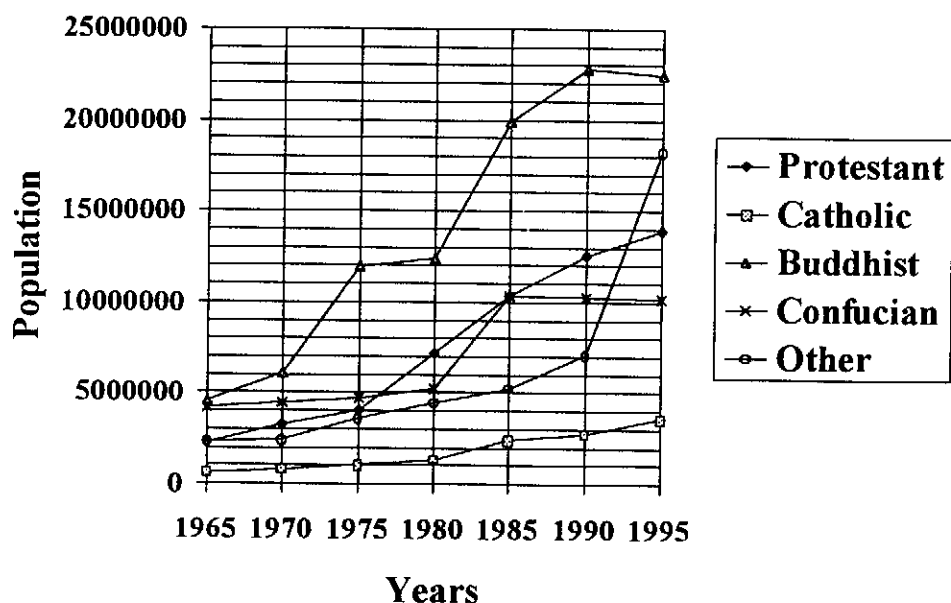
However, from Table 8 (and Figure 2) above it could be assumed that the realities of Korean religions are reflected in the following facts:

1) The membership growth rate of Christianity increased rapidly during 1975-1980.

2) Until 1990 membership trends in Buddhism, Protestantism and Catholicism, the major religions other than Confucianism, showed a similar pattern.

3) Since 1985 the membership growth rate of all major religions (Christianity, Buddhism

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[12] These statistics are drawn from the following sources: (*Yearbook of Korean Christianity* 1965, 1985; *Yearbook of Religions in Korea* 1993, 1995, 1996-7).

and Confucianism) has slowed down considerably, with the exception of Catholicism, whose growth rate has recovered since 1990.

4) Since 1985 membership of the other religions has increased rapidly.

5) In the case of Confucianism, the growth rate increased very rapidly during 1980-85.

6) It can be seen that the numbers of religious adherent are considerably inflated and rather unreliable when compared to the governmental population census data of the relevant years.

5.2.1.2 Governmental Census Reports on Religion and Statistics Surveyed by Social Research Organisations

The unreliable denominational data should be complemented and evaluated by governmental census or statistics surveyed by social research organisations. Tables 9 and 9.1, and Figure 3 below are established from the censuses that the government surveyed and published. 'Market share' refers to memberships as a percentage of the total population (Figure 3) or a percentage of the total religious adherents (Table 9.1 and 9.2).

TABLE 9. Religion in South Korea (1983, 1985 & 1995): Population Census Data

	01/Oct/'83 Statistics	01/Nov/85 Census	01/Nov/95 Census
Protestants	5,337,308 (13.45%)	6,489,000 (16.0 %)	8,760,000 (19.7 %)
Catholics	1,590,625 (4.01%)	1,865,000 (4.6 %)	2,951,000 (6.6 %)
Buddhists	7,507,059 (18.92%)	8,060,000 (19.9 %)	10,321,000 (23.2 %
Confucianists	786,955 (1.98%)	483,366 (1.2 %)	211,000 (0.5 %)
Other Religionists	365,672 (0.92%)	305,627 (0.76%)	355,000 (0.82%)
Non-Religionists	24,082,240 (60.71%)	23,216,356 (57.44%)	21,953,000 (49.3 %
Total Population	39,669,859 (100 %)	40,419,652 (100 %)	44,554,000 (100 %)

(*Yearbook of Religions in Korea* 1993, 1995, 1996-7)

FIGURE 3. Religion in South Korea (1985-1995): Population Census Data
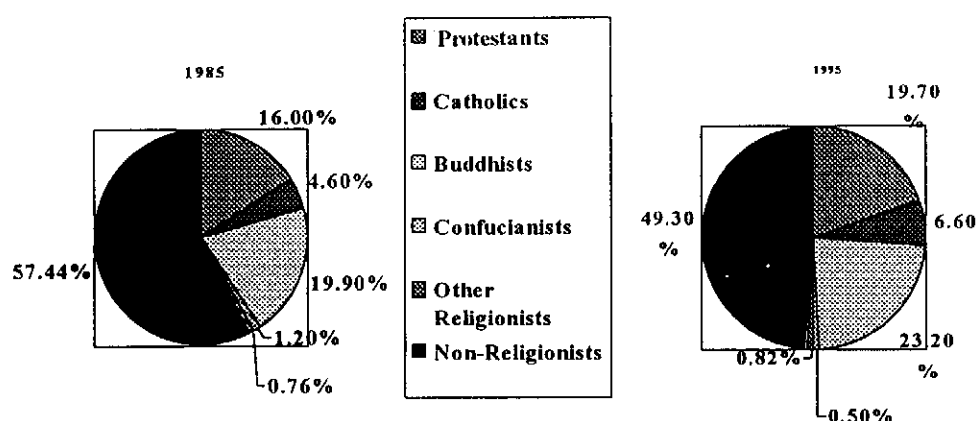
Table 9 and Figure 3 above show steady membership growth in all major religions except Confucianism, which resulted in the numerical decrease of non-religionists. It also shows that these governmental census reports differ markedly from the denominational reports. Consider Tables 9.1 and 9.2 below.

TABLE 9.1

South Korean Religious Market Share Trends (1985-1995): Government Census Data[13]

Religions	1985 Census	1995 Census	Percentage loss or gain
Protestantism	377	386	+2.4%
Catholicism	108	131	+21.2%
Buddhism	469	457	-2.6%
Confucianism	28	9	-67.9%
Other Religions	17	16	-5.9%

Total	1000	1000	

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[13] These statistics are calculated from Table 9 and non-religious people are excluded from the calculations.

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TABLE 9.2

South Korean Religious Market Share Trends (1985-1995): Denominational Statistics[14]

Religions	1985	1995	Percentage loss or gain
Protestantism	214	203	-5.1%
Catholicism	50	52	+4.0%
Buddhism	414	328	-20.8%
Confucianism	214	149	-30.4%
Other Religions	107	268	+150.0%

Total	**1000**	**1000**	

Large differences are manifest between Confucianism and the other religions. According to the 1995 denominational statistics (Table 9.2), the Confucian organisation reported that its membership numbered 15% of the total religious adherents in Korea and the other religionist organisations assumed that they also had a considerable number of adherents. By contrast, the governmental census reports show that the members of Confucianism and the other religions altogether numbered below 2.5% of the total religionists or 1.5% of the total population.

Concerning such big differences, S Y Yoon (1998:179) claims that the governmental reports do not reflect the realities of religious membership correctly. He argues that the reports surveyed by means of self-identification, a research method by which the respondents themselves declare the religions they believe in, fail to reflect the true state of membership in the new religious movements and the traditional cultural religions such as Shamanism, Taoism and Confucianism (:181). A large number of new religions which can be regarded, strictly speaking, not as 'new' but rather as variations or syncretic combinations of traditional religions, have emerged in the country recently, especially since the Korean War. In 1973, some 200 new sects were registered in the religious annals of Korea (Chung 1982:623). The traditional [cultural] religions, in particular, do not possess the evident criteria of membership and lack a church structure centred on formalised rituals and services. According to K O Kim's (1993:8) survey concerning the religious life of the urban middle class, "there is a very high incidence of visiting a fortuneteller or diviner regardless of one's religious affiliation". In the case of

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[14] These statistics are calculated from Table 8.

Confucianism, its organisation assumes that people who practise ancestor worship (*chesa*) at home are among its members. But most of the people could actually identify themselves as non-religionists: they regard Confucianism not as a religion but rather as a cultural tradition. For instance, the following data (Table 9.3) surveyed by Gallup Korea in 1984, 1989 and 1997, concerning the religious propensity of the Korean people show that the Confucian propensity was strongest in them:

TABLE 9.3: Religious Propensity of Religious Adherents and Non-Religionists

<Unit: 1=weak, 2=moderate, 3=strong>

	Confucian Propensity			Buddhist Propensity			Christian Propensity		
	84	89	97	84	89	97	84	89	97
Protestants	2.26	2.18	2.08	1.88	1.77	1.70	2.68	2.63	2.58
Catholics	2.05	2.05	2.09	1.93	1.98	1.91	2.69	2.45	2.30
Buddhists	2.42	2.36	2.27	2.08	2.03	1.99	2.09	1.90	1.83
Non-Religionists	2.28	2.25	2.14	1.92	1.81	1.81	1.86	1.77	1.67
Average	2.30	2.25	2.15	2.29	1.86	1.83	2.10	2.01	1.94

(Gallup Korea 1998:32)

By contrast, in the case of the institutional religions such as Buddhism, Protestantism and Catholicism, which have certain evident criteria of membership, the governmental census reports and data provided by the social research organisations are quite reliable (Yoon 1998:199). The following table (9.4) and figure (4) show membership change in religions as a percentage of the total population since 1983.

TABLE 9.4: Religious Adherent Trends as a Percent of Population: 1983-1997

(Gallup Korea 1998:218)

Religious Adherent	Gov. Sta. 1983	Gallup 1984	Census 1985	Gallup 1989	Soc. Sta. 1991	Soc. Sta. 1994	Census 1995	Gallup 1997
Protest.	13.45	17.2	16.0	19.2	18.6	18.2	19.7	20.3
Catholic	4.01	5.7	4.6	7.0	5.7	5.9	6.6	7.4
Buddhist	18.92	18.8	19.9	20.9	27.6	24.4	23.2	18.3
Other	2.90	2.6	1.96	1.9	2.1	1.5	1.3	0.9
Non-Re.	60.71	55.8	57.44	51.0	46.0	50.1	49.3	53.1

| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

<Ages of respondents: Gallup Korea (over 18 years), Governmental Statistics and Census (all ages), Social Statistics (over 15 years)> Protest = Protestants, Re = Religionists

FIGURE 4. Religious Adherent Trends as a Percent of Population: 1983-1997

<Protest = Protestants, Re = Religionists>
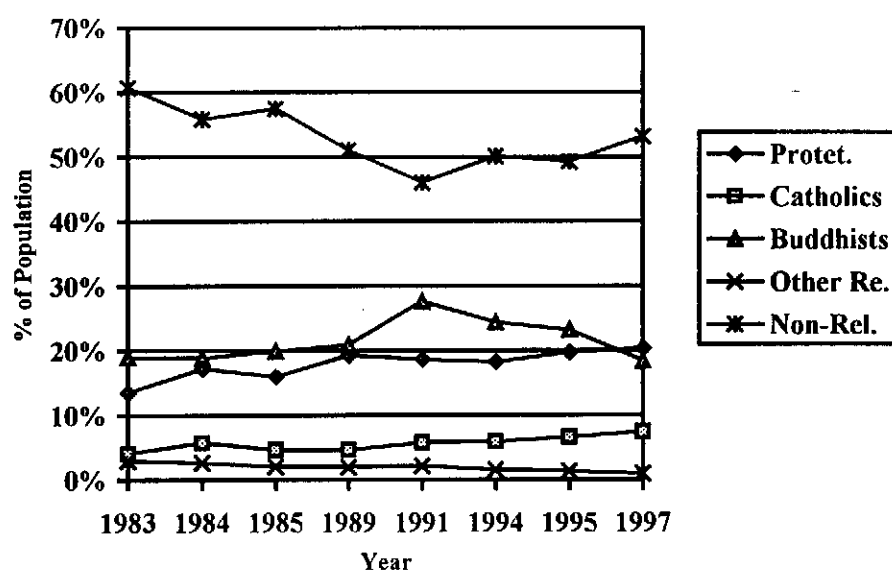
Table 9.4 and Figure 4 reveal the following facts:

1) Catholic membership has grown steadily since 1983.

2) During 1983-1990 Buddhism and Protestantism grew steadily in membership.

3) Since 1991 Buddhism has shown a downward trend in membership.

4) In the case of Protestantism, during 1990-1994 its membership trends slowed down, but since 1994 have turned upward again.

5) The other religions have steadily lost members since 1983.

6) The pattern of membership trends in the case of Buddhism is contrary to that of non-religionists. It seems that membership trends in Buddhism have decisively influenced the numerical growth or decline of non-religionists in a reverse way.

5.2.1.3 Some Findings concerning the Adherent Trends of the Major Korean Religions

The religious adherent trends of the major Korean religions are reflected in the following findings:

1) In Buddhism, Protestantism and Catholicism, membership increased quite considerably during the three decades after 1960. This increase resulted in a decrease in the growth rate of the non-religionists: in 1991 the percentage of non-religionists in the total population descended to its lowest point (46.0%).

2) In the case of Buddhism, its membership has decreased steadily since 1991. This has resulted in an increase in the percentage of non-religionists.

3) Protestant membership increased rapidly between 1975 and 1980. Most scholars agree that this phenomenal increase was caused by two nationwide mass evangelism crusades, Expolo '74 and 1980 World Evangelization Crusade (cf Yoo 1987:219; Kim, J G 1995:29).

4) The Protestant church experienced a downward slide in membership from 1990. This declining trend continued until 1994. Since 1995, membership has increased slightly.

5) By contrast, the Catholic church has shown steady, almost constant, growth in membership.

6) It seems that the birth rate and the growth rate of the total population have hardly influenced adherent trends in the major Korean religions.

5.2.2 Membership Trends in the Korean Protestant Churches

All the data presented in this section is reformulated on the basis of the statistical reports provided by the denominations. There is no report concerning denominational membership trends surveyed by the Government or social research organisations.

This section is divided into three parts: 1) membership trends in the Protestant denominational families; 2) membership trends in the selected (major) denominations (1965-1995); and 3) recent membership trends in the four (major) denominations

(1990-1996).

5.2.2.1 Membership Trends in the Protestant Denominational Families

TABLE 10

Religious Adherents of Protestant Denominational Families, in 1960, 1969, 1977 and 1984 (Percentage of Total Adherents)[15]

	1960	1969	1977	1984
Presbyterians	570,000 (54.8%)	1,371,507(43.0)	2,223,620(44.5)	5,121,737(60.5)
Methodists	286,297 (27.5%)	317,281 (9.9)	587,243 (11.7)	1,007,737(11.9)
Holiness	93,414 (9.0%)	215,289 (6.7)	373,941 (7.5)	712,464 (8.4)
Baptists	4,425 (0.4%)	64,171 (2.0)	183,061 (3.7)	505,300 (6.0)
Pentecostals	3,293 (0.3%)	29,986 (0.9)	214,788 (4.3)	762,687 (9.0)
Others	82,685 (7.9%)	1,194,387(37.4)	1,418,838(28.4)	350,210 (4.1)
Total	1,040,114	3,192,621	5,001,491	8,460,135

Korean Pentecostals are included under Protestants. 'Others' include the new religious movements and sects, such as the Salvation Army, the Nazarene Church, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Jehovah's Witness, the Evangelism Hall (the Chondogwan or the Elder Park's Olive Tree Sect), and the Unification Church (Moonism).

Table 10 above shows that in the 1960s the growth rates of the mainline churches, Presbyterians and Methodists, were much lower than those of the non-mainline churches and, in particular, lower than the 'Others'. Concerning rapid membership growth in the 'Others' category in the 1960s, Rhee (1995:278), referring to Min ([1982] 1993:537-542), says that many people were drawn to "a powerful movement of mystical but materialistic Christian sects" which arose "in the 1950s and 1960s when South Korea suffered the post-war tragedy of bereavement, separation of North and South, material poverty, and physical diseases". The strongest of the sects are the Elder Park's Olive Tree Sect of the Evangelism Hall and Moon's Unification Church. The Presbyterian churches grew rapidly in membership during 1977-1984. Pentecostals and Baptists show continuously steady growth in membership.

[15] The following statistics are drawn from several sources: (*Yearbook of Korean Christianity* 1965, 1985; *The Korean Christianity Great Annual* 1991; *Yearbook of Religions in Korea* 1993, 1995, 1996-7).

TABLE 10.1

Comparison between Membership in the Mainline and the Non-Mainline Churches, in 1969, 1977 and 1984 (Percentage of Total Adherents)[16]

	1969	1977	1984
Mainline	1,688,788 (54.3%)	2,810,863 (56.2%)	6,129,474 (72.5%)
Non-mainline	1,422,597 (45.7%)	2,190,628 (43.8%)	2,330,661 (27.5%)
Total	3,192,621 (100%)	5,001,491 (100%)	8,460,135 (100%)

FIGURE 5

Comparison between Membership in the Mainline and the Non-mainline Churches, in 1969, 1977 and 1984 (Percentage of Total Adherents)
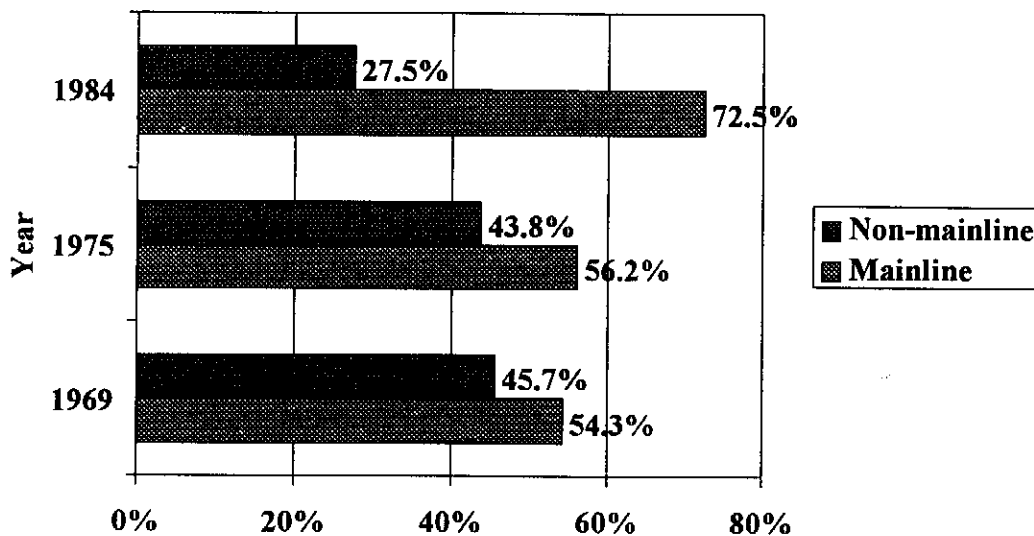
Table 10.1 and Figure 5 above show that the membership gap between mainline and non-mainline churches became increasingly larger. This discrepancy was caused by the rapid membership decline of the "others".

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[16] These statistics are drawn and calculated from the following sources: (*Yearbook of Korean Christianity* 1965, 1985; *The Korean Christianity Great Annual* 1991; *Yearbook of Religions in Korea* 1993, 1995, 1996-7).

