

**AN OVERLOOKED DIMENSION OF THE KOREAN WAR:  
The Role of Christianity and American Missionaries in the Rise of  
Korean Nationalism, Anti-Colonialism, and Eventual Civil War,  
1884-1953**

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Kai Yin Allison Haga

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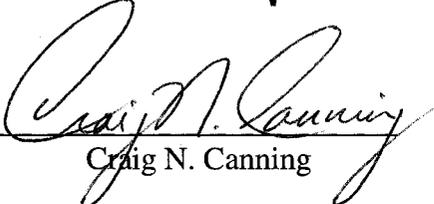
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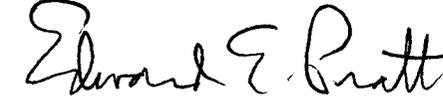
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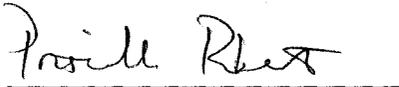
  
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## DEDICATION

To Ah Pa and Ah Ma  
And to Momo, Mom and Dad  
for all their unending love and support

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation reveals how religious factors affected the development of the Korean War. Much prior research has analyzed the causes and nature of the Korean War, in part because of the war's impact upon later events, from the Cold War to the present-day geopolitical standoff. Though the war has been much-studied, religious factors have rarely been included in these analyses. This de-emphasis of religion may be a justifiable simplification in general war historiographies, but not in the specific case of Korea. This current study uncovers the unique role of religion in Korean-American relations and in Korean culture and politics, prior-to-and-during the time of the Korean War.

The Korean War ushered in a time of intimate collaboration between state and non-state actors, unparalleled in American diplomatic and military history. Because American missionaries had been working among Koreans for many years, they possessed the language skills, human connections, and geographical knowledge that the US military lacked. From the early days within the Pusan Perimeter through the late period at P'anmunjŏm, American missionaries were highly visible on the frontline, at the negotiation table, and in the POW camps. They were also important to the battle of propaganda. Their letters and reports aroused sympathy in America for the Korea people.

In addition to the contributions of American Missionaries, the effect of Korean Christians was an equally important factor