TABLE 10.2

Comparison between Membership in KNCC and that in Non-KNCC[17]

	1969	1984
KNCC	947,682 (29.7%)	2,665,281 (31.5%)
Non-KNCC	2,244,939 (70.3%)	5,794,854 (68.5%)
Total	3,192,621 (100%)	8,460,135 (100%)

FIGURE 6. Comparison between Membership in KNCC and that in Non-KNCC
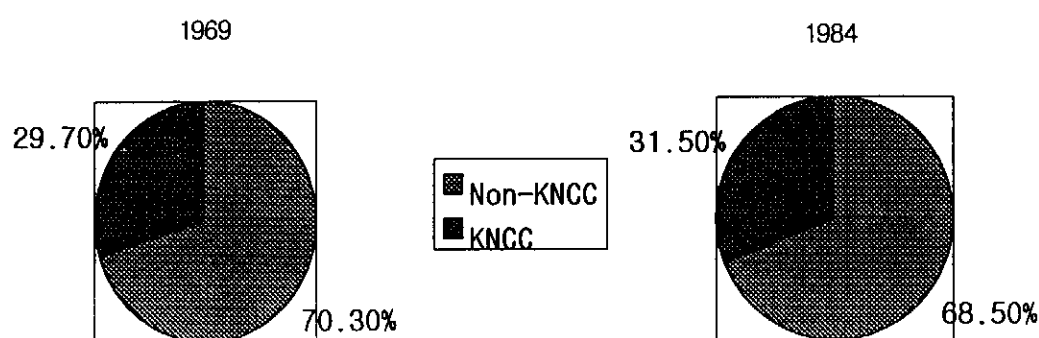
Table 10.2 and Figure 6 above represent a comparison between membership in the KNCC and that in non-KNCC, in 1969 and 1984. There is no great change in the market share of membership between the two groups. The churches which belong to the KNCC are moderate or liberal in theological propensity, and moderate or radical in political propensity. Non-KNCC churches are conservative in theological as well as in political propensity. The conservative evangelical churches thus comprise the majority in the SKCs.

5.2.2.2 Membership Trends of Selected (Major) Denominations, 1965-1995.

Consider Table 11 and Figure 7. These show that all the denominations except the PCROK have grown considerably in membership since 1965. The three major denominations, the PCKT, the PCKH and the KMC, follow the same pattern in

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[17] These statistics are drawn and calculated from the following sources: (*Yearbook of Korean Christianity* 1965, 1985; *The Korean Christianity Great Annual* 1991; *Yearbook of Religions in Korea* 1993, 1995,

membership growth rate trends. Each denomination has, in fact, striven for numerical growth by encouraging its congregations to take part aggressively in the nationwide mass evangelism crusades of the 1970s and the 1980s and the new church development project (cf Kim, J G 1995).

TABLE 11

Membership of Selected (Major) Protestant Denominations: 1965-1995[18]

	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995
PCKT	514,740	532,020	696,893	1,115,548	1,400,167	1,867,416	2,105,004
PCKH	590,870	530,600	668,678	1,298,225	*1,509,20	2,109,159	2,171,856
PCROK	200,213	189,761	216,068	230,280	281,513	310,195	334,685
PCKK	52,000	78,484	124,643	183,490	236,662	277,329	373,498
KMC	377,108	289,024	380,389	^647,650	[926,630	1,183,123	1,314,680
KHC	100,000	127,304	200,780	"344,350	{490,670	-513,610	557,134

^ estimation from the statistics of 1979 (590,730) and 1984 (875,321)
" estimation from the statistics of 1979 (314,962) and 1984 (461,378)
* estimation from the statistics of 1984 (1,389,200) and 1990 (2,109,159)
[estimation from the statistics of 1984 (875,321) and 1990 (1,183,123)
{ estimation from the statistics of 1979 (314,962) and 1984 (461,378)
- estimation from the statistics of 1984 (461,378) and 1995 (557,134)

FIGURE 7: Membership of Selected (Major) Protestant Denominations: 1965-1995
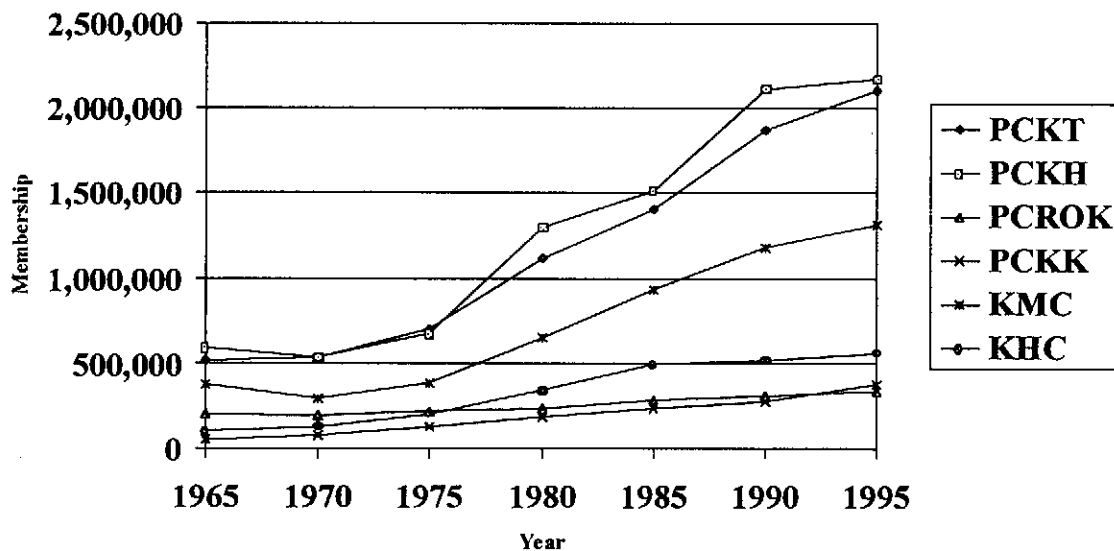
However, when compared to other religions, the membership growth rates of these three denominations have not reached the growth rate of Buddhism, nor even that of Catholicism, both of which worked less aggressively for membership growth than the Protestant denominations. Consider Table 11.1 below. Nevertheless, the growth rate of the PCKK has mostly been higher than the growth rate of Buddhism, and even higher than that of the total for Christians.

TABLE 11.1

Membership of Selected (Major) Protestant Denominations as a Percentage of 1965 Membership: 1965-1996[19]

<Unit: %>

	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995
PCKT	100	103.4	135.4	216.7	272.0	362.8	408.9
PCKH	100	89.8	113.2	219.7	255.4	357.0	367.6
PCROK	100	94.8	107.9	115.0	140.6	150.4	167.2
PCKK	100	150.9	239.7	352.9	455.1	533.3	718.3
KMC	100	76.6	100.9	171.7	245.7	313.7	348.6
KHC	100	127.3	200.8	344.4	490.7	513.6	557.1

Catholics	100	128.4	169.9	221.7	406.6	459.7	600.8

Total Ch	100	140.2	177.7	300.2	449.7	539.3	617.6

Buddhists	100	132.4	263.1	270.9	437.2	500.3	492.2

<Ch = Christians>

We cannot presume that the Protestant church's growth in membership has always been caused by its aggressive endeavour for numerical growth or the effective evangelistic works of its congregations. In brief, membership trends in Korean Christianity, at a denominational level, have depended generally upon sociological (national) factors rather than institutional factors.

However, membership trends in the PCROK and the PCKK indicate that institutional factors related to denominational ethos and the formation of denominational identity may

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[19] These statistics are calculated from Table 8 and Table 11.

have considerable influence on denominational growth in membership. The growth rate of the PCROK's membership has run almost parallel to that of the total population. This implies that the PCROK, the liberal and radical group, which advocated *Minjung* theology and actively protested against military dictatorship during 1961-1987, has failed to satisfy the people's immediate needs, such as, the need for a strong sense of comfort and security, intimate relationship and individual fulfilment. By contrast, the PCKK, which is more conservative than the others and emphasises the preservation of its identity [cf 2.2.4 in this dissertation], constantly shows a high and steady growth rate.

According to the following table (11.2) and Figure 8, during 1975-1980, the membership growth rates of all the denominations except the PCROK peaked. Since 1980, however, the membership growth rates of all denominations on the whole have decreased. [The reason for this decline will be discussed in the following section 5.3.] This decline reveals that the difference in theological and political propensity between the conservative denominations and the moderate denominations has rarely influenced membership trends. This lack of influence implies that the people, whether unchurched or not, do not perceive any difference among those denominations.

TABLE 11.2

Five-Year Membership Growth Rates in Selected (Major) Protestant Denominations (Compared with Their Theological and Political Propensity): 1965-1995[20]

<Unit: %>

Denom.	Theo Pr	Pol Pr	1965-70	1970-75	1975-80	1980-85	1985-90	1990-95
PCKT	mod	mod	3.6	31.0	60.1	25.5	33.4	12.7
KMC	mod	mod	-23.4	31.6	70.3	43.1	27.7	11.1
PCROK	liberal	radical	-5.2	13.9	6.6	22.2	10.2	7.9
PCKK	con	con	50.9	58.8	47.2	29.0	17.2	34.7
KHC	con	con	27.3	57.7	71.5	42.5	4.7	8.5
PCKH	con	con	-10.2	26.0	94.1	16.3	39.8	3.0
% of Total Population			7.5	10.5	10.3	8.0	5.9	4.1

<Denom = Denominations, Theo Pr = Theological Propensity, Pol Pr = Political Propensity, mod = moderate, con = conservative>

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[20] These statistics are calculated from Table 11.

FIGURE 8

Five-Year Membership Growth Rates in Selected (Major) Protestant Denominations (Compared with Their Theological and Political Propensity): 1965-1995
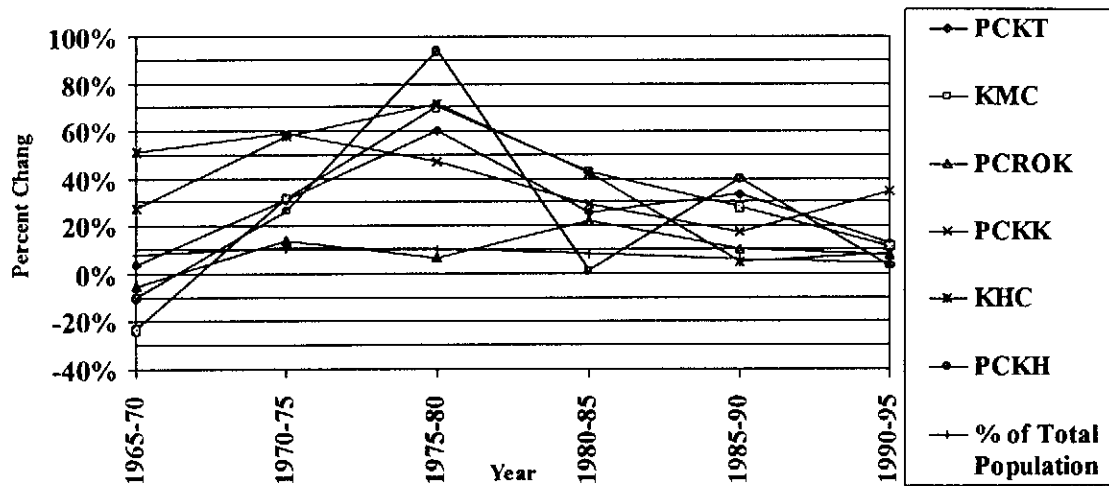
Interestingly, during 1990-95, the membership growth rate of the PCKH, the largest denomination of the SKCs, dropped steeply to 3.0%, which was lower than the growth rate of the total population [see Figure 8]. This might mean that this denomination has lost credibility in society more than the other denominations owing to the following reason: the PCKH suffered a serious denominational split in 1980. Most congregations of the denomination were pro-government and stood for the middle class. In doing so, they abandoned their prophetic role in society, and tended to accommodate themselves to the dominant culture in South Korea. We submit that such accommodation has resulted in the loss of a Christian identity which is distinct from the social culture, as well as the loss of credibility in society.

5.2.2.3 Recent Membership Trends of the Four (Major) Denominations, 1990-1996

TABLE 12

Recent Membership of the Four (Major Protestant) Denominations: 1990-1996

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
PCKT	1,867,388	1,989,965	2,049,117	2,101,295	2,094,388	2,105,004	2,191,395
PCKH	2,109,159	2,105,156	2,147,642	2,153,218	2,158,794	2,171,856	2,203,068
KMC	1,183,123	1,217,986	1,117,986	1,289,242	1,289,626	1,314,680	1,335,614
PCROK	310,195	329,458	331,753	334,048	334,367	334,685	326,076

(Ro, C J 1998:17)

TABLE 12.1

Recent Membership of Four (Major Protestant) Denominations as a Percentage of 1990 Membership: 1990-1996[21]

<Unit: %>

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
PCKT	100	106.6	109.7	112.5	112.2	112.7	117.4
PCKH	100	99.8	101.8	102.1	102.4	103.0	104.5
KMC	100	102.9	94.5	109.0	109.0	111.1	112.9
PCROK	100	106.2	106.9	107.7	107.8	107.9	105.1

Total Po.	100	100.8	101.6	102.5	103.3	104.1	104.9

<Po = Population>

Table 12.1 clearly shows that the four major denominations, the PCKT, the PCKH, the KMC and the PCROK, have stagnated in their membership growth since 1990. It also shows that the membership growth rate of the PCKH, the conservative evangelicals, in particular, has almost been lower than that of the PCROK, the liberals, and also lower than that of the total population. By contrast, it seems that the PCKT, which is the second largest denomination at present and comprises moderate evangelicals, is recovering its membership growth better than the others: the PCKT has preserved its unity without any division since 1960. It often played a prophetic role against military dictatorship as a member of the KNCC during the 1980s.

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[21] These statistics are calculated from Table 12.

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5.2.2.4 Some Findings of Denominational Membership Trends in the SKCs

The following results emerged from the above investigation into denominational membership trends in the SKCs:

1) Social modernisation led to steady membership growth in the evangelical denominations. It is certain that they have coped well with the needs of the urban middle class.

2) Differences of theological and political propensity among conservative and moderate evangelicals have rarely influenced membership trends.

3) The liberal churches have on the whole been stagnant in membership trends. This shows that they have failed to address people's needs.

4) When other conditions are the same, identity formation of the church, as well as its credibility to society have considerable influence on membership trends. In the Catholic church, the high preservation of both elements has ensured steady growth in membership. In the case of the PCKK, it seems that emphasis on identity formation has brought about a positive function of membership growth. The PCKT which gained social credibility by preserving denominational unity and by accepting social responsibility, has continued to grow steadily in membership even into the 1990s. By contrast, the PCKH which lost both credibility and identity formation has been stagnant in membership growth in the 1990s.

5.3 The Factors Affecting Membership Trends in the SKCs in the 1990s: the SKCs' General Consensus

After the consideration of some findings derived from the reading of various statistics of membership dealt with in the previous section [5.2], this section aims to describe the SKCs' general analysis of recent decline or stagnation in their membership. This section focuses on finding reasons or factors which have affected the recent membership trends.

The SKCs have generally found that the reasons for decline in membership can be classified according to the following factors: socio-psychological conditions; the SKCs'

inadequate accommodation to recent social changes; and the loss of the SKCs' credibility to society caused by their ecclesiological problems, as well as socio-political and cultural factors. This classification emphasises the interrelationship of the church and the world (society or culture).

5.3.1 Socio-Psychological Reasons

C J Ro (1998:18-25) interprets the recent decline in membership growth in a socio-psychological way. His main argument is that the very socio-psychological factor which influenced rapid growth in membership during the past three decades, has been operating reversely to cause the recent decline in membership. Social situations in Korea shifted very rapidly and widely during the 1960s through the 1980s. The changing situation overwhelmed the Korean people with a sense of insecurity and uneasiness. Such psychological insecurity and uneasiness made people turn to the SKCs.

Since the late 1980s Korean society has increasingly enjoyed improved stability politically and economically. Political stability has played an important role in reducing people's sense of discomfort. In 1993 the so-called civil government was established, and then, through the presidential election of 1998 the candidate of an opposition party became a new president. The ruling party was peacefully changed. The expansion of the social security system and of incomes also resulted in the enhancement of a feeling of security. Various social trends show that Korean society is entering the status of a post-industrial society: for example, about nine million cars are now individually owned, which means at least one car per every two households. Nearly all the Korean people have medical insurance: 96.7% of total population. The pension system has also been enlarged. In 1995 GNP per capita reached 10,000 US dollars (:23-24). In particular, the urban middle classes are increasingly interested in their leisure activities. The enjoyment of leisure must surely be a stumbling block that hinders people from participating in church activities, since leisure becomes a functional alternative to religion. Recently in Korea the leisure and entertainment industry has spread throughout the country (:25). W K Lee (1994:195-196) is also concerned that decline in church membership can be linked to the pervasiveness of that industry.

In brief, social stability has diminished people's psychological insecurity, which in turn has undermined their reliance on religion. Social improvements have ultimately contributed to bringing about a numerical decline in the SKCs.

5.3.2 The Inadequate Response of the SKCs to Recent Social Changes and People's Needs

In his book entitled *Critical Predictions for Future Pastoring*, S H Lee (1998:11) hypothesises that the Korean Church's failure to adapt to rapid social change is the main reason behind the recent decline in its membership. He evaluates that the given paradigm of pastoring has lost its adaptability to the changes in contemporary society. He thus argues that a new paradigm is urgently needed for the 21st century Korean Church in order to recover the growth of the Church (:17).

5.3.3 The Loss of the SKCs' Credibility in Korean Society

Three reasons can be presented for the loss of the SKCs' credibility: the Churches' secularisation; their silence on social and political issues; and ecclesiological problems.

5.3.3.1 The Secularisation of the SKCs

J S Rhee (1995:228-281) concentrates on the political and moral secularisation in the Korean Church throughout his contextual analysis of the SKCs. He assumes that such secularisation has made the SKCs lose their credibility in society.

C J Ro (1998:26-31) indicates that the root reason why the SKCs have become secularised is their uncritical accommodation to modernism. He explains that modernism has been connected with three ideologies in the case of Korea: capitalism or the ideology of progress; pro-Americanism; and anti-Communism. What is of relevance is that the SKCs have played a leading role in transmitting such modernist ideologies to Korean society. At

one stage most Korean people appreciated the leading role of the SKCs in the process of modernisation, since they hoped that Korean society would develop rapidly and that Korea would become a developed country like the USA. However, following the changing socio-cultural situation, they have now begun to criticise the SKCs which advocated modernist ideologies. In other words, postmodernism which presents a critical reflection on modernism has emerged in Korean society. The negative implications of modernisation are now being contemplated: Korean society is suffering a moral crisis due to materialism and the ideology of success and progress that capitalism produces.

The Korean people's perception of the USA has begun to change: they object to the USA's injustice for long supporting military dictatorship in Korea. Furthermore, increasing anti-American sentiment was prompted by the USA's attempts to open up Korean markets to American agricultural products. Now most Korean people, not only intellectuals and students but also ordinary people like farmers and businessmen are increasingly doubtful whether the USA is the friendly nation it was always thought to be (Kim, J W 1994:36-47; Kang, W J 1997:117-126).

Finally, another protest against modernism is revealed by the people's renewed recognition of traditional culture and religion and national identity. Koreans take up the question of Westernised Korean Christianity, which has disregarded Korean traditions. At the same time, the South Korean people eagerly hope for South-North reunification, believing that such an event would transcend all other ideologies, whether communist or anti-communist. They prioritise the united national identity of the Korean people (:163).

In brief, the Korean people doubt whether the SKCs can lead them in the right direction, and against the Churches' compromise with Western modernist culture and ideologies. It is certain that this doubt is closely related to the membership decline in the SKCs.

5.3.3.2 The Silence of the Majority in the SKCs on Socio-Political Issues

In his dissertation entitled 'Reformed social ethics and Korean churches', N H Yang (1993) tries to address the problem that the Korean Presbyterians, conservative evangelicals, lack one of the essential aspects of the Reformed tradition: they lack a consistent concern for socio-political responsibilities (:2). This problem is serious, because

the Korean Presbyterian Christians are in the absolute majority: they comprise about two thirds of all Korean Christians (:1), that is about 20% of the population.

After dealing with the social ethics in the Reformed tradition by investigating the political writings of some representative Calvinists, Yang examines the socio-political theories and practices of Korean Christians, particularly Presbyterians, since the Gospel was introduced into Korea in 1884 (:12). He shows that, except for a small number of early Korean Presbyterians, the Korean Presbyterian churches have failed to properly fulfil their socio-political responsibilities. Yang believes that this failure has resulted in the loss of the churches' credibility in society.

5.3.3.3 Ecclesiological Problems Facing the SKCs

As stated by C J Ro (1998:12-40), the most important reason for the recent decline of the SKCs can be explained by the fact that the SKCs have lost their social credibility due to their unhealthy attitude and actions, such as excessive competition and conflict among neighbouring churches for increased membership ('congregational extensionalism'); pandering to peoples' privatistic needs; negative images of Christianity as immature and hypocritical; group egoism expressed in individualistic congregationalism, denominationalism, separatism, regionalism and nationalism.

C J Ro (1998:32-33) and W K Lee (1994:190-194) insist that such distortion in ecclesiology has mostly originated from uncritical acceptance of the Fuller church growth theology.

5.4 Conclusion and Some Remarks for the Next Chapter

By considering social change in Korea and the SKCs' general consensus on the factors affecting their membership trends and by comparing membership trends in the SKCs with those in other religions, we have attempted to describe the trends in the SKCs more broadly and soundly. Our description can be summarised as follows:

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1) Membership growth in religions or denominations during 1960-1990 depended predominantly on their adaptability to the modernisation of Korean society. This is one of the reasons behind the rapid membership growth of Buddhism and Christianity, as well as behind the decline or negligible growth of Confucian membership (cf Kang, D K 1998).

2) Membership trends also depend on whether the needs of the people are being addressed, in particular those of the urban middle class. The religiosity of the Korean people on the whole is strong and enthusiastic. They tend to be attracted by powerful religions which they assume will satisfy their needs, including worldly success, good health, security, and religious unique experiences. In other words, the Korean people are generally looking for religions which can adapt well to social change. This means that changing social needs and the dynamic socio-cultural situation are interrelated: they are two sides of the same coin. For example, the fact that the evangelical denominations have recovered upward trends in membership since the mid-1990s shows that those denominations have begun to satisfy anew the changed needs of the people caused by socio-cultural changes. By contrast, we presume that Buddhism, whose adaptability to change in the socio-cultural situation and people's needs is more or less inferior to that of Christianity, has continuously lost members since 1991 [see: Figure 4].

3) The religious and political attitudes of the Korean people, including religionists, are generally conservative. The three major religions, Buddhism, Protestantism and Catholicism, show a similar pattern in membership trends. It seems that the transfer of membership among these religions is rare. Those who secede from their religions tend to stay non-religionists. This means that it is very difficult for the sects and the new religious movements to grow steadily in membership without the strong support of various resources. We assume that the liberal and politically radical denominations have shown arrested numerical growth by failing to address the needs of Korean middle class people. Recently, through the development of anti-Americanism and national democratisation, the Korean people have been changing their religious and political consciousness from conservatism towards moderatism. It can be assumed that this change has resulted in the steady membership growth of the PCKT which has kept a moderate line in its religious and political attitudes.

4) Denominational credibility and identity have a positive impact on steady growth in membership, which can be sustained during the process of socio-cultural change, and in particular during the emergence of postmodern culture. A good example is the Catholic church.

5) During the period of social unrest until the mid-1980s, the united mammoth evangelistic campaigns at a national level, as well as aggressive evangelism at denominational and congregational levels, were assumed to be effective in ensuring membership growth. In fact, the evangelical denominations which were deeply involved in those evangelistic enterprises did gain many new members. However, it cannot be said that such aggressive evangelism in evangelical denominations has always positively influenced membership growth. Some evangelical denominations which always emphasised and practised aggressive evangelism have had a lower membership growth rate than the Catholic church since the mid-1980s. The PCKH is a case in point.

6) We hold that membership of the SKCs is not declining rapidly: membership figures could be affected by the fact that the SKCs are still highly mobile due to the religious free market situation, the ideal of unification of the two Koreas, and socio-political and socio-economic instability as well as the Churches' positive reactions to their numerical decline. As mentioned earlier, recent membership trends in the SKCs show that membership is gradually increasing at present [see 5.2.2 in this dissertation].

Through the above description of membership trends in the SKCs we could estimate the order of priority among the factors which have positively affected membership growth in the SKCs as follows. The first priority is the strengthening of denominational credibility and identity, which can be attained through the church's commitment to sound social responsibility and church unity, as well as to continuing self-reformation in its theology and practices. This means that the SKCs should have paid more attention to incarnational, organic, and conceptual growth than to numerical growth. The church needs to grow as comprehensively as possible in all dimensions.

The second priority is the heightening of critical adaptability to changing socio-cultural situations and the people's needs. This means that the church should not be held captive by the dominant culture and people's worldly needs. In other words, what is implied is the

church's critical engagement with that culture and people's needs. In this respect, our analysis of the realities of the SKCs shows that the denominations which have accommodated themselves to the dominant culture and the people's needs have failed to clearly reveal their distinctive Christian nature and mission in the Korean context. This has resulted in the loss of their credibility for society, and eventually in the arrest of membership growth. Therefore, they should have correctly read the changing situation and people's view of their values and coped faithfully and effectively with them in the light of the Gospel.

The last priority is faithful evangelism. The SKCs should seriously have considered that the Korean people want to see the witness in daily living, both religious and secular, of Christians rather than their aggressive verbal evangelism.

The above summary of the descriptive phase proves our hypothesis that the membership question is not simply a matter of statistics. The healthy growth of the church is hardly the simple sum of numbers (Coalter, Mulder & Weeks 1990a:27). Therefore, theological hermeneutics is absolutely necessary in order to interpret, deeply and comprehensively, the reality of the SKC. Accordingly, we must stress that the sociological analysis of the church should be assessed critically by its theological counterpart. The church does not only consist of a sociological reality, but also a transcendental reality since it is the community of faith in God. The reality of the church is thus both sociological and theological. This calls for theological interpretation or theological hermeneutics, which is dealt with in the next phase.

CHAPTER VI. Interpreting the Unhealthy Growth of the SKCs: the Explanatory Phase

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at investigating theologically and, in particular, ecclesiologically, the fundamental roots of the problems facing the SKCs, which have resulted in their unhealthy growth. In the previous chapter, while analysing membership trends in the SKCs, brief reference was made to their theological and ecclesiological problems. But that chapter, as the descriptive phase, focused on describing the reality of the church sociologically, empirically, and by general consensus. Now, this chapter, the explanatory phase, attempts to interpret, theologically, the SKCs' influence on and credibility to society, theological or ecclesiological reasons behind the growth or decline in church membership, and problems facing the Churches. In particular, a special efforts is made to find the root problems embedded in the practices of the Churches, as well as the realities of the Churches, which might be reflected in growth or decline in church membership.

In order to find the roots of the problems facing the Churches, it is necessary, first of all, to analyse their traditions. No doubt the current problems facing the SKCs are connected deeply with their traditions: socio-political, religio-cultural and theological traditions. Next, the SKCs' endeavours to recover its growth will be critically evaluated. Finally, the inherent problems embedded within the dominant ecclesiology will be presented.

Methodologically, some hermeneutical keys will be used as barometers to discern the problems facing the church. The keys provided within the framework of a practical ecclesiology mentioned above, are such as, the church in the light of God's kingdom; a new community as the body of Christ; the missionary church; the church in the world, but not of it; *ecclesia crucis*; the holistic church growth theory; faithfulness and effectiveness in ecclesiology; and various theories and perspectives on analysing the reality of the church. These hermeneutical keys are used not only as tools to analyse different qualities of the church's spirituality, vitality, and growth in the past, but also for proposing alternatives to remedy the problems it is facing. Accordingly, such hermeneutical keys are

also used in the normative phase which aims at predicting a new direction for the church and at leading it to it. Furthermore, the strategic phase can use these keys as an evaluation grid or as criteria by which the practices of the church can be assessed. Since such keys overlap, we select the holistic church growth theory and the balanced view of faithfulness and effectiveness in ecclesiology for our study.

6.2 Reinterpreting Today's Realities of the SKCs in the Light of Their Traditions

The SKCs today cannot be correctly understood if their traditions are not taken into careful consideration. The traditions include socio-political, cultural and religious, and theological traditions. This precondition implies that these traditions lie at the root of a particular church. The SKCs exist in Korean society, in the Korean context. Therefore the SKCs cannot help encountering the Korean social and cultural context. In other words, it can be said that the SKCs have been formed in the Korean socio-political situation and Korean religious culture. Our concern is to investigate how the SKCs have responded or accommodated themselves to that situation and culture. A more important question is how the SKCs have theologically justified such responses or accommodation. This question leads us to examine theological traditions in the SKCs. Our hypothesis is that today's realities of the SKCs can be reflected comprehensively and critically in the light of these three traditions in the SKCs: the socio-political, cultural/religious, and theological. This section aims at analysing what influence such traditions have had on the growth of the SKCs and the formation of their ecclesiology. We focus on their common traditions in this section.

6.2.1 Socio-Political Tradition in Korean Protestantism

6.2.1.1 The Formation of a Socio-Political Tradition in Korean Protestantism during 1884-1945

J H Grayson (1995:44-49) refers to the four particular socio-political conditions which were conducive to Korea's rapid acceptance of Protestantism: the rejection of the values of traditional society and a strong yearning for new values; the lack of conflict between the core values of Protestantism and those of society; general political tolerance of the Korean government towards Protestantism; and the lack of organised resistance to Protestantism.

More positively, K W Park (1986:610-611) argues that the miraculous success of Korean Protestantism is the result of the credibility that was established between the early Korean Church and the people. He explains that such credibility of the Church in the eyes of the people was gained by means of the following three factors. Firstly, the early Church became a source of energy for the country's modernisation movement. The second factor is that the Church from the beginning was deeply and actively involved in the people's movement for national independence. A third factor which enabled the Church to gain the people's respect and trust concerns the Church's endeavours for the improvement of the Korean people's culture and education against the Japanese policy of suppressing them.

What must be appreciated is the energetic, patriotic devotion of Protestant leaders to the nation's restoration along with the services of missionaries, such as medicine, nursing, and education. American missionaries earned a good public image as those who came to aid the people. "Such friendly attitudes, a law-abiding spirit, and an unobtrusive manner helped pave the way for the acceptance of Protestantism by the Korean government and the people", and in particular by the young and progressive leaders (Chung 1996:525-526). Through Western medicine, education, and human welfare programmes initiated by missionaries, the Korean Protestant churches could cope positively with the frustrations and sorrow experienced under Japanese domination (Chung 1982:619-620).

By the nineteenth century, when the social and political world of Confucianism in Korea had become badly decayed due to the gross political corruption of Confucian

literati-bureaucrats, the progressive Korean leaders were persuaded that Protestantism would be the advisable means to regenerate their people morally and to modernise the country. The missionary policy, especially the Nevius Method, emphasised indigenous leadership, financial self-support, and administrative autonomy and thus helped Korean Christians to learn the modern values of independence and democracy. By 1919 the Protestant churches had developed into a leading social force and were providing the nation with its most effective leadership, particularly in the March First Independence Movement (:619-620). During the subsequent period, from the 1930s through 1945, a period of harsh repression and despair under Japanese imperialism, Korean Protestantism continued to help the people maintain the hope of national liberation and independence. It promoted a variety of alternative strategies to strengthen the nation and managed, through various educational endeavours and programmes for economic enterprise, to raise the standard of living and to protect the national economic basis (Chung 1996:530).

The Korean Church's positive association with the politics of modernisation and national liberation, even though this might have been best for its mission at that time, tended to produce in the Church an uncritical accommodation to ideologies which were opposed to the Gospel, such as nationalistic patriotism, Constantinian triumphalism, secular humanism and modernistic progressivism (:530-531). When Christianity, which is completely grounded in Western thought, comes into contact with a different cultural sphere, Christianity inevitably distances itself from the existing culture. The Korean case is no exception. Undeniably, Christianity was a vital power that gave the Korean people new direction and hope in the corruptive Confucian society which "was attributable to the selfish motivation to climb the ladder of bureaucratic success, patrimonialism, and the oppressive hierarchical system" (:528). However, Korean Protestantism's apparent disjuncture with the Confucian socio-political values of the Yi dynasty proceeded to another extreme, namely, to absolute continuity between Protestantism and modernisation or Westernisation. At the time most Korean Protestant leaders tended to identify Christianity with Western culture, holding a negative, exclusivistic attitude towards traditional culture and religions. Such uncritical accommodation to Western modernism has become a root characteristic of Korean Protestantism as a whole.

In brief, during the formative period of the early Korean [Protestant] Church, the continuous national sufferings engraved on the Korean people's minds a particular

national sentiment called '*Han*', the wounded heart of the oppressed. On the soil of *Han* the Christian Gospel of the Cross was planted well and the Korean Church grew very soundly in all dimensions including membership.

6.2.1.2 Korean Protestantism's Socio-Political Propensity during 1945-1987

The profound social structural shift in the industrialisation and modernisation processes in Korea after the Second World War provided a cultural opening for the 'selling' and 'reception' of a Christian world-view that harmonised with the industrial transformation of the society (Kim, A E 1995:34).

W K Lee (1992:233-238) interprets the rapid numerical growth of the Korean Church by means of the socio-psychological deprivation theory. He first notes the unstable social situation of Korean society, which heightened the need for religion of the people as religion plays a socio-psychological role in providing a sense of belonging and well-being, as well as feelings of comfort, security, and satisfaction for people who are experiencing socio-psychological deprivation caused by the unstable, rapid shift of their social, economical, and political situation. Lee's interpretation is also accepted by C J Ro (1998:13-29), who explains the SKCs' rapid growth in membership socio-psychologically in the context of the rapid modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation of Korean society.

According to I C Kang's (1996) analysis of the Korean Church's socio-political character in the period between 1945 and 1960, the Korean Protestant Church was decisively advantageous in the religious free market situation due to the active support of the USA government and churches. In the modernisation process in Korea, the USA in particular influenced Korea pervasively.

Relating Rhee's (1995) theological view, which will be dealt with in more detail in the following section [6.2.3], to I C Kang's (1996) socio-political view, it can be concluded that the USA's pervasive influence accelerated the political and moral secularisation of the Korean Protestant Church. The conservative non-KNCC group in the Church actively supported the Korean military governments without any theological reflection on the socio-political situation of Korean society, and simply enjoyed the *status quo*, following

the policy of the USA government. At the same time, the SKCs generally encouraged people excessively to pursue physical and material security, as well as high social status, by introducing the American way of life to the Korean people without any critical reflection.

The successive social upheavals, in particular the Korean War (1950-1953), had a decisive impact on the formation of the following distinctive socio-political characteristics of the SKCs: anti-communism, pro-Americanism, and pro-government stance (Kang, I C 1996). After the postwar period, the majority of the SKCs have actively supported the anti-Communist state ideology of South Korea and remained silent to political repression and social injustice of the ruling regime under the pretext that Christianity should positively contribute to national security and stable economic development (Chung 1996:531).

Chung (ibid) argues that such characteristics of the SKCs almost exactly reflect the general socio-political conservatism of Korean society:

> The Christian activism for political reform of the past three decades, during which Christianity has shown phenomenal growth, has been limited at best to a minority of Christians. It is hardly a general characteristic of Korean Christians. In a predominantly homogeneous and conservative culture that lacks the heritage of tolerating heterodoxy or deviation, mainstream Christians as a whole are still quite conservative. They are more to the right of what we associate with the term "mainstream" in the United States today.

Grayson (1995:50-51) discusses the background of such conservatism in the SKCs, by explaining that the SKCs have accommodated themselves to Confucian hierarchical culture at the behavioural level despite a certain disjuncture between Korean Protestantism and Neo-Confucianism. For example, even though most Korean Protestant churches, whether Presbyterian, Methodist, or Holiness churches, have a presbyterian type of church polity, the ordained minister usually holds a paramount place in all affairs of the church both religious and administrative, while the elders are expected to play a subordinate and supporting role and the lay people are required to be obedient to the minster and the elders. Church ministry tends to be minister-centred.

In similar vein, as K O Kim (1993) argues, most Protestant congregations in the cities are strengthening their middle-class orientation. They are attempting to serve the needs of the middle class, such as the extension of middle class personal productive activity and

self-realisation, and personal conformity to personal legitimacy of middle class success and fulfilment. They are neglecting to explore, as a result, "the possible alternative to the reigning values of egotistic individualism, hedonistic and materialistic consumerism, family-centred group egotism, and authoritarian patrimonialism" (Chung 1996:535). Modern Korean Protestantism has become a popular religion, which represents the middle class and supports the established powers and the *status quo*.

6.2.2 Korean Protestantism in Korean Religious Culture

Every culture is closely related to religion. A culture can be defined as "a complex of significant symbols and practices, enclosed within an overarching meta-narrative, which shapes the perceptions, experience, and sense of identity of a community" (Yeago 1997:150). I S Markham (1996:7), referring to Emile Durkheim, defines religion as "a way of life (one which embraces a total world view, certain ethical demands, and certain social practices) that refuses to accept the secular view that sees human life as nothing more than complex bundles of atoms in an ultimately meaningless universe". He also correctly says that "a religious history is a history of entire cultures" (:6).

The above definitions of culture and religion imply that each religion must be "a coherent cultural entity" (Yeago 1997:152). Generally speaking, every religion that enters a foreign cultural sphere cannot help but be influenced by the previously existing (religious) culture and *vice versa* (Kang, D K 1998:106). When Christianity, which was completely grounded in Western modernisation, entered Korea, it inevitably entered into dynamic relations with the traditional culture and religions. "The encounter between Christianity and Korean culture involves not only a process of inculturating Christianity in Korea but also a movement towards the Christian transformation of existing Korean culture and values into a new pattern of synthesis with the gospel's moulding influence (Chung 1997:21)." Therefore, without a study of Korean religious culture, either traditional or contemporary, a correct understanding of the SKCs is almost impossible (Rhee 1995:230).

This section considers the accommodation of Korean Christianity to the five major traditional religions of Korea: Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism, Taoism and

Chundogyo. The purpose is not to develop a systematic analysis of each religion but rather to articulate some elements in them which have had either a positive or a negative influence on Korean Christianity.

6.2.2.1 Korean Buddhism

As Chung (1997:22) says, "for a long time [*Mahayana*] Buddhism has given the Korean people a transcendental spiritual reference". It was introduced during the period of the Three Kingdoms, AD 372 in Kokuryo, 384 in Baekjae, and 535 in Silla. In particular, *Zen* (which means meditation) Buddhism, which flourished during the Koryo dynasty (918-1392), contributed to the spiritual life of the Korean people by cultivating their minds. "Koryo Buddhism, however, gradually declined. Under the patronage of the state the monks became increasingly involved in politics. The privileges of monastic landholding and tax exemption not only corrupted Buddhism but also undermined the national economy. The corruption of Buddhism became one of the dominant factors in the downfall of the dynasty in 1392. ... Because of its easy accommodation to other [folk religious] beliefs and practices, [such as geomancy and the *yin-yang* theory of Taoism and Shamanism], Buddhism became too adulterated to retain its own identity (Chung 1982:613)." With the Yi dynasty (1392-1910), Buddhism was replaced by Confucianism as the state religion. Buddhism was treated as heterodoxy and its monks and nuns were forced to withdraw from cities and towns.

Despite the severe suppression by Confucian Yi dynasty, Buddhism survived as a popular religion among the lower classes and women. Among several reasons for its survival, two are given by Chung (1982:614-615): one is its syncretic ability, and the other is its transformation to a mystical, eschatological and messianic religion.

The Buddhist idea of reward in the future life blended with the utilitarian, fatalistic Taoist ideas of luck, fortune, and longevity. The Buddhist law of retribution (*karma*) could well be used to support Confucian filial piety and ancestor worship. The Buddhist compassionate *bodhisattva* (an enlightened being) Kuan-yin (*Avalokitesvara*), responding to the earnest prayers of women to have sons, became a very popular figure, since Confucianism emphasised the important status of a male descendant to assure the continuity of the family lineage (:614).

The Buddhist Pure Land and Miruk (the messianic saviour) sects were very popular among the masses as salvation religions throughout the nineteenth century towards the end of the Yi dynasty. These sects greatly helped to alleviate the suffering of the oppressed masses by planting eschatological and messianic hope in their minds (:614-615).

During the years 1910-1919, the time of early Japanese colonisation, Korean Buddhism was able to rebuild itself due to the Japanese policy of religion. The recent Buddhist renewal movements, partly motivated by competition with Christianity, have generated new or refurbished Buddhist institutions of higher learning, youth activities, social welfare and human services, in addition to more Buddhist scholarship and publications (:615; cf Kang, D K 1998:114-118). The 1995 governmental census shows that Buddhism is the largest of the Korean religions: it then numbered more than 10 million adherents (23% of the total population).

Chung (1982:615) argues that "the peculiarity of contemporary Buddhism remains its syncretic character". In many Buddhist temples, Shamanist and Taoist gods, such as the mountain gods and the god of the Seven Stars are worshipped along with Buddha. It is certain that "the other-world elements of Buddhism have been compromised to accommodate the this-world-affirming elements of Shamanism, Taoism, and Confucianism" (ibid).

6.2.2.2 Korean Neo-Confucianism

Neo-Confucianism (more specifically, the scholastic system of philosophical teaching based chiefly on the authority of Cheng I and Chu Hsi) succeeded Buddhism as the state religion of the Yi dynasty even though it had appeared in Korea as early as the time of the Three Kingdoms. Because Confucian teachings comprised the content of the civil service examination, Confucianism successfully became the leading force in the intellectual and religious life of the country.

Confucianism teaches that "man is born to be upright and virtuous: he/she can become a harmonised part of heaven and earth by fulfilling his/her given nature. The principle for the fulfilment of human nature in social relations is *yeh* (propriety) or the code of proper

conduct" (Yoo 1987:15). This principle is extended to "the moral principles of status, order, and duties governing all the relations between superior and inferior in the family as well as in the society at large. It was believed that these principles were morally binding because they were rooted in the nature of man" (Chung 1982:616). The foundational form of the principles is filial piety. Ancestor worship is the result of extending filial piety to the dead (Yoo 1987:15).

For a while Confucianism penetrated deeply among the people through moral education from primary school to institutions of higher learning and through the exemplary life of the literati and the *yangban* (scholar-officials). But "Confucian political, social and religious thought remained too difficult for the uneducated masses to grasp, and Confucian rites were too complex for them to follow" (Chung 1982:616-617). During the period from the middle of the nineteenth century to the end of the Yi dynasty (1910), most Confucian communities (*Yurim*) confronted Western civilisation and disregarded the needs of the masses, by overly striving to cultivate an individual moral character through religious devotion, and the rules of propriety and ritual. These communities were too closed-minded to manifest the spirit of moral improvement of the world (Chung 1996:527).

On the other hand, the *yangban*, who were involved in political factional struggles to protect the privileges of their parties or educational institutions (exemption from land tax and corvee, and the holding of slaves, land, and grain), did not respond any longer to the original Confucian moral and educational goals of forming a secure social order. The corruption of the *yangban* continued to develop sectarianism, provincialism, and endless political conflicts among competing parties, which resulted in the rejection of the Confucian values by the younger, progressive social elite, as well as the gradual stagnation of Confucian influence on the masses (Rhee 1995:248; Grayson 1995:44).

This irrelevance of Confucianism to the masses made them continue to hold on to folk religions, such as Buddhism, Taoism and Shamanism (Chung 1997:23). Confucianist ancestor worship was performed for the worldly prosperity of the individual family.

"Today, however, Confucian beliefs and values still persist as an important part of Korean culture and society": these include "a tenacious memory of the past (customs, habits, and

thought patterns); paternal authority; familistic collectivism; reverence for the aged; learning and personal cultivation; legalistic conservatism; a hierarchical society; rigidity of thought; and rigid social behaviour" (Chung 1982:618). Yoo (1987:14) thus correctly says that more than any other religion Confucianism has shaped the social and political forms of Korean culture.

6.2.2.3 Korean Shamanism

B W Yoo (1987) depicts the character of Shamanism, which was the earliest religion in Korea and which has profoundly influenced the culture and personality of the Korean people, as follows:

> Because Shamanism stems from pre-literate societies and has lacked a systematically expressed doctrine, it is difficult not only to comprehend it but also to isolate it from other religions. Moreover, because of its very nature, it has easily borrowed from others and has tended to vary in its expression in different times and places. Because of its ready adaptability and accommodation, it has penetrated and become part of other religions without any great resistance (:10).

> Shamanism believes in a three-storey cosmos. In the upper storey the bright heavenly world above, *Hananim*, and benevolent spirits reside. The present world where man and all animate and inanimate things live constitutes the middle storey. In a lower storey, hell, live all evil spirits. It is said that man, after this present life, will either ascend to the upper storey or descend to the lower one (:11).

The concepts of *Hananim*, heaven and hell, and benevolent and evil spirits imply that Shamanism, in origin, has some primal notions of sin and judgement, and some concern for morality. The early Koreans believed in *Hananim*, the Supreme Deity of Heaven, and thus practised Heaven-worship: "the 'Heaven' is the highest being who created and governs the world, and thus has been personalised as *Hananim* and affectionally worshipped by the whole Korean people" (Rhee 1995:233). In this Heaven/*Hananim*-worship, great emphasis was put on purification: because *Hananim* was believed to be pure and holy, thus every worshipper was required to be pure in his or her body and mind in order to approach the altar of Heaven. This religious tradition of purification has strongly shaped all religious worship in Korean religions. Korean Christians are also accustomed to purify themselves, as well as the appointed date and place of worship.

Despite *Hananim*-worship, Shamanism is a polytheistic or polydemonistic cult in its

nature; it is related to 'ten thousand gods'. At the deep centre of the early Koreans' psychic world, man and the spirit of the dead or gods shared a common, intimate life (Chung 1982:608). In the actual practice of Shamanism, the people primarily sought for liberation from evil spirits to achieve a happy life in the present world. They believed that earthly blessings, such as success, the continuation of lineage, health, longevity, harvest and human well-being, were achieved by not offending any spirit who brings troubles (Rhee 1995:237). This belief made them concentrate on propitiating spirits, in particular evil ones, through proper rituals with repeated prayers and offerings rather than on pursuing communal welfare and ethical transformation.

In the course of history, religious differentiation progressed in parallel with a gradual differentiation of society, and specialists in Shamanistic techniques emerged. Shamans, who were usually spirit-possessed women called *mudang*, played a central role in the magico-religious life of the community. Their role included the rites of exorcising evil spirits that were troubling people through the magical ceremony called '*gut*' (Chung 1982:609; Yoo 1987:11; Rhee 1995:236-237). Accordingly, Shamans had high prestige and commanded the respect of the people (Chung 1982:609).

Even though, with the ascendency of Buddhism in the Koryo period and Confucianism in the Yi dynasty, Shamanism was gradually discredited and officially condemned, it has still preserved its influence on women, who have a very low status in the home as well as in society. Until quite recently many Korean women have tended to be so confined by the general demand of household chores that they easily became enmeshed in Shamanistic beliefs and practices.

According to C S Chung (1982:609, 624), "shamanism has always been at the center of the religious life of traditional and even modern Korean society" since it has been "the most truly indigenous" to the religious culture of Korea. "Imported religions", which include Christianity, "had to be modified and adapted to indigenous shamanistic elements before they could implant themselves in the Korean cultural soil" (Chung 1997:33).

6.2.2.4 Korean Taoism

In the fourth century B.C., Chinese Taoism entered Korea without causing much conflict with Shamanism, for both shared the religious view of nature as divine. Moreover, the imported form of Taoism was a Chinese folk religion of sorcery and divination to predict fate and conjure fortune according to the Book of Changes [*I-Ching*] and its *Yin-Yang* theory (Rhee 1995:237).

This similarity between the imported Taoism and Korean Shamanism has formed the Taoist-Shamanistic basis of Korean culture. The following Taoist-Shamanistic beliefs and practices have been popular among the commoners, in particular, women: divination, prayers by women to the seven stars of the Great Bear, astrology, fortune papers and geomancy for tomb and house. Through these beliefs and practices the masses have believed that they could manipulate the fundamental forces of the cosmos and attain their immediate goals on earth: health, peace, longevity, and fortune (:238; Chung 1982:611-612).

Among the various Taoist techniques, geomancy is deemed the most important. Fortune or misfortune depends on the art of selecting the right residence for the living (i.e, house) and for the dead (tomb) in harmony with the essence of the cosmic forces, *yin* and *yang*. This idea was readily accepted by the Confucian society, which emphasised filial piety and ancestor worship (:612).

Korean Taoism is also concerned with long life and semi-immortality (with the perpetuation of a youthful body) by way of natural medicine and self-discipline: it teaches that human beings can obtain the power of longevity in nature, by pursuing the attainment of a perfect harmony with nature through a certain strict self-discipline. Such an ideal person is called 'Tao master' and is held in special respect by ordinary people. This attitude has, in fact, encouraged the instigation of a kind of spiritual elitism in Korean religious culture (Rhee 1995:238-239).

During the turmoil of the Yi dynasty, Korean Taoism developed the function of geomantic prognostication. Chung Kam Nok was the most widely accepted of the apocryphal writings on prognostication, whose message was the imminent fall of the dynasty and the

promise of the founding of a new society through a miraculous change. These millennarian beliefs are still popular among several religious groups, apart from Taoism, particularly among the new religions (Chung 1982:612-613).

6.2.2.5 *Chundogyo* and the New Korean Religions

Chung (1982:622) says that the *Tonghak* (Eastern Learning) is the oldest form of the new Korean religion, which emerged in the early 1880s to counter Christianity (Western Learning) and the process of disintegration of the established social order of that time. He continues to explain the characteristics of the *Tonghak* as follows:

> The Tonghak arose as a nativistic movement to fill the spiritual vacuum of the people and to provide them with a religious and cultural identity. In a curious and crude admixture of borrowed Christian symbols with Shamanistic, Taoist, Buddhist, and Confucian elements, the Tonghak offered a new way to salvation as an alternative to the alien theme of Catholic salvation. It promised the coming of a new social order in this world in which the status of the under-privileged would be miraculously reversed and man would be one with God. This syncretic religious movement evoked a large following among the oppressed people, although it was condemned by the government as a dangerous heterodoxy (ibid).

The *Tonghak* movement led an unsuccessful peasant revolt in 1984 against official corruption, grew to nationwide prominence as an organised politico-religious force, and was renamed the *Chundogyo* (Religion of the Heavenly Way) in the early twentieth century. The Chundogyo, along with Protestantism, played a leading role in the Independence Movement against the Japanese in 1919. By contributing, as a nativistic movement, to the formation of the Korean national spirit, the Chundogyo has survived despite its lack of intellectual leadership and organisational ability: in 1973 it claimed a total membership of over 700,000 in South Korea (:623).

More recently, especially since the Korean War (1950-1953), many new religions have emerged, which are, strictly speaking, not 'new' but rather variations or syncretic combinations of traditional religions. The most significant reason for the proliferation of the new religions is that the masses have felt a sense of insecurity and discomfort due to a rapidly changing societal situation, and massive internal migration and urbanisation after the war. These religions have appealed, in general, to the lonely, troubled migrants, lower class people suffering from illness, unemployment, poverty, or family problems (:623).

6.2.2.6 The Salient Factors in the Korean Religious Heritage

According to Chung (:624-625), the salient factors in the Korean religious heritage can be summarised briefly as follows:

(1) Korea demonstrates a high degree of cultural and social homogeneity, perhaps because of its mono-ethnic population, as well as its small geographical size, which has led to a more or less uniform, centralised value system.

(2) Shamanism, the oldest religion in Korea, has always been at the centre of the magico-religious life of traditional Korean society, and has had a great influence on all imported religions.

(3) The concept of *Hananim* (the Heavenly God) is common to all religions in Korea.

(4) Korean complex religious culture can be defined as syncretic: it is distinguishable from the pluralistic religious situation in the USA where competitive, mutual tolerance of different faiths is the norm. All religions in Korea have blended into a synthetic whole in the spiritual life of the people.

(5) The predominant syncretic feature of Korean religiosity gives rise to an important problem. "A religious culture in which nature, man, society, and the gods are strictly integrated in a harmonious and immanent oneness may distance people from the cultural basis of their society and the possibility of change (:625)." Such a religious conservative tendency is also evident in Korean Protestantism, and will be discussed in the next section.

6.2.2.7 Korean Protestantism's Response to Korean Religious Culture

This section does not deal with the history of Korean Protestantism, which has already been discussed in Chapter 2, but with Korean Protestantism's syncretic tendency, which has occurred from the time of its encounter with Korean religious culture. This section thus aims to articulate the religious cultural tradition of Korean Protestantism.

Korean Protestantism has influenced the grand shift of the Korean religious landscape by actively attempting to integrate other religions into Christianity. As Chung (1997:22) argues, Protestant Christianity entered Korea "at a moment in history when their traditional religions had lost vitality and meaning in the lives of the Korean people". The decadence of the traditional religions "provided fertile soil for the inception and growth of a new faith [Protestantism]", as Horace Allen, the first Protestant resident medical

missionary in Korea, diagnosed (quoted by Chung 1982:619). In these circumstances, Protestantism appealed strongly to the people, since it was regarded as a religion with a clear ideology that appeared to the people as timely and pertinent to meet their various needs. Most early Korean Protestant leaders thought that the Korean religions were useless and powerless, and that only Christianity held the dynamic spiritual power that enabled the people to direct themselves towards a new purposeful life (Chung 1996:528-529).

Korean Protestantism's endeavour towards religious integration made it concerned primarily with the fulfilment of the people's immediate need. At the time that Protestantism was introduced into Korea, the Korean government in fact recognised freedom of religion, which benefited Protestantism's spread (:527). W K Lee (1992:233-238) stresses that the free market religious environment in Korean society made religions so relentlessly competitive that Christianity, which had satisfied the people's need, won the competitive game. In other words, Korean Christianity fulfilled its socio-psychological function far more effectively than the other religions in the situation of a pluralistic religious society. This shows that Korean Protestantism was this-worldly oriented from the beginning.

To satisfy the people's this-worldly and utilitarian concerns such as health, success, and a sense of security, Korean Protestantism has blended easily or unconsciously into the world-views of Shamanism. Grayson (1995:54-56) points to the accommodation of Korean Protestantism to Shamanism or Korean folk religions by giving as an example *kibok sinang* (belief in prayers for blessing), which "would appear to focus faith in God on his ability to provide material blessings, and the possession of such material blessings as a visible sign of the perfection of one's faith". The so-called three-fold Gospel, material blessing, good health and wellness of soul, is entirely individualistic. Such a gospel is nothing more than the Shamanistic faith.

Chung (1997:34) puts the Full Gospel Church as the most salient example of the SKCs' compromise with Shamanism. He considers the central message of this Church as based upon the theology of good fortune which fits in well with the current ethos of a crassly materialistic, newly industrialising society that worships Mammon. He continues to argue that the Full Gospel Church and similar mammoth entrepreneurial churches have become captive to the power of consumerism and the market rather than the power of the Gospel.

They tend to rationalise the individualistic fulfilment of the middle class in society. Growth measured in tangible figures is what such churches are really concerned about (:35).

Such a this-worldly-oriented and quantitative commercial mentality in Korean Protestantism encourages its members to separate the faith they profess from the realities of everyday living. Ironically, many Korean Christians who fail to live a sanctified life in the world tend to proceed to the privatised, other-worldly way of life that Korean Buddhism emphasises. As a result, Christianity merely becomes a kind of 'me-first religion', which entices such believers to pursue a subjective experience of holiness, such as ecstatic trances, spirit possession, speaking in tongues and exorcism. It is really difficult to distinguish the subjective Christian experience of receiving the Holy Spirit from Shamanistic and Taoist trances (ibid).

The Confucian influence can be seen in several aspects of church life and practice. The Korean people tend to be very clique and person-centred. "Connected with such person-centeredness is a keen awareness of rank and position, leading to hierarchical structures, even within the church (Underwood 1994:66)." Along with the prevalence of hierarchical structures in church polity, the Confucian influence is also evident in the very paternalistic setting of rules and standards that are really ideals or goals. This paternalism shows itself in literal legalism, dogmatism and nominalism. This paternalistic tendency easily and frequently develops into church conflicts and divisions (:72-73). "When a dynamic leader disagrees on matters of doctrine, polity, or even church position, there is a tendency for personal followers to join in dissociating themselves and forming a new denomination (:73)." Korean Protestantism focuses on clique-oriented personal relationships rather than on breaking the social barriers and forming "the church as a new community for the world".

In addition, the syncretic feature in Korean Protestantism has been revealed in its uncritical accommodation to Western Christianity, as well as its official acceptance of the Shinto shrine worship during the period of Japanese rule.

6.2.3 Theological Tradition of Korean Protestantism

As discussed earlier in this dissertation [2.2.2, 2.2.3, 3.2.1, and 3.2.3], the early American missionaries who came to Korea were highly influential in forming the theological tradition of Korean Protestantism. Furthermore, the American church's influence on that tradition has continued till now [see 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 3.3 and 3.4 in this dissertation]. The major theological tradition of Korean Protestantism can be outlined in the following terms: religious activism, denominationalism, congregationalism by the adoption of the Nevius Method (Hunt 1991), Revivalism, Pietism, theological conservativism or Fundamentalism, Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism. The indigenisation movement, as well as Christian activism for political reform, have been limited at best to a minority of Christians. To avoid repetition, this section briefly summarises the following five movements, which have revealed the typical theological traits of the SKCs from the beginning to the present.

6.2.3.1 The Evangelistic Movement

Underwood (1994:68), who worked as an American missionary in Korea for over 40 years, states that "Korean Christians are best known for their evangelistic zeal". He continues to argue that the constant focus of personal evangelism on Christian duty in particular, has resulted decisively in a rapid growth in membership in the SKCs.

In the early Korean Church the evangelistic work was enhanced by the effective application of the Nevius Method. The Great Revival, begun in 1907, expanded into the nationwide Million Movement, which aimed to save "a million souls for Christ". This evangelistic zeal led to the five mass evangelism crusades, the Billy Graham Crusade of 1973, Explo '74, the '77 Holy Assembly Crusade, 1980 World Evangelization, and the Protestant Centenary Celebration in 1984. The churches also campaigned for membership growth at both a denominational level and a congregational level during the 1970s and 1980s.

As a result of the 'conversion boom' among the urban middle class during the three decades since 1960, many mega-churches emerged, which positively accepted the

theology and techniques of the Fuller church growth movement. Recently some mega-churches have attempted to develop effective programmes to attract young people, who are leaving the church, such as the seeker's service and Worship and Praise. Such programmes are imported from the ministries of the contemporary so-called successful churches in America.

6.2.3.2 The Ecumenical Movement

The early Korean Church actively promoted ecumenical endeavours, such as the translation of the Bible into Korean, mission conferences, the production of a common hymn book and textbooks for Sunday School, the division of mission territory, Bible conferences, prayer meetings, the mass evangelisation movement, and the national independence movement.

These ecumenical endeavours became undermined by denominational schisms which weakened denominational restraint. This has resulted in strengthening congregationalism, which has contributed to still more splits and divisions in the denominations (:73). Congregational extensionalism based on competitive individualism and capitalistic composition is currently operating as the biggest stumbling block that hinders the ecumenical movement.

Korean Protestantism has become polarised into two groups since the 1960s: the KNCC and the NAE groups. Recently the two groups have attempted to co-operate in aid of North Korea, as well as in preparation for the unification of the Koreas. Strictly speaking, the two groups tend to neglect earnest dialogue with each other. The conservative evangelical churches, the majority of the SKCs, are mostly antagonistic to the WCC and the KNCC.

6.2.3.3 The Diakonia Movement

The medical and educational works of the early missionaries and Western church aid for the restoration of Korea after the Korean War (1950-1953) had a significant impact on the SKCs as well as on Korean society. Korean Christianity is still involved actively in social work. Regretfully, however, Christian institutions for social work are generally laying

aside their distinctive motivation of Christian sacrificial love. They usually look after their own financial interests as secular institutions do. Some mega-churches are managing their own institutions for social ministry to the handicapped and the poor since they can afford to do so financially.

The so-called *Minjung* theology was introduced during the 1970s and the 1980s by some Korean liberal Protestant theologians, who gained theological insights and themes from liberation theology and recent Western political theologies. The aim of *Minjung* theology is to relieve the sufferings of the alienated masses, called 'the *han* of the *minjung*'. *Minjung* theologians consider that the Korean *minjung* have repeatedly been the targets of oppression through foreign domination and injustice throughout their long history. These theologians have tended to reach neither a large middle class nor the *minjung*. Moreover, *Minjung* theology is still largely the perspective of a limited group of intellectuals. Furthermore some *Minjung* theologians have embraced the internationalist perspective of economic and political domination as found in dependency theory and various readings of Marxism-Leninism, while others have opted for an exclusivistic *minjung* nationalism. By taking this radical line, they have become isolated from the ordinary Korean people, as well as from the predominantly conservative mainstream Christians (Chung 1996:533-534; 1997:38-41).

The counterpart of *Minjung* theology, the new evangelical movement which emerged in Korea in the 1980s, emphasises the sound social responsibility of the church. Y K Park (1998b) argues that this movement plays a leading role in the healthy growth and renewal of the SKCs, since it pursues both faithful theology and effective practice: sound evangelical theology, the evangelical alliance movement, the laity movement, and a balanced practice of evangelism and social concerns.

New Christian social movements have emerged in the 1990s (cf Lee, S J 1993). Korean Christians are increasingly participating on an individual level in a common mission for a just and peaceful community. They realise that modern life is fundamentally determined by the dynamic relationship between political, economic, cultural and environmental spheres. They are thus willing to join the Christian social movements, such as Citizens Coalitions for Economic Justice, the YMCA Consumer Movement, the Environmental Movement, the Supervisory Organisation for Just Election, and the Christian Ethical

Practice Movement. Even though these movements have had a good influence on society, participants are limited to the elite group. The movements will only become real Christian social movements when the churches are faithfully and effectively involved in them.

6.2.3.4 The Mission Movement

Church statistics show that Korean missionaries sent abroad have rapidly increased since the 1970s: in 1975 there were 42 Korean missionaries in 12 countries; in 1984 nearly 200 missionaries in 36 countries; and by June 1994 nearly 3,300 missionaries in 119 countries. In 1998 the number of missionaries amounted to 5,948. The aim of the Korean World Missions is to send out 10,000 missionaries to various countries in the world by the year 2000 (*Yearbook of Religions in Korea* 1993; Chung 1997:36; Park 1999:205).

The SKCs' overseas missionary outreach which has been carried out mostly by the Pentecostals and the evangelicals exposes the church to theological problems. Their missionary zeal, driven by the Great Commission to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth, has promoted the aggressive and triumphalistic missionary movement which disregards local culture and traditions (cf Na 1998). As Chung (1997:37-38) says, "it seems undeniable that Korean missionary expansionalism has moved in the direction of a right-wing political alliance and towards a gospel of prosperity and entrepreneurial religious growth". Engrossed in numerical expansion, the Korean missionary movement tends to lack Christian ethical and social responsibility.

6.2.3.5 The Church Renewal Movement

The church renewal movement of Korean Protestantism has generally focused exclusively on the repentance and conversion of the individual person. The renewal or repentance movement has spread through revival meetings. The early American missionaries to Korea were pietistic revivalists, who had been influenced by American revivalism. The Great Revival Meeting held in Pyung-Yang in 1907 was the beginning of a tradition which has characterised Korean church life down to the present. The aim of the revival meetings is individual moral and spiritual regeneration. Since the 1970s, the individualistic trait of the revival meetings has been strengthened according to their emphasis on physical and psychological healing (Grayson 1995:53).

This individualistic trait of the renewal movement has always prevented the transformation of the community of faith. The failure of the Church Rehabilitation Movement can be given as a good example. The Church Rehabilitation Movement occurred with the liberation of Korea from Japanese rule, and aimed at the serious and public repentance of the sin which the Korean Protestant Church had committed by officially supporting the Japanese Shinto shrine worship. But instead, the movement resulted in dividing church. The church renewal movements which have prevailed recently in the SKCs, are also guilty of not overcoming this individualistic renewal trend, in order to stand as a model of communal transformation in a fragmented and privatised society.

6.2.4 Summary

Socio-political conservativism, cultural accommodation, religious syncretism, and theological conservativism have dominated the SKCs.

Korean Protestantism has played a leading role in implanting Western modernism in Korean society. Accordingly, the former has shown conservativism in its socio-political engagement with that society which has been modernised. Such conservativism has successfully fulfilled the need of the urban middle class masses.

Korean Christianity accommodated itself to Korean traditional religious culture, such as Confucian dyadic thought, a hierarchical class system, propriety, and household customs, as well as Shamanistic materialism and spiritualism. Such accommodation of Korean Christianity to traditional Confucian and Shamanistic culture heightened the people's receptivity of Christianity (Grayson 1995). As Rhee (1995:228-281) argues, however, the SKCs have been secularised by failing to avoid powerful syncretism in Korean religious life: "Korea has always been a powerful melting pot of the world religions, including Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Christianity (:232)." Korean Christians are often not even conscious of being captive to their inherent religiosity (Chung 1997:32).

The theological tradition of the SKCs reveals that they have tended to be predominantly conservative. It is not surprising that the conservative evangelical churches are in the majority. They are very critical of liberal theology and tend to make compromises with the dominant culture of the middle class without proper critical, theological reflection. This implies that these churches are accommodationists and pragmatists. This theological propensity of the mainstream of the SKCs has in fact promoted individualism. As Rhee (1995:254-280) insists, the SKCs on the whole have been considerably secularised by modernistic and materialistic secular ideologies, such as capitalism, exclusivism, nationalism, individualism, separatism and materialism.

The most serious problem in the tradition of the SKCs lies in their inadequate understanding of the relationship between the church, the world (culture), and the Gospel. The SKCs should have seriously considered that it is called to witness to the Gospel in the context of a particular culture. Regretfully, they have failed to identify, criticise and reject certain elements in the inherited or dominant culture that stand in opposition to the Gospel.

6.3 A Critical Evaluation of the SKCs' Endeavours for Recovering Church Growth

6.3.1 The Dominant Reaction of the SKCs to Social Changes: Restructuring of an Effectiveness-Oriented Ecclesiology

The dominant reaction of the SKCs to the consensus of 'crisis' consciousness caused by the recent membership decline tends to be biased towards an effectiveness-oriented or marketing-oriented ecclesiology.

Urgently arguing a new paradigm of pastoring for the SKCs, S H Lee (1998:15) believes that sound predictions of societal change are primarily needed. Predicting the change of future society in Korea, he proposes reasons for, as well as the characteristics and contents of, the new paradigm of pastoring for the Korean Church as follows (:14-15):

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(1) The church should adapt to accelerating social change, as a phenomenon of the future.

(2) The present paradigm requires urgent transformation since membership in the Korean Church has declined already.

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(4) The church should pursue unity in diversity pertinent to the age of globalisation and localisation.

(5) The culture and thinking patterns of the new generation are different from those of former generations.

(6) The ability to use high-tech, new management skills and strategic information systems is needed in the church as well.

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(8) Serious issues pertaining to the dignity and protection of life will be highlighted by the church in the light of unrestrained scientific progress.

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(10) The structure of the church will change from the paradigm of minister-centredness to that of the laymen-led ministry.

(11) Woman ministers will increase and women's roles will expand.

(12) The tendency to pursue the development of spirituality will be prominent.

(13) The concern of the church will move toward an emphasis on the church's mission in society rather than toward growth in her own membership.

(14) The theory of church marketing will be developed.

(15) The Korean Church will be increasingly interested in the preparation of itself as a developed nation after the unification of the two Koreas. [my translation]

Lee (:16-17) especially stresses that he makes positive use of new management and business administration theories in his book in order to restructure the new pastoral paradigm pertinent to the new time. He believes in the usefulness of marketing theory for the modern church.

Lee's proposal of the new paradigm of pastoring in the SKCs could be regarded as reflecting the consensus of most ministers who hope for and attempt to recover growth in church membership. They have reacted speedily to the membership decline by creating movements such as the Seekers' Church Movement, the Mission Movement, the *Diakonia* Movement, the Ecumenical Movement, and the Church Renewal Movement. It seems that the urban or suburban mega-churches have been revitalised by such movements. But these movements, with their programmatic efforts to recover growth in membership, could be short-term measures rather than geared towards a fundamental change which would effect sustained and substantial growth.

6.3.2 Proposing Theological Alternative Solutions

Yang's (1993) dissertation deals with the problem of social ethics among Korean conservative evangelicals, from the perspective of the Western Reformed traditions and current developments in the USA. In Chapter 6 of his thesis, correcting the misunderstanding of the concept of separation between church and state, Yang gives some explanations and suggestions about the necessity for religious resistance to unjust civil authorities, and the right relationship between politics and the Christian religion (:237).

In his dissertation, Rhee (1995) proposes an approach to church renewal through his thesis of sanctification. In Rhee's conclusion, Barth's doctrine of sanctification is reinterpreted within the context of the SKCs and applied to them. Our summary is as follows: (1) The SKCs which are suffering from the internal and external challenges of liberal and humanistic theologies of sanctification, needs the assistance of Barth, who is one of the best critics of liberalism. (2) The SKCs have to overcome private Christianity, in the light of Barth's teaching of "the sanctification of the whole": body and soul, individual and social, economic and political, intellectual and cultural lives. (3) The theological polarisation can be overcome by Barth's comprehensive doctrine of sanctification which includes objective and subjective sanctification, regeneratory and continual sanctification, gracious and disciplinary sanctification, Christological and Pneumatological sanctification. (4) Barth can offer an effective political theology for the SKCs in preparation for the reunification of Korea: his political theology was formed in the resistance movement against Hitler's totalitarianism and the political secularisation of the German church. (5) The ethical weakness of the SKCs is caused partly by the influence of traditional religions, but also partly by the pursuit of an amoral theology in the Fundamentalist tradition. This can be cured in the same way that Barth overcame the separation of dogmatics from ethics by incorporating them in his doctrine of sanctification. (6) The SKCs have been carrying out their missions in a spirit of competition, pride, denominationalism, or nationalism due to the individualistic and egoistic understanding of sanctification. This dysfunction will be corrected through Barth's vision for the world from the perspective of the Kingdom of God. This perspective has made Barth critical of the churches' support or silence, regarding the collective egoism of western colonialism. (7) In the current Korean Church, the *theologia gloriae* has been offering cheap grace. The Pentecostal churches have also

been spreading their theology of prosperity throughout all denominations, instead of the *theologia crucis*, which has been the theological basis for the present growth of the SKCs. The Churches thus need to recover the *theologia crucis*: Barth can be of great help in this respect, because he emphasised cross-bearing as an indispensable element of sanctification (:290-296).

6.3.3 Our Evaluation

The advocates of S H Lee's proposal tend to lack sufficient theological reflection on the distinctive nature and mission of the church. They also tend to overlook the danger behind church marketing theory (cf Webster 1992; Wells 1994; Kenneson 1993; Kenneson & Street 1997; Guinness 1993). They seem to consider it obsolete and obstinate to keep a 'critical distance' from modern cultural mega-trends. Rather, they attempt to accommodate themselves primarily and actively to rapid change in modern culture and society.

In this regard, the findings of C Kirk Hadaway and David A Roozen (1995:65) can be applied to the SKCs:

> Programmatic efforts to achieve growth often result in more activity than sustained growth. ... This activity may produce growth in the short term. ... But that kind of growth rarely lasts very long.

Hadaway and Roozen (:65) continue to argue for ecclesial change at a deeper level: this change is called "the attitudinal shift" in the identity, vision, and direction from which the vitality comes. Put simply, the SKCs require radical change at a more fundamental level in the light of the Gospel, the Kingdom of God, the eschatological character of the church as *paroikia, ecclesia crucis*, and a liberating theology to free it from its academic and secular captivity (cf Theron 1997). In brief, a faithfulness-oriented ecclesiology (cf Hays 1994; Lohfink 1982; Hauerwas & Willimon 1989) and the holistic church growth theory require primary emphasis to ensure the healthy growth of the SKCs.

Although Yang's view provides a theoretical basis for the current *diakonia* movement in the SKCs, we doubt that it can be applied directly to the SKCs, without the prior construction of an ecclesiology that would be appropriate to the Korean context.

Reconstruction of a practical ecclesiology is urgently needed in order to form a theological basis for social actions in the SKCs.

Rhee ignores the way in which the secularisation theory is currently being developed in America. He chooses to concentrate on the traditional thesis of secularisation, which was developed in Europe. The Korean context, however, is more similar to the American than to the European context, especially in regard to religious pluralism, disestablishment and the open market of religion. Thus, studies by American social scientists and theologians on the debate concerning the secularisation theory would be very helpful for analysing the problems facing the SKCs, as well as for promoting an understanding of their membership trends and the social and cultural forces that have influenced these trends (cf Warner [1988] 1993; Chaves 1993; Hadden 1987; Stark & Iannaccone 1992). Rhee has attempted to solve the rising problem of secularisation in the SKCs by applying Barth's doctrine of sanctification in a Korean context. But sanctification could be embodied more concretely in the reconsideration of a practical ecclesiology.

6.4 A Critical Evaluation of the Dominant Ecclesiology in the SKCs

The problems facing the SKCs do not lie in numerical decline, but at a more fundamental level. The fundamental problem in the SKCs is the way in which they have accommodated secularism and modernism. This accommodation has resulted in the distortion of the ecclesiology as follows:

1) An effectiveness-oriented ecclesiology has emerged which neglects its faithfulness: the SKCs have focused on success and numerical growth. The Churches have accommodated the indigenous Shamanistic tradition, modernism, capitalism, materialism, pragmatism and modern technology, and has attempted to pander to human need. The Churches have neglected their faithful service and obedience to the kingdom and the will of God.

2) An excessively individualistic tendency has appeared: Korean Christianity has reduced

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the status of the prophetic influence of the church in modern society.

3) Loss of Christian unity has occurred due to excessive competition and conflict among neighbour churches for increasing membership, and group egoism, expressed as denominationalism, separatism, sectionalism, provincialism and nationalism.

The above distortion of ecclesiology in the SKCs can be called ecclesial pathologies, which correspond with social pathologies. Such ecclesial pathologies have most certainly made the SKCs lose their credibility to society and even their numerical membership.

More fundamentally, the SKCs have neglected to reflect theologically and critically on their dominant ecclesiology. At the same time, they have been busy copying American ecclesiological models uncritically, even though the context of the SKCs is far different from that of the American churches.

As referred to in Chapter III of this dissertation, the dominant ecclesiological models in the SKCs, whether the conservative evangelical model, the contemporary effectiveness-oriented model or the liberal model, have serious inherent flaws in their understanding of the Gospel, as well as of the nature and mission of the church. The models disclose the separation of the identity and the action of the church which should be inseparable (cf Guder 1985:113-115). The evangelical model, which includes the contemporary mega-church and effectiveness-oriented models, tends to concentrate upon the inward dimension of the faith, personal conversion and enjoyment of the benefits of the Gospel. This model encourages the church to focus on its membership growth. Hence, "the church, rather than the world, becomes the central focus of the Gospel" (:114). In contrast, the liberal ecclesiological model requires the church to concentrate upon the 'doing of' the church's witness rather than the 'being of' the witness. Hence, "the Gospel becomes an idea, and Christian witness is made into the intellectual defence of that idea, or the political or social program to translate that idea into action" (:115).

Furthermore, these models either prevent the church from intentional disengagement from the dominant secular and religious culture or allow it to neglect meaningful and critical engagement of that same culture, and thus the church loses its distinctive identity and mission. Therefore, our consistent contention that the root problem facing the SKCs lies in

their ecclesiology is well grounded.

6.5 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter we interpreted the theological realities of the SKCs, and their ecclesiology in particular, by means of multi-dimensional hermeneutical keys.

Our theological interpretations of the realities of the SKCs are thus: the conservative evangelical churches as a whole have always supported theologically the dominant culture of the urban middle class and the dominant ideologies of Korean society, such as a self-fulfilment-oriented or success-oriented culture, consumerism, individualism, modernism, pro-Americanism, anti-Communism, and political conservatism.

In the 1990s, the social situation has changed: new democratic governments have been formed; the Korean people have begun to criticise the USA's political and trading policies; and they are eagerly hoping for national reunification. In such a changed situation, the people have also begun to criticise the SKCs, which have actively stood for the ruling regimes, the USA, and anti-communism: the majority of the SKCs have been predominantly conservative, both theologically and politically. At the same time, ecclesial pathologies, namely the loss of holiness, have been exposed openly to society. The Churches have failed to show their distinctive nature and this has resulted in the loss of their credibility and sincerity in the eyes of the Korean people.

We thus emphasised that the fundamental and chronic problem facing the SKCs lies with their dominant ecclesiology. Such ecclesiological problems resulted in unhealthy growth, and ultimately even influenced recent stagnation in membership. The SKCs began to suffer a sense of 'decline crisis' in all dimensions.

More fundamentally, we indicated that the reflection of the SKCs on ecclesiology has not been adequate and thorough. The dominant ecclesiology of the SKCs has failed to play a role in preventing them from accommodating themselves to contemporary culture and

dominant ideologies. The current movements which are springing up in the SKCs are lacking in critical reflection on ecclesiology. It seems that the mega-churches, in particular, are succeeding in gaining more members by producing and displaying new religious goods that can fulfil the changed needs of the urban middle class. However, their ecclesiology is still beset by the same problem.

In brief, the unhealthy growth of the SKCs and their recent membership trends (considerable decline in membership growth rate) are closely related to a root problem inherent within their dominant ecclesiology. The root problem lies in their uncritical engagement with the dominant Korean and American cultures of secularism and modernism without a deliberate critical, theological reflection on those cultures. In other words, all the problems facing the SKCs have been caused by the misunderstanding of a practical ecclesiology, which functions to make the church reflect upon itself in the context of the light of God's praxis.

In the following chapter we shall propose a tentative ecclesiological model which can direct ecclesial change at a deeper level, and eventually promote the SKCs' healthy growth. This means that the model should be pertinent to the Korean context and the Gospel.

CHAPTER VII. A New Direction for the SKCs: Proposing a Model of the Church

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter aimed at a sound interpretation of the reality of the SKCs and articulated their dominant ecclesiology and its inherent flaws, which are brought about by the lack of a balanced view between faithfulness and effectiveness in ecclesiology.

In this chapter our study will conclude by proposing an alternative model of the church which can stimulate the SKCs to become revitalised and to direct themselves towards healthy growth (the normative phase). The proposal will include the planning of some basic strategies through which the model can function faithfully and effectively and move in the right direction (the phase of basic strategic planning). In the latter phase our study delimits some basic common issues that the SKCs should take into careful consideration. Our concern is not directed at the congregational level but at the SKCs as a whole. This does not mean that the congregation itself is disregarded. On the contrary, our proposal aims to encourage the individual congregation to align itself with the common direction towards the healthy growth of the SKCs. In brief, this chapter proposes a new direction for the SKCs on the basis of the study of the models of the church.

7.2 The Models of the Church

7.2.1 The Necessity of the Study of Church Models

The New Testament says that the church is a mystery due to Christ's dwelling in it (cf Eph 5:31): in Christ are "unsearchable riches" (Eph 3:8); in him dwells the whole fullness of God (Col 3:9). This means that the church pertains to the mystery of Christ; Christ is carrying out in the church his plan of redemption. He is dynamically at work in the church

through his Spirit (Dulles [1976] 1988:17-18). Hence, "the church is not fully intelligible to the finite mind of man". This implies "that the reason for this lack of intelligibility is not the poverty but the richness of the church itself" (:17).

The mysterious character of the church has an influence on the formation of a metaphorical ecclesiology. The church cannot be fully described in propositional, deductive concepts. Metaphors help to resolve the difficulty by saying indirectly what the church is (:18; Nel 1996:171). A metaphor allows the church's realities to be spoken of in symbolic terms which are familiar to human believers (Louw 1998b:84).

A metaphorical ecclesiology can be defined as an ecclesiological beam that illuminates the mysteries of the church by using metaphorical tools, such as images, models, and paradigms of the church. This ecclesiology builds on the assumption that no one metaphor or concept is adequate to convey the rich and varied meanings of a Christian understanding of the church (cf Gerkin 1991:22). The church can be described through many different metaphors, which reveal the dynamic character of the church, and thus reflect theological vitality (Nel 1996:171).

The Bible speaks mostly through metaphorical images about the nature of the church. Paul Minear ([1960] 1977) lists more than ninety images of the church, such as the flock of Christ, the Bride, the Temple, the people of God, the body of Christ, the light of the world, the salt of the earth, a city on a hill, the household of God, and the pillar of the truth.

Louw (1998b:84), in referring to McFague, defines a model as a metaphor with "staying power". Nel (1996:170) also says that "when a metaphor gains wide appeal and becomes a major way of structuring and ordering, it becomes a model". "From metaphors and models arise concepts and theories" (:171). Dulles ([1976] 1988:23) says that "when an image is employed reflectively and critically to deepen one's theoretical understanding of a reality it becomes ... a model". Some models can be images that can be imagined; other models are of a more abstract nature. The former class might include temple, vine, and flock; the latter include institution, society, and community.

Dulles (:23) defines a paradigm as a dominant model: "a model rises to the status of a paradigm when it has proved successful in solving a great variety of problems and is

expected to be an appropriate tool for unraveling anomalies as yet unsolved". It can be understood as an interpretive framework or a key to understanding why people think and behave as they do (Shawchuck & Heuser 1993:222, 225).

To evaluate the realities of the SKCs and to propose a new direction towards their healthy growth, we assume that it is useful for us to study the models of the church. The images of the church are so diverse that they ask for further theoretical integration. Many contemporary theologians agree that the church today can no longer create a healthy life for itself within the framework of the old paradigms, such as the Apostolic paradigm and the Christendom paradigm. These theologians are thus concerned with a new emerging paradigm in the church today. However, they also recognise that since its birth is not complete, the new identity and mission of the church remains obscure (Mead 1991:28-29). In other words, the changing of paradigms occurs slowly even though the realities of the church are changing rapidly. Furthermore, as correctly pointed out by Dulles ([1976] 1988:31), people often resist new paradigms strongly since "they find themselves gravely threatened in their spiritual security". In this respect, our study focuses on the models of the church[22].

7.2.2 The Functions of the Models of the Church

The models of the church have two functions. On the one hand, the models of the church influence the formation of its identity. Dulles (:21) agrees with Minear's statement that the church's "self-understanding, its inner cohesion, its *esprit de corps*, derive from a dominant image of itself". The dominant image of the church can be regarded as a model of the church. According to P Minear, if an unsound model "dominates the church's

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[22] The studies of models of the church have been presented by theologians using different perspectives: Paul Minear ([1960] 1977) elaborates a list of some ninety-six images and metaphors on the church found in the New Testament. Dulles ([1976] 1988) classifies models of the church according to the different emphases of the functions of church ministry, such as the institutional, koinonial, sacramental, kerygmatic, and diakonial models. Brueggemann (1994:263-272) explores models of the church in the light of the Old Testament: he identifies the wilderness model, the temple model, and the exile model. Emilio Castro (1995:173-177) deals with Protestant ecclesiological models in relation to Christian ethics according to the historical lines of church traditions and movements: the Lutheran model, the Calvinist model, the evangelical model, the radical Reformation (Anabaptist) model, and the Pentecostal model. In addition, Snyder's (1991) study of the models of God's Kingdom also provides good insight for the study of church

consciousness, there will first be subtle signs of malaise, followed by more overt tokens of communal deterioration" (quoted by Dulles, ibid). If a sound model "is recognised at the verbal level but denied in practice, there will also follow sure disintegration of the ligaments of corporate life" (ibid). If on the contrary a sound model is deeply and effectively rooted in the corporate life of the faithful, it positively influences the forming of the church's identity, which results in its healthy growth (ibid).

On the other hand, the models of the church influence the church's decision to carry out its mission. They stimulate the church to confirm its mission or direction and its members to make a commitment to carrying out the mission. According to Dulles (:22) "we live by myth and symbol -- by connotations as much as by denotations. ... Theology itself depends heavily on images", which include models. Therefore, a model of the church functions as a guide for the life of the church.

Since the functions of the models of the church are closely linked to the formation of the church's identity and the realisation of its mission, it is of great importance for the church to seek and discover a sound model within its context. As mentioned earlier [Chapter III], in these times of rapid cultural change many traditional models have lost their impact on today's church, "while the new models have not yet had time to gain their full power" (:21).

Dulles (:24ff) divides the uses of models in theology into two groups, the one explanatory, the other exploratory. On the explanatory level, models are analysed as to whether they accord with the biblical traditions as well as with what history and experience reveal about the Christian life (:24-25). Through this analysis the inherent theological flaws and inadequacy of the models in a changing situation may be discovered. Dulles ([1976] 1988), in *Models of the church*, explains and evaluates the following five models which have been revealed in church history: the church as institution, mystical communion, sacrament, herald, and servant.

In the exploratory use of models, their capacity of traditional models to lead the way to new theological insights is considered (:25). These insights can encourage the church to

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models.

develop a new model, one which complements and transforms the traditional models. The theological verification of this new model depends on a kind of corporate discernment of the church (:26). In other words, the adequacy and limits[23] of the model are assessed by church members through consultation of their own experience of the consequences of the model. If there is evidence that such a new model helps the church to cope well with its present problems and to proceed in a new direction of healthy growth, then the adequacy of the model is recognised and the fact that the Spirit of Christ is using it. In this type of assessment, theory and practice are inseparably united. As an example on the exploratory level, Dulles (:204ff) proposes the church as the community of Jesus' disciples.

7.3 Towards a Convergence Model within a Practical Ecclesiological Perspective

As referred to in Chapter 4.3, a practical theological ecclesiology, which is a base theory of our study, focuses on the dynamic relationship between God's praxis (mission) and the church's praxis (mission), as well as the Kingdom of God (Gospel), the church and the world (culture). This relationship implies that a practical theological ecclesiology seeks for a balanced ecclesiological model to enable a particular community of faith to become more faithful to God's mission and more effective in its life and practice in a changing situation.

> Thus the church is called to be faithful: to discern, interpret, proclaim, and participate in God's activity. The church is also called to be effective: to organize, structure, and manage itself in such a way that it is attentive, receptive, and responsive to God's call within its unique situation (Dietterich 1990:1).

Such a faithful and effective ecclesiology implies the sound and balanced understanding of the following concerns: theology and the social sciences; theology as *habitus* and

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[23] To discuss the limits of the models of the church, the following two points should be taken into consideration. Firstly, a model is to some degree an intentional abstraction from reality in order to clarify issues. Dulles ([1976] 1988:28) correctly says that "because their correspondence with the mystery of the church is only partial and functional, models are necessarily inadequate". This means that no single model can illumine everything about the church and that it is not possible to seek a kind of super-model, which is completely distinct from the traditional models. There is no perfectly biblical or fully adequate model. The second consideration is that models are not necessarily mutually exclusive: different models may balance, supplement, or revise one another (:196).

scientia; practical theology and other theological disciplines; *academia* and *ecclesia*; theory and practice; God's praxis (mission) and the church's praxis (mission); the one, holy, catholic, apostolic church and a particular church; the nature and mission of the church and the identity, vision and mission of a particular church; the formation of the community of faith (inner-dimension of church mission) and its engagement with society (outer-dimension of church mission); the reformation of the church and that of the world; effective functioning of church ministry, such as worship, preaching, teaching, fellowship and service and effective structuring; church transformation and church development.

We believe that both dimensions of each aspect could balance and complement each other in a creative tension. The dimensions could create a constructive tension of mutually dynamic correction and dialogical self-reflection rather than a non-negotiable competition and exclusive bipolarity or division from each other: the difference becomes complementary rather than mutually repelling (cf Dulles [1976] 1988:196). The dimensions are inseparable. Although one dimension can be emphasised for the time being due to the context and human limits, this does not mean that the other can always be disregarded. Both should be included in a balanced way. This implies that a **convergence** model can be proposed to harmonise both dimensions of each aspect. This model is dealt with in the following sections. At the same time, this proposal is congruent with a practical ecclesiology as science, which attempts to construct an integrative and coherent model of the church for a particular church.

7.4 Advocates of a Convergence Model in the Western Church

This convergence model is advocated by the following theologians and groups: Lesslie Newbigin (1966, 1983, 1986, [1978] 1995, 1995), Douglas Hall (1980, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996a, 1996b, 1997), David Bosch (1991, 1995), Howard Snyder (1975, 1983, 1991, 1996), Loren B Mead (1991, 1993, 1994, 1996) and the Alban Institute (Woods 1996; Klaas 1996), The Gospel and Our Culture Network (Hunsberger & Van Gelder 1996; Guder 1998) and the Center for Parish Development (Dietterich, I T 1991, [1989] 1993; Dietterich, P & Dietterich, I T [1989] 1994). This section deals briefly with the

ecclesiological ideas of the above groups and theologians.

7.4.1 Lesslie Newbigin: a Trinitarian Missionary Ecclesiology

Returning home to Britain after 35 years as a missionary in India, Newbigin found that the West had become a more difficult mission field than India. After 1974 when he retired from missionary work, Newbigin applied his missiological insights to the West and, through his writing and teaching, made sufficient impact to revive missionary zeal within the Western culture. His positive influence on the North American church encouraged some theologians to form the Gospel and Our Culture Network (Hunsberger 1996a:3-7).

B G Thorogood (1990) highlights three features of the 'doing theology' of Newbigin: the search for Christian unity, the critique of secularising tendencies in Christian theology, and the passion for inspiring the life of the church towards global witness to the cross.

Newbigin has always been actively involved in the promotion of church unity through his activities and writings. He is firmly convinced that Christian unity is the inner requirement of a gospel of reconciliation and the evidence of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (:73-74). His conviction is based on the church's mission of the Triune God (Newbigin [1978] 1995:19-29). The understanding of unity that has held Newbigin's mind is very concrete and bold: he maintains that church unity must be organic and visible. To avoid church division, and instead to promote church unity, he declares that all Christians "are called to experience mutual support and recognition, shared prayer and praise and common service in the world. ... He preaches that the denominational style of Christianity dominant in Protestantism is not a necessity of gospel truth, but the outworking of private enterprise in religion and the tyranny of taste" (Thorogood 1990:75).

Newbigin has engaged himself continuously in a considerable critique of the secularised modern world. His three books, in particular, *Honest religion for secular man* (Newbigin 1966), *The other side of 1984* (1983), and *Foolishness to the Greeks* (1986), deal with that issue. In these books, he persuasively argues that the church and its theology, as a whole, have made an uncritical compromise with the dominant culture of society, which has resulted in the exclusion of God from the reasoning and the assumptions of modern

society. He affirms that a profound sense of meaninglessness has been caused throughout the world by this exclusion of God, and the rejection of the only secure basis of society (Thorogood 1990:75-77). To confront the process of secularisation, Newbigin (1983:27) emphasises that the church should become an alternative model for the radical renewal of modern culture, without which the world could move towards an inner collapse. Hence, the being, saying and doing of the Christian community is of great importance. According to Newbigin, the church's critical engagement with secularisation is based upon proper confidence in the public truth of the Christian faith and the incarnational humility of Jesus Christ, who came into this world and now calls Christians to service for the renewal of the world (Newbigin [1978] 1995; Thorogood 1990:79).

The third great theme of Newbigin's writings and activities is the church's global witness to God's salvation for the whole world. Newbigin believes firmly that the bearer of the Gospel is the church. However, he notes that the church has truncated and reduced the full meaning of the Gospel. In *The open secret*, Newbigin ([1978] 1995:91-190) criticises liberation theology, the Fuller Church Growth theology, and exclusivist and pluralist theology in interfaith dialogue, all of which have failed to correctly understand the whole Gospel. He suggests an alternative in the church's faithful witness to the Gospel of the Cross. Newbigin believes that the presence of radical obedience in the very heart of the church is unveiled through the grace of the living God, even though sin is present in the life of the church (Thorogood 1990:84-85). In brief, Newbigin's concept of the church has been shaped by his deepened understanding of the praxis of the Triune God.

7.4.2 Douglas Hall: *Ecclesia Crucis*

G Baum (1990) interprets Douglas Hall (1991) as trying to construct a contextual theology in the North American context. Hall argues that theology cannot exist without being contextualised. In other words, theology as the intelligent exploration of faith which is embodied in life, cannot but reflect the concrete, historical conditions of people's lives. In this respect, Hall criticises the Western dominant theology which has claimed to be "universal, true and meaningful everywhere, transcending its own historical context" (Baum 1990:37). Rather, Western traditional theology has failed to recognise "how

embodied in a particular culture it was and how much it reflected the social conditions under which it was created. In these circumstances the claim to universality has played an ideological role legitimating the centrality of Europe in the history of the world" (ibid).

Hall notes that contemporary contextual theology tends to be perverse, which encourages Christians to follow the spirit of the dominant culture and adapt the Gospel to the needs of their society without any resistance. Unless theology plays a prophetic, critical role and uncovers the blind spots of that culture, it becomes a *theologia gloria* and ceases to communicate Christ's redemptive message. To avoid this perversion, he maintains that contextual theology should become *theologia crucis*, which demands that Christians take a critical look at the dominant secular and religious culture and recognise its sinful and possibly idolatrous dimension (:37-38). On the basis of such real contextual theology, Hall (1996a) proposes an ecclesiology, called *ecclesia crucis*, for the North American church.

In his book, *The end of Christendom and the future of Christianity*, Hall (1997) offers a serious critique of Christendom and the American dominant theology. He indicates that most current problems facing the North American church have been produced by the tenacity of the cultural establishment, a cultured Christianity in which Christianity and Americanism are amalgamated (:28-33). In this amalgamation the modern faith in progress, cultural optimism, and the success-orientation of American culture have existed alongside one another within the church. Hence, the prophetic voices in the church have never been strong enough to shake the foundation of American culture (Baum 1990:40).

Hall (1997:35ff) primarily calls for intentional disengagement from the dominant culture. He considers this disengagement as a basic task of contextual theology. He says that every Christian must be a theologian, who "must learn how to distinguish the Christian message from the operative assumptions, values, and pursuits of our host society" which includes the dominant religious culture (:44-45). More fundamentally, this intentional disengagement demands that the church relinquish its ambition to be the dominant religion of the dominant culture (:49). Following in Hall's footsteps, Baum (1990:41) says thus:

> If we search too quickly for a strategy to overcome the present crisis, we still allow ourselves to be guided by faith in progress. And because we remain optimists and refuse to acknowledge the data of despair, we will never find the way. What is needed, Hall argues, is entry into the *via negative*, the recognition of failure, the acknowledgement of having gone astray, the total disillusionment with modernity and its technological rationality.

Hall (1997:65) emphasises, however, that Christian disengagement from the dominant culture should not be confused with the abandonment of that culture. Rather, he believes that this disengagement can facilitate re-engagement or authentic engagement with the dominant secular and religious culture. His idea of 'disengaging-in-order-to-engage' as a characteristic of every meaningful relationship is related to an ancient dialectic that the church is in the world, but not of the world (:51-52). To provide concrete re-engagement for the North American church he addresses four quests: (1) the quest for moral authenticity, (2) the quest for meaningful community, (3) the quest for transcendence and mystery, and (4) the quest for meaning (:57-66). In brief, "his main thesis is that the church ... cannot authentically assume missional responsibility to the world without serious and critical self-reflection and correction" (Hertig & Hertig 1999:268).

7.4.3 David Bosch: the Church in a Creative Tension

David Bosch (1991) presents a new ecumenical mission theology as a new paradigm of church and mission. Mays (1999:251) highlights the fact that Bosch emphasises the following three features: firstly, the missionary nature of the church; secondly, 'church-with-others' as a new relationship between the church and the world, which means that the church truly can be light, salt, and servant to the world; and thirdly, the so-called inward dimension and outward dimension of the church's mission (i.e., the church as a koinonial community and the church in solidarity with the world) should be understood and practised in terms of a 'creative tension', which would render the church sensitive to God's praxis and vitality.

7.4.4 Howard Snyder: the Church as an Organism

Snyder (1996) presents the church as an organism emphasising an organic balance among the three essential functions of the church: worship, community, and witness. Each function is expanded by three components: worship involves celebration, instruction, and repentance; community is built by discipline, sanctification and spiritual gifts; and witness

consists of evangelism, service and justice. He argues that the church, revitalised by the interaction of these functions and components, becomes a sign that the Kingdom of God is breaking into the world (:117-124).

7.4.5 Loren B Mead and the Alban Institute: a Balanced Ecclesiology

Loren Mead (1991) discusses the shift of the church's paradigms. Defined by Thomas Kuhn as "an interpretive framework for observing reality patterns and making sense of those patterns" (quoted by Shawchuck & Heuser 1993:222), the paradigm can be understood as the key to understanding why people think and behave as they do (:225).

Paradigms are doubtlessly essential to the life of the church (:226). It is thus important to define a congregation's paradigms when trying to interpret the reality of that congregation. Paradigms of the congregation should also be critically examined since they tend to have the power to keep people from seeing what was [and is] really happening (ibid). In other words, paradigm change occurs slowly and with difficulty even though realities are changing rapidly. Moreover, since religious paradigms can easily be regarded as divine rules in religious life, they tend to be the least examined, the most tenacious, and the most out-of-date elements in a congregation. Congregational paradigms thus need to be critically examined and constantly readjusted to the new situation in order to effect congregational transformation.

Loren B Mead (1991) classifies the Western church's dominant paradigms into two, the historical -- the Apostolic paradigm and the Christendom paradigm -- and a new emerging paradigm. The first three centuries of Christianity experienced an environment which was hostile toward the Christian faith. The central reality of the apostolic church was a local community, a congregation called out of the world. At the same time, the church nurtured its members to reach out into the hostile environment to witness to the Gospel. The church's witness was costly, but effective since the clear sense of its mission provided the vitality for its life and helped it to shape its roles and relationships in neighbouring institutions (:9-13).

With the conversion of Emperor Constantine in A.D. 313, the identity of the church was radically altered as the enmity between the church and the Empire then disappeared. The Empire was now identified with the church. To be a citizen was to be a church member. The missionary frontier of the church became the same as the frontier of the Empire. The concept of congregation became that of the parish, a piece of territory assigned to the parish priest. The mission of the parish was no longer to witness to one's neighbour, but to Christianise those who were 'afar off' in other regions outside the Empire. In the end, mission became the responsibility of the professionals (:14-22, 28; Shawchuck & Heuser 1993:224).

Mead (1991:28) believes that a new emerging paradigm has begun to emerge in the church in the late twentieth century. But because its emergence is not complete, a new mission frontier has not yet become clear or compelling enough; the identity and mission of the church remains obscure; and the church's energy for mission is dissipated. Clearly, the old paradigms to lead a congregation or a denomination are no longer sure and certain (Shawchuck & Heuser 1993:224-5). The forms and structures, the roles and relationships of the churches that have been inherited from the old paradigms no longer work for the church today. Therefore the task is to look carefully for the emerging paradigms in order to renew the mission of the church (Mead 1991:28-29).

Mays (1999:247) points out that the Christendom paradigm which has been with the Western church for 1500 years, began to erode 500 years ago, and has continued to experience -- through a process of secularisation -- the removal of the church's influence on society. The Western church, still saturated in the Christendom paradigm, has not only been ineffective in responding to movements of secularisation, but has also shown the church's 'pathological pattern' by accommodating itself to the secularised culture without a proper distance to or a critical reflection on that culture. This accommodation has undermined the church's credibility (:248-249). In this respect, Mead (1991:22-29) argues that the Western church must reinvent and rebuild the concept of church and of mission: a new paradigm is called for, starting with the recognition that the front door of each congregation has become its new mission frontier.

'The Alban Institute', initiated by Loren Mead, is probably the best known church consulting and training organisation (Dietterich 1991:35). Through its publications,

consultation and continuing education courses, the Institute offers a unique blend of practical 'how-to's', research findings, and concepts to help clergy, laity, and denominational executives make effective sense of the ministry of the church (:34).

In the 1990s, the Institute has emphasised the importance of theology for church transformation. Until the 1980s, the resources of the Institute tended to utilise a short-term problem solving approach (:38). The Institute mostly endeavoured to develop the effective ecclesiological structures of the church in order to deliver its riches to the laypersons in their mission, by adopting, without critical reflection, the language of various theories borrowed from the social sciences (:37-40). In the 1990s, however, the Institute has given attention to church transformation, which is fundamentally a theological challenge, in order to discern afresh what God is calling the church to be and do (cf Meyer 1998:7-14). The books recently published by the Alban Institute are useful in that they study the congregation in a balanced way by using both theological and sociological methods (cf Mead 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996; Woods 1996; Klaas 1996): they positively utilise findings provided by the congregational studies movement and research. At the same time, these publications endeavour to stand on a firm theological basis. In brief, the recent work of the Alban Institute emphasises the interrelationship between the theological and social dimensions of the church and aims to develop a balanced, faithful and effective ecclesiology for the American churches.

7.4.6 The Gospel and Our Culture Network (GOCN): the Missional Church

This Network is seeking a balanced way between 'postliberal theology' and 'revisionist theology'. On the one hand, the Network appreciates that postliberals focus on biblical narratives in which the life of the New Testament church is described: they believe that the building up of a particular community of faith is the most faithful and effective social action, since that community essentially plays the role of light in the world. The proponents of postliberal theology, the so-called 'Yale School', include theologians such as Hans Frei, George Lindbeck, William Placher, Stanley Hauerwas, William Willimon, and George Hunsinger. These theologians were influenced greatly by Ludwig Wittgenstein, Karl Barth, Clifford Geertz, and Peter Berger (Phillips & Okholm 1995:11;

Campbell 1997:3). For such postliberals, practical theology is an activity of the church as it articulates its identity in contemporary society and in the North American context, in particular (Poling & Miller 1985:53). In brief, a postliberal ecclesiology exhibits many of the characteristics of postmodernity: a critique of modernity (Philips & Okholm 1995:11), a strong emphasis on Christian community (cf Hauerwas & Willimon 1989), and an unwillingness to go in search of the lowest common ethical denominator in the name of dialogue and collaboration either with the secular world or with other religious groups (Lakeland 1997:60). The main emphasis of this postliberal ecclesiology is on the holiness, obedience and life-style of discipleship of the gathered Christian community as the primary mandate of the whole of the Christian church called by God (Castro 1995:176). Postliberal theology is thus Christocentric, ecclesiocentric, and confession-centred in its nature (Campbell 1997:45-46).

The Gospel and Our Culture Network thus concerns a biblical ecclesiology as the framework and normative basis of practical theology and considers the restoration of the community of faith in the contemporary context as the main mission of the church. The ecclesiology of the Network emphasises its faithfulness rather than its effectiveness.

On the other hand, the Network also recognises revisionists who emphasise the meaningful and faithful engagement of Christians with the world. Revisionist theology is linked with the contemporary practical theology movement and the so-called 'Chicago School'. The following theologians, Catholic as well as Protestant, in the American mainline churches can be classified as revisionists: Davis Tracy, Edward Farley, Don Browning, Peter Hodgson, James Gustafson, Davis Griffin, Marjorie Suchocki, Henry Young, John Cobb, Clark Williamson, Ronald Allen, James Fowler and Thomas Ogletree. Charles Hartshorne, Alfred North Whitehead, Paul Tillich, Richard Niebuhr and Reinhold Niebuhr represent major influences on this group (Browning 1983; Allen et al 1997:20; Campbell 1997:3). These revisionist theologians caution those mainline churches which imitate closely the contemporary successful, evangelical churches without any fundamental, theological reflection. They also note that a weak point of the congregational studies movement is to rely too heavily on social scientific research of church growth (cf Hadaway & Roozen 1995). In other words, revisionists are earnestly seeking for more fundamental solutions to the predicament of the mainline churches through sound and critical theological reflection. Such solutions ultimately direct the church towards the

transformation of the world in the light of God's praxis and mission: revisionists advocate public theology, which attempts to engage in dialogue, boldly, humbly and in an incarnational way, with the world (Browning 1983:11). Their engagement with the world is not promoted by the conventional and naive passion that social activists tend to display, but by theological deliberation. A revisionist ecclesiology is apologetic in its nature (Allen et al 1997:69; Lakeland 1997:91; Poling & Miller 1985:46).

Accepting the missiological challenge of Newbigin, the Gospel and Our Culture Network (GOCN) has outlined the agenda for the North American church in terms of the missional church, a domestic missiology for North America, which emphasises the three-way relationship between the Gospel, the church and the world. George Hunsberger (1996b:290) explains the main concern of the GOCN:

> The GOCN is a collaborative effort that focuses on three things: (1) a cultural and social analysis of our North American setting; (2) theological reflection on the question, "What is the gospel that addresses us in our setting?"; and (3) the renewal of the church and its missional identity in our setting.

With due consideration to the Network's criticism of the North American church which has lost its distinctive identity as a called and sent community, the focus in this section will be on the following two questions: 'What characteristics of the missional church does the Network propose for the renewal of the church? and, What are the basic strategies for the formation of such a missional church?'

The first question concerns the identity of the missional church. The identity of the missional church is formed by remembering, retelling and rehearing the story of the Triune God (Hunsberger 1998:6-7). Such identity formation is strengthened through a dynamic and balanced relationship of the functions of the church, such as *leitourgia*, *kerygma*, *koinonia*, and *diakonia* (:7-10). This means that the identity of the church is closely connected with its mission. The missional church emphasises the public presence of its life expressed in mutual forgiveness, accountability, and love, which together display the qualities of God's reign. At the same time, "the missional church acts according to God's passion for justice, peace, and the wholeness of creation, whether it has promise of success or not" (:10). Accordingly, the missional church is willing to risk crossing all human boundaries and always lives as an open community, which takes part in God's praxis and welcomes those who respond by receiving and entering God's reign

(:11-12).

To answer the second question, the GOCN has developed some basic strategies to cultivate the missional church in a way which is pertinent to God's calling in the North American context. Such strategies can be summarised in the following four steps: (1) reading the signs of the times; (2) envisioning a dynamic and faithful future; (3) reconceiving theology as the work of the people; and (4) cultivating a common mind within the community of faith (Dietterich & Ziemer 1998:16-17).

For the first step towards living with a missional identity and vision, the church is challenged to read the signs of the times. "Swirling gusts of cultural, political, technological, and economic changes are sweeping across the religious landscape" (:17). When the church fails to read the signs of the times, it will either proceed towards resistance to innovation or sink into the spirit of the dominant culture (:16-17). Thus the GOCN "engages the North American cultural context in a critical way, assessing how it has been shaping the church in North America" (Nieder-Heitmann 1999:84).

The second step is that God's people should see God's vision by sitting together at His feet, and taking the time to be open to the power and the promise of His transforming presence. "Congregations engaged in the transforming process of envisioning are becoming intentional learning communities actively engaged in discerning God's vision for their future. ... Their goal becomes not one of quick solutions or quick agreement, but of discovering an enriched common vision through the sharing and teaching of personal visions" (Dietterich & Ziemer 1998:18). This process of visioning and discernment stimulates the church to see the world in new ways, as God sees it. As a result, God's eschatological hope is planted in the heart of the church. In brief, the GOCN proposes a broad vision for the sending of the church in North America. It attempts to help congregations cultivate and embody the vision that God casts for them in their particular contexts.

The third step towards cultivating the missional church is that all members must become engaged in the intentional and disciplined thinking of the faith - theology. If they stop exploring theology, the vision they once caught will wither away. Therefore, the community of faith must become an ongoing learning community, which "involves a

communal process of conviction and witness guided by the enlightening and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit (cf John 16:13)" (:21). Such a learning congregation sometimes suffers tension, struggle and conflict due to controversial issues. Yet in the midst of this diversity and conflict, the work of theology is of the utmost importance in the sense that under the leadership of the Holy Spirit theology can help the congregation "to move beyond their comfort level, to embark upon the adventure of learning" and to "discover new insights, new energy, and new ways of participating in God's salvific mission" (:22).

The final step is related to community building. Without building a community, a missional church cannot be cultivated. Cultivating a common mind implies that congregations are becoming intentional about forming a context of mutuality, engaging in faithful conversation, and affirming the unity of the Holy Spirit. The cultivation of a common mind primarily requires that the members share an intimate fellowship. It also requires that they talk faithfully and meaningfully with one another. Such faithful conversation does not focus on congregational survival or growth in membership, but on seeking an answer to what it means to proclaim and to embody the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the midst of the alienation and brokenness of this world. It is important to keep in mind that faithful conversation can bear fine fruit in the Holy Spirit who transforms the members into a new and diverse community, in which all human barriers are overcome. This transformation is a sign of the coming of God's Kingdom.

In theologising, the GOCN employs a multi-disciplinary approach, using both theology and the social sciences. Considering that the theological disciplines have functioned "in a fragmented and compartmentalized manner", however, "the GOCN strongly proposes that the discipline of missiology should function as an integrative and centering catalyst to interpret and focus the work of the traditional theological disciplines (including practical theology and its rubrics) as well as the social sciences as far as the sending of the church in North America is concerned" (Nieder-Heitmann 1999:124). Accordingly, to the GOCN, the concept of the missional church becomes the fundamental theological norm.

In sum, the GOCN aims to encourage congregations to be transformed into missional churches in their setting. Its sound "critique of cultural trends in the dominant North American culture and how these affect and challenge the church, are invaluable tools for a

particular community in their endeavor to develop a local, contextual, missional ecclesiology" (:126). More practically, the GOCN helps a congregation to discover a vision and to write a clear vision and mission statement.

At the same time, to fulfil more effective congregational changes, the GOCN considers that denominational structures also need to undergo radical change to become a missionary denomination. A missionary denomination defines its identity and mission at a local level and a global level rather than at a national level. In other words, the role of the national staff and organisation of such a denomination will not be to serve its own national structures, but rather to support the local mission of congregations and to connect the church local with the church global. According to this aim, the denominational structures and functions need to be reallocated and transformed. A good example of a 'missionary denomination' is found in the Reformed Church in America (RCA) (Granberg-Michaelson 1998). This RCA case will be applied to our last proposal, for reshaping the denominations in South Korea, which will be dealt with in the last part of this chapter.

7.4.7 The Center for Parish Development (CPD): a Faithful and Effective Ecclesiology

According to its own introductory brochure (CPD 1994a:2), the CPD's core mission is: "(1) to develop theological foundations to guide the transformation of the church's mission and witness in this new era in history; (2) to contribute to a theory and practice of planned church transformation; (3) to apply systems theory and practice to church life and work; and (4) to contribute to the field of practical theology".

The CPD primarily emphasises the theological foundation of the nature and mission of the church. The Center's understanding of the church which follows is correspondent with the GOCN's missional ecclesiology: the Center participates actively in the work of the GOCN.

> As stewards of "the mysterious of God," the church is not simply one among many societal institutions, but a people called, gifted, and empowered to participate in God's creative, redemptive, and transformative activity. The mission of the church is determined by God's mission: the reconciliation of all created reality into a society of forgiveness, love, hope, justice, peace, service (CPD 1994a:1).

To help the church to accomplish its mission faithfully and effectively, the CPD believes that church transformation is primarily needed in the current situation of modern society, which is characterised by "cultural and personal fragmentation, alienation, fear, hostility, and conflict" (ibid). The Center notes that the American churches are in a predicament, which has been caused by their uncritical accommodation to the dominant American culture (Dietterich, I T 1991:44). Hence, what is needed is church transformation rather than church development or revitalisation (:4): church transformation rather emphasises innovation or radical new departures than continuity or selective affirmation of existing values (:56). Inagrace T Dietterich (:4) defines church transformation as:

> a profound reorientation which analyzes, critiques, and changes the fundamental ways of perceiving, thinking, and behaving of church organization. Church transformation is a process of intentional planned change which involves the entire church organization in retrieving its historical grounding, becoming clear about its current situation, exploring its theological heritage and commitment, envisioning a dynamic and creative future, building plans to enable the vision to become a reality, and developing new and more faithful and effective systems that will enable the church organization to manage itself more faithfully and effectively -- being informed and challenged by the Gospel at every point along the way.

To theorise church transformation, "the CPD has developed **A Systems Model of the Church in Ministry and Mission**" (CPD 1994b:4). The model "is built upon a tested theory and practice of *re-orientation-level* change in church system" by utilising the social sciences and the theological disciplines in a critical and appropriate manner (CPD 1994a:4). This model, based on general systems theory, consists of "*inputs* (religious heritage, environment, organizational history, organizational strategy), an *internal management system* (ministry development system, organizational dynamic system, resource system, structural design system), *outputs* and *results*, a *receiving system* and a *feedback system*" (CPD 1994b:4, cf Dietterich & Dietterich [1989] 1994). Focusing upon the dynamic interrelationships among the many factors operating upon and within the system, the model "provides a roadmap to aid in diagnosing church organizational problems, in developing solutions to those problems, and in implementing those solutions" (CPD [1990] 1993:4). In addition to the system model, the Center proposes a structured process for planned reorientation -- a five-phased strategic-transformation process: "to build the plan for planning"; "to build the strategic profile"; "to choose the organizational strategy"; "to design the strategic ministries"; and "to embed strategic management". The process is used as a guide to bring about planned change within the church system

(:18-29).

More concretely, the CPD emphasises the comprehensive educational nature of church organisational change (Dietterich, I T 1991:44). Accordingly, the Center provides research, consulting, teaching and resourcing services in an intensive partnership with its clients for the major and profound transformation of church organisations, which implies long-term planned change.

In brief, grounded in the Bible, theology and systems theory, the PCD's services help churches to participate in God's transforming activity. In other words, by providing a practical theological ecclesiology, the Center aims to encourage the church to become more *faithful* and *effective* in its ministry and mission in this new era.

7.4.8 Summary and Conclusion: a Consensus

Critical reflections on the nature and mission of the Western church which the above advocates of a convergence model address can be summed up as follows:

1) The Western church needs a domestic missiology or missiological ecclesiology that redefines the nature and mission of the church in relation to the Gospel and culture.

2) The church should primarily rediscover that, due to a changing context, its front door is the new mission frontier.

3) The church should employ both cultural analysis and theological reflection to redefine its renewed vision and mission.

4) The church has stagnated in the (functional) Christendom paradigm, which has suffered through a process of secularisation -- the removal of the church's influence on society. P Mays (1999:248) says that "in the 1960s and 1970s [in North America], the 'Christian culture' collapsed with the mainline denominations moving to the sideline and with the evangelical churches shrinking from the secularised culture".

5) The church's 'pathological pattern' in responding to the secularisation process has served to undermine the church's credibility and faithful mission to the world (Hunter, G G 1992:29).

6) The church should recognise the cultural change from modernism to postmodernism and from a churched culture to an unchurched culture.

7) The church should articulate a new understanding of the Gospel in a changing context.

8) The church should understand a new relationship between itself and the contemporary world or ethnic religious and secular cultures, in the light of the Kingdom of God.

9) The missional activity of the church should be more clearly redefined and practised.

10) Denominational structures should also be transformed in order to support the missional lives of their congregations.

11) The unity of the church should be more visibly promoted.

12) A practical theological ecclesiology should be constructed as a faithful and effective ecclesiology, which is interrelated with a descriptive ecclesiology, a critical ecclesiology, a constructive ecclesiology, and a functional ecclesiology.

7.5 Characteristics of a Convergence Ecclesiological Model within the Framework of Practical Theology

A convergence model can be depicted according to the following three perspectives: the understanding of the Gospel (God's truth), the understanding of the nature and mission of the church, and the images or metaphors of the church.

7.5.1 The Understanding of the Gospel (God's Truth)

Most advocates of a convergence model agree with the Postliberals' nonfoundational epistemology of the truth[24]. They consider that the truthfulness of the Gospel cannot be fully proved outside the Gospel. Rather, the Gospel itself proves its truthfulness through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel is always deeper and larger than the church's understanding, and that is the reason why the Gospel is leading the church forward. In

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[24] Nonfoundationalists are critical of any assumption that there are certain and stable foundations for knowing, upon which other claims can be built (Lakeland 1997:125). Most nonfoundationalists believe that the truth exists. However, they argue that there is no need for any external foundation of the truth, and that the truth itself proves its truthfulness.

other words, truthfulness of the Gospel is experienced and understood when people encounter the Gospel through the work of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly the advocates of the convergence model rely fully on the power of the Gospel which leads the church and the world in the right direction. Nevertheless, they believe that the Holy Spirit positively uses the Bible and human resources such as tradition, reason and experience, through which part of the light of the truth can be seen. Hence, the truth is considered as public in its nature. At the same time, these advocates reflect critically on the history of the church in which human understanding of God's truth has tended to be distorted (Newbigin [1978] 1995:62).

7.5.2 The Understanding of the Nature and Mission of the Church

The convergence model supports a theocentric ecclesiology. The advocates of a convergence model are primarily concerned with the mission or praxis of God, who leads .forward both the church and the world towards the eschatological fulfilment of His will. The need for God's guidance implies that the church is not equated with the Kingdom of God. In other words, the praxis or mission of the church is led by the praxis and mission of God, both of which are deeply engaged in the particular human context.

The model emphasises the right direction of the church: the church should orient itself towards the Cross of Jesus Christ. The Cross is the only way in which the church can take part in God's praxis and mission and transmit the Gospel faithfully to the world (:181). The model thus maintains that the newness of life that the Christian communities practise in the world should be urgently demonstrated in an age of social fragmentation, political disorder and psychological bondage of various kinds. In other words, the church must commit itself to Gospel radicalness: the primary concern of the church is that it should be formed as the community of Jesus' disciples by its conformity to Christ, the Incarnate, who has become man (Ramachandra 1996:279-282). In order to build such a unique community the church has to go to the foot of the Cross and live an incarnational life worthy of the Gospel (Guder 1985:18-32). The advocates of the model believe that when the church assembles beneath the Cross it will be transformed and empowered by the Holy Spirit (cf Hall 1996a).

The reason why the church must humble itself to the foot of the Cross is to communicate the Gospel to the world. Only the church that continuously transforms itself through a new understanding and experience of the Gospel, can truly engage in proclaiming the salvation of the world. This means that the church's true dialogue with the world primarily demands critical reflection on its own image and shortcomings.

The church's dialogue with the world aims at the true benefit of the world. Thus the church engages itself humbly but seriously in the dialogue. It tries to listen carefully to the story of the world and to correctly understand it. This implies that the church is required to open its doors to accept the world's criticism. As Ramachandra (1996:270-279) says, the church has to show Gospel integrity, such as *respect* for all human beings, who are created in the image of God, a spirit of *humility*, and an *incarnational* way of life. At the same time, the church tries to share the story of the Gospel with the world through various languages and cultural sources. But the church should undertake a critical, theological reflection on the dominant culture and ideologies, whether secular or religious. As a result of such reflection, the church would not fear to say 'no' boldly to the world, since such *boldness* is an expression of sincerity and a passion for the truth with a sense of love. The church should doubtlessly seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who evokes creative imagination and sensibility in the dialogue.

The convergence model also concerns effective functioning in church ministry. The identity and activity of the church is preserved and promoted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, through which the church can effectively carry out its functions, such as *leitourgia*, *koinonia, diakonia* and *kerygma*. The ultimate pursuit is effective functioning operated by a dynamic relationship between the functions of a church which aims at a faithful and effective balance between the formation of the community of faith and its engagement of society.

In brief, the convergence ecclesiological model aims to build a faithful and effective ecclesiology, which includes a descriptive ecclesiology, a critical ecclesiology, a constructive ecclesiology, and a functional ecclesiology.

7.5.3 The Images or Metaphors of the Church

The following images or metaphors of the church can be identified as being of crucial importance to the SKCs: *ecclesia crucis* (the church on the way towards the Cross), the missional church, the church with others, the church as the community of Jesus' disciples, and the church in the world but not of the world.

7.5.4 Summary

Recognising that the role of the church should be renewed in a changing situation, a convergence ecclesiological model lays great emphasis at least on the following three essential aims: (1) The model emphasises a critical, theological reflection on the modern/postmodern culture, and on conventional theologies and ecclesiologies, in particular; (2) it aims to develop theological (or ecclesiological) models for the recovery of the integrity of the church pertinent to its context; and (3) it also aims to help denominations and congregations proceed in a new direction by proposing concrete plans for the renewal of their identities and ministries in their setting.

7.6 The Application of a Convergence Model to the SKCs: Proposing a 'Trinitarian Praxial Ecclesiology'

This section proposes a 'tentative' ecclesiological model that is congruent with the convergence model discussed in the previous sections [7.4 & 7.5] of this dissertation, one which may help the SKCs to cope with their ecclesiological problems and to proceed towards healthy growth in the light of a practical ecclesiology. As stated in the Introduction of this dissertation [1.4], by 'tentative' a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology is meant that could play a constructive role in transforming the SKCs in their particular situation, here and now. In other words, it is *a* model from among possible alternatives. We recognise that the SKCs are too multifaceted to shelter under one umbrella. Nevertheless, we hope that this model will stimulate the SKCs to rediscover the meaning

of the Gospel in today's context, and to be revitalised.

In this section, we aim first to articulate the implications and significance of a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology in the Korean context by examining its validity for the SKCs. Finally, we propose some basic ministry principles in order to flesh out our model for the SKCs.

Concerning the validity of an ecclesiological model, we agree generally with Dulles ([1976] 1988:190) who says that "the critique and choice of models depends, or should depend" on the criteria that are acceptable to adherents of different models of the church. On the basis of Dulles' (:190-203) study, we propose the following six criteria by which the validity of a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology for the SKCs is examined.

Criterion (1): the continuity of the model with the Bible and Christian tradition

Criterion (2): its adaptability to other models and different theological methods.

Criterion (3): its theological development -- integrity and coherence.

Criterion (4): its contextuality and provisionality

Criterion (5): its positive role in promoting healthy church growth

Criterion (6): its critical distancing from the church, as well as the world.

7.6.1 Implications and Validity of a Trinitarian Praxial Ecclesiology for the SKCs

By 'trinitarian praxial' we mean that such an ecclesiology is primarily concerned with the praxis or mission of the Triune God in the church and in the world. God's praxis in the church refers to: (1) the church in which the Triune God dwells; (2) the church that reveals the Triune God to the world; and (3) the church that serves to reconcile the world to the Triune God. Therefore, a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology orients a theocentric ecclesiology and may help the SKCs to deepen and renew their traditional understanding of the Triune God. This claim is supported by *'Criteria (1) & (3)'*: its continuity with the Bible and the tradition of the SKCs and its theological development.

'Praxial ecclesiology'conveys the meaning of an ecclesiology with a practical theological

perspective. Thus a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology unites the following four characteristics: descriptive, critical, constructive, and functional [cf 4.3.2 of this dissertation]. Through this convergence this ecclesiology aims to lead the SKCs in the right direction pertinent to their context. This aim primarily implies that a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology engages itself in the interpretation of the global and ethnic situation surrounding the SKCs. At the same time, the ecclesiology attempts to clarify the realities of the SKCs, which include the realities of their growth. Therefore, a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology must be a systematic study of the church. Such an ecclesiology may contribute to a heightened theological coherence for the study of the SKCs ['*Criterion (3)*'], and to sound analysis of the realities of the SKCs by adequately using different research methods ['*Criterion (2)*'].

In particular, a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology, as a critical ecclesiology, stresses that *ecclesia crucis* should urgently be recovered in the SKCs, which on the one hand have existed in the religious syncretic tradition and the predominant theological and political conservatism, and on the other hand, have been infected by the American churches' success-oriented activism and pragmatism, and the optimistic and aggressive American culture. A trinitarian praxial ecclesiology thus tries to keep a critical distance in order to maintain a meaningful relationship between itself and the SKCs, as well as between itself and the world [this meets '*Criterion (6)*']. By doing so, it stands "as a critique of the cross" before the SKCs (Theron 1997:6). It thus stands against the contemporary effectiveness-oriented ecclesiology. In other words, it plays a prophetic role by urging the SKCs to live their lives as a witness of the Cross, which is indispensable for recovering the Churches' credibility in Korean society.

A trinitarian praxial ecclesiology shows that the SKCs must avoid church division, and rather promote an organic and visible unity based on the unity of the Triune God. As mentioned by Hendriks[25] (1996:394), "[t]he goal of reconciliation and unity with room for diversity and pluralism can be attained through a process of spiritual growth", which includes an epistemological shift from foundationalism towards Newbigin's concept of

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[25] In the light of the developmental stage theory, Hendriks (1996, 1997:3-4) argues that church unity will be enhanced if there are more people in the accommodating stage in the churches. This stage is the first at which diversity and pluralism can be handled: people are more mature and hermeneutically sensitive to the 'other'. J W Fowler (1991:111-113) names this stage the "conjunctive faith stage".

truth (cf Newbigin [1978] 1995). As a way to enhance spiritual growth, a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology must include a certain educational process, through which church unity is taught and concretely practised. If the promotion of reconciliation in the SKCs is demonstrated through the intentional, ongoing education and practice of church unity, this will be able to provide a hopeful sign of social integration for the people, who have suffered the division of two Koreas and chronic discord due to regionalism and excessive competition. This reconciliation proves the validity of a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology for the SKCs according to 'Criterion (5)': its positive role in promoting healthy church growth.

A trinitarian praxial ecclesiology is also a constructive ecclesiology with a practical theological perspective, since it aims to help the SKCs discover their problems and seek a new direction towards healthy growth, which includes both the formation of the community of faith and the service of Korean society. This constructive character implies that a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology helps the congregations or the denominations to operate by effective functioning of their ministries in their particular context, and to transform their structures (cf Heyns 1992:324-325). This charater satisfies 'Criteria (4) & (5)': its contextuality and constructive role in transforming the SKCs.

Furthermore, a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology is positively concerned about global problems. It should help to free the SKCs from being compromised by Korean nationalism. Accordingly, it should encourage the SKCs to contribute to the realisation of global peace and justice in both theology and ministry. In this way, 'Criterion (5)', its revisioning role, and 'Criterion (6)', its critical role are also fulfilled.

In brief, a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology is interlinked with contextual, hermeneutical, and strategic aspects. But its main concern is to redefine the SKCs' vision and mission, through a theological reflection on the church's life, whether at a congregational, a denominational or a national level. Its validity for the SKCs is proven by properly meeting the six criteria.

7.6.2 Proposing the Common Grounds of Congregational and Denominational Ministries in the Light of a Trinitarian Praxial Ecclesiology

A trinitarian praxial ecclesiology provides at least the following five basic ministry principles for the SKCs: 1) reconceiving theology as the work of the people; 2) cultivating the community of faith as an alternative society to resist social fragmentation and privatisation; 3) envisioning a common future and mission for the transformation of the SKCs and the world; 4) reshaping congregational and denominational structures to function effectively through a network of collaborative individuals and ministry teams; and 5) practising mission faithfully and effectively. When the church is built solidly on these foundation stones, it will experience healthy and well-balanced growth.

The first basic ministry principle, 'reconceiving theology as the work of the people', can be embodied when members are encouraged to have and freely share critical, theological reflections on the most important issues in their Christian lives. The following issues need to be discussed seriously among the members of the SKCs: the tradition and reality of Korean Protestantism, the nature and mission of the church, church growth, the Triune God, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, spirituality, the meaning of the Gospel in Korean society and the SKCs today, the coming of the Kingdom of God, and God's praxis and mission in the Korean context. The sound understanding of these issues will improve the conceptual dimension of healthy church growth.

The second basic principle, 'cultivating the community of faith', becomes a foundation on which the organic growth is promoted through the realisation of a koinonial church at congregational, denominational, interdenominational, and global levels.

The third principle, 'envisioning a common future and mission of the church', can be made concrete through writing 'the statement of our common mission and vision' and aiming at the transformation of the church for the world. To write a clear statement, a clear reading of changing cultural trends, such as the change from modernism to postmodernism, is primarily needed. The dominant culture and ideologies in Korea, and the dominant religious tendencies of the Korean people should be analysed, too. Above all,

it is really important that as many people as possible should be actively involved in the process of writing the statement. This may result in church growth in organic and conceptual dimensions.

The fourth principle, 'the restructuring of the congregations and the denominations', can be achieved when the roles of congregational or denominational leaders, as well as those of lay people, are redefined according to the established common mission and vision of the church. The role of a denomination is "to restore the two proper dimensions of ecclesiology -- the church local and the church global", as stated by Granberg-Michaelson (1998:36): the role of denominational staffs and organisations "will not be to serve their own national structures, but rather to support the local mission of congregations and to connect the church local with the church global". The role of congregational leaders is to empower the people for ministry and to accompany the people in the right direction towards the shared vision through a balanced -- visionary, servant and forerunner -- leadership. The lay people are the core of the community of faith. Without their active involvement in forming the community and their commitment to church ministries, church growth will be blocked considerably in all dimensions.

The last of the basic ministry principles, 'effective ministries for the fulfilment of the common mission towards the transformation of the church and the world', should be carried out by Gospel integrity and radicalness: respect for and humility towards the world and an incarnational way of life; and sincere commitment to the Gospel -- a passion and bold regard for truth with an eschatological hope. In a sense, this principle urges the church to risk solidarity with the world for the accomplishment of the common good of human beings. For this solidarity, the church must firmly maintain sensibility, creativity, wisdom, a sense of compassion and perseverance before the world. We believe that the SKCs are called to work for the reconciliation of the two Koreas, the remedying of deformative regionalism, social justice and global peace and justice. Such an incarnational growth will make the SKCs recover credibility in Korean society. It may eventually encourage even their growth in membership.

7.7 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter we proposed a 'trinitarian praxial ecclesiology' as an alternative model of the church, which could help the SKCs to recover healthy growth and to bear a good influence on Korean society. By including the five common basic ministry principles, our proposal became more or less practical: laying a sound theological foundation for the lay people, cultivating the community of faith, being caught by a common mission and vision, restructuring church organisations and the role of leaders and the lay people, and practising church ministries faithfully and effectively in order to fulfil the common mission and vision. This model orients a faithful and effective ecclesiology for the SKCs.

More fundamentally, it is certain that without the work of the Holy Spirit the formation and realisation of the vision and mission of the SKCs is not possible. Dulles' ([1976] 1988:202) reminder is that one's ears must be opened to hear "what the Spirit says to the churches (Rev 2:17)". The change of the SKCs depends fundamentally on the free initiative of the Holy Spirit. The Churches should be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Under the leadership of the Spirit, the images and forms of Christian life will continue to change and from this change will come the production of new models of the church, as well.

What is also important is that the Holy Spirit calls the SKCs to be transformed into a sign for the coming of God's Kingdom, and into a faithful servant 'for the world', which God loves and is willing to renew. Therefore, an ecclesiological model for the SKCs should be pertinent in both Korean and global contexts.

A critical question is raised concerning the relationship between the SKCs and the world when it is considered that "the church has its own culture, which is not simply a function of the cultures of the nations among which it dwells", as to "how the distinctive culture of the church is to live and grow in the midst of the culture of the nations, and what it means that people are called out by the Gospel from their own indigenous ethnic cultures to the new culture of the people of God" (Yeago 1997:150).

In this respect, Theron (1997) rightly argues that theology has a *paroikia* character, which

means its intentional distancing from the church, as well as the world. In this respect, Theron (:2) emphasises the critical role of theology in relation to the church.

> The relation between church and theology can be called "critical" because it is crucial. ... When church and theology are alienated from each other, the implications for both can but be disastrous. The same holds true when they are in too tight an embrace. A critical distance is a prerequisite for a meaningful relationship.

The critical role of theology is also applied to its relation to the world. The reality of the church is always in danger of becoming distorted by the world -- in particular, by the dominant culture and ideologies. In this sense, theology represents a protection for the church against the world.

Theron (:6-8) thus proposes a critical ecclesiology as a critique of the Cross, which serves the church as a *paroikia* -- a new life and a new creation (2 Cor 5:17) -- in society, and thus enables it to proclaim God's kingdom with its promise of eschatological peace. In the same vein, we propose a trinitarian praxial ecclesiology, an '*ecclesia crucis*', which should be recovered in the SKCs that have been taken excessively captive by a success-centred and number-oriented ecclesiology.

CHAPTER VIII. Conclusion

8.1 Summary of Our Study

Through our study we have achieved the following two aims: (1) to reflect critically on the realities of church growth in the SKCs since the 1960s; (2) to propose a new direction for the SKCs in a changing situation, which can promote their healthy growth.

The SKCs grew rapidly in membership from the 1960s to the mid-1980s. This rapid growth surprised the ecumenical (Christian) world. But since the mid-1980s the growth rate of church membership in the SKCs has shown a declining trend. During 1991-1994 their membership decreased (see Figure 4 in this dissertation). Since this 'decline crisis', the SKCs have endeavoured to recover numerical growth with much reflection on their problems.

During our brief survey of Korean church history [Chapter 2.2] we found that the basic and chronic problem facing the SKCs is their lack of critical, theological self-reflection. Most Korean Protestant churches in the cities have come to regard the contemporary successful mega-churches in the USA in the light of a solution to the recent decline in their own membership. More fundamentally and regretfully, the SKCs as a whole have always copied American theologies, and in particular American ecclesiological models, without maintaining any critical distance. The optimistic and aggressively success-oriented American culture, an extreme form of utilitarian rationality, as well as its present technological and informational influence, have decidedly invaded Korean society and reshaped the Korean cultural identity. The SKCs have also become the most willing recipient of that culture as transmitted by American Protestantism, and have assimilated the watered-down version of the American dream or a functional Christendom mentality. Therefore, it is certain that the SKCs have followed a 'pathological pattern' similar to the American churches. That is the reason for studying some American ecclesiological models in Chapter III.

We analysed three American ecclesiological models: the ecclesiological prototype, which

has been deeply embedded in American Protestantism and culture since the formative period of America; the Fuller church growth model; and the American mainline model [3.2, 3.3 & 3.4]. Our study focused on three commonalities of the theological problems of these models: (1) American Protestantism has generally made a compromise with the dominant culture and the American Creed. (2) The three models are effectiveness- and success-oriented. (3) They have some important theological flaws: they are not adequate when assessed from the perspective of practical ecclesiology, which emphasises the relationship between the Gospel, the church and the world/culture; they also pay insufficient attention to God's mission and praxis; and, they are ecclesiocentric or anthropocentric [3.5.1].

Another reason for the study of the American ecclesiological models is that we might gain some valuable insights from the critical, theological self-reflection of certain theologians, churches, and institutions on their dominant ecclesiological models, even though they number only a few. Unlike the SKCs, they have critically examined the theological flaws which their dominant ecclesiology has embraced. Such groups include The Gospel and Our Culture Network, the Alban Institute, and the Center for Parish Development [3.5.2]. They emphasise the interpretation of the situation, through which they try to read correctly the present American context in order to predict a change of context. They attempt to reshape their ecclesiology in the light of God's praxis and mission. They also deal seriously with the three-way relationship of Gospel-church-culture. In brief, their ecclesiology is reconstructed within the framework of practical theology.

On the contrary, the dominant ecclesiologies in both the American churches and the SKCs have common inherent flaws from the perspective of practical theology. Thus these ecclesiologies should be reshaped into an ecclesiology with a practical theological perspective, which we call a 'practical ecclesiology'.

In Chapter IV we defined practical theology and the essence of a practical ecclesiology. A practical ecclesiology emphasises the dynamic relationship between the church, the world and the Gospel. This implies that a practical ecclesiology is hermeneutical in its nature. As such it determines whether an ecclesiological model plays a constructive role in relation to the Gospel and the context, or not. A hermeneutical approach protects the church against being held captive by the dominant culture and ideologies. Further, it aims to help the

church seek ecclesiological models pertinent to God's calling in its present contextual situation. Accordingly, a practical ecclesiology has four characteristics: descriptive, interpretive, constructive and functional. These are closely connected with a four-phased methodology employed by the practical theology movement which comprises descriptive, explanatory, normative, and strategic phases. The subsequent chapters addressed the four phases.

In Chapter V we described from multi-dimensional angles the realities of growth in the SKCs, by investigating various factors which have affected their growth, in general, and their recent membership trends, in particular. Our analysis of membership trends in the SKCs revealed the following results: (1) membership trends in the SKCs predominantly depended on a socio-psychological factor; (2) denominational credibility and identity had a positive impact on growth, even growth in membership; (3) in the case of denominational religious and political propensity, it is predicted that the moderates will grow more readily in membership than the conservatives or the liberals. This might be related to denominational credibility, which can be enhanced by their sound involvement in social actions; (4) aggressive evangelism did not always have a positive influence on a balanced membership growth; and finally, (5) our conclusion in Chapter V is that the unhealthy growth of the SKCs has eventually arrested even their numerical growth.

Chapter VI searched for the root problem embedded in the tradition of the SKCs. Socio-political, religio-cultural, and theological traditions have led to their unhealthy growth. We also criticised the dominant ecclesiology of the SKCs, especially in terms of a practical ecclesiology. Our findings are: the unhealthy growth of the SKCs and their recent membership trends (considerable decline in membership growth rate) are closely related to a root problem inherent within the dominant ecclesiology of the SKCs. The root problem lies in an uncritical engagement with the dominant Korean and American cultures of secularism and modernism without a deliberate critical, theological reflection on those cultures. In other words, all the problems facing the SKCs have been caused by the lack of a sound methodology and a practical theological ecclesiology, which should function to make the church reflect upon itself and its context in the light of God's praxis.

After studying the models of the church, we finally proposed a 'trinitarian praxial ecclesiology' as an alternative model of the church. We believe that this model could help

the SKCs to recover healthy growth and to have a positive influence on Korean society, since the model has two simultaneous functions, critical and constructive. A 'trinitarian praxial ecclesiology', as a critical ecclesiology, stresses that the SKCs should keep a critical distance for meaningful engagement of the world. This ecclesiology thus stands as a critique of the Cross before the SKCs and stimulates the Churches' conformity to Jesus Christ. A 'trinitarian praxial ecclesiology' also plays a constructive role by suggesting to the SKCs concrete practices for global justice and peace, as well as the transformation of Korean society.

8.2 Some Findings

Our study focused on four issues: membership trends in the SKCs, the theological quality of their growth, their dominant ecclesiology, and a new and more balanced way of doing theology. These concerns are reflected in the following findings:

1) Concerning the numerical growth or decline in the SKCs:

- Membership trends in the SKCs have predominantly depended upon their adaptability to people's needs which change according to the contextual changes.
- Steady growth in denominational membership has been promoted by denominational credibility and identity formation in troubled times rather than by aggressive denominational evangelism.

2) Concerning the realities of growth in the SKCs:

- Korean Protestantism's orientation towards numerical growth has deepened its 'pathological pattern', which has served to undermine its credibility and faithful mission to Korean society.
- Recent membership trends (considerable decline in membership growth rate) in the SKCs prove that numerical growth which is not supported by growth in other dimensions, such as conceptual, organic, and incarnational growth, will eventually lead to arrested

growth and decline in all dimensions.

3) Concerning the dominant ecclesiology of the SKCs:

- The dominant ecclesiology of the SKCs has failed to preserve a critical distance from the church, as well as from the world. This ecclesiology has encouraged the Churches to accommodate contemporary cultures and dominant ideologies without proper critical, theological reflection.
- The root problem facing the SKCs lies in the misunderstanding of a practical ecclesiology, which functions to make the Churches reflect critically and theologically upon themselves, in the Korean context, and in the light of God's mission and praxis.

4) Concerning an alternative direction for the SKCs today:

- A sound practical ecclesiology will promote a healthy growth in the SKCs. In other words, the growth of the SKCs, including numerical growth, depends decisively upon a sound practical ecclesiology.
- The so-called effectiveness-oriented American popular ecclesiology cannot offer a sound alternative for the SKCs. Instead, a faithfulness-oriented ecclesiology should be primarily emphasised for the healthy growth of the SKCs.
- A trinitarian praxial ecclesiology, which implies a critical and constructive ecclesiology, can be recommended as a new direction for the SKCs, since we expect that it will encourage the Churches to redefine their vision and mission through sound theological reflection on themselves and on a changing contextual situation, and to participate faithfully and effectively in God's ministry (God's praxis and mission) for the world.

8.3 In Anticipation

Our expectations are that our study will be complemented by further studies, and will also have a practical application to the lives of the congregations and the denominations in the SKCs. These expectations can be expressed as follows:

- We expect that our study could evoke new studies which will attempt to analyse the realities of the SKCs more soundly through different approaches and theories such as the systems theory (Dietterich & Dietterich [1989] 1994; Shawchuck & Heuser 1993, 1996), the generational cycle theory (Regele 1995), the developmental stage theory (Fowler 1991; Hendriks 1997), and the developmental systems theory (Armour & Browning 1995). We suggest that studies on the following topics will help the SKCs towards better balanced growth: the transformation of church leadership; and ecclesiological restructuring on congregational and denominational levels. These should lead to the SKCs' theological and strategic involvement in global and national issues, such as eco-justice, global peace and justice, religious dialogue, the overcoming of nationalism, and the reconciliation of the two Koreas.

- We hope that our study will ignite church transformation movements in the SKCs as the Gospel and Our Culture Network, and the Center for Parish Development have done for the North American churches. Church transformation should doubtlessly be carried out at a congregational level. Therefore, we also trust that the works of the congregational studies movement in the USA, and the Project Team for Congregational Studies, in particular, which have contributed towards the deeper understanding of the congregation itself, will be introduced and properly utilised in the SKCs.

- We pray that the SKCs will experience the power of the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of God's Kingdom in the Korean society. We believe that these can be promoted by a practical theological ecclesiology which seeks to partake faithfully and effectively in God's mission and praxis in a changing contextual situation. This expectation is the eschatological hope, on which our study is founded.

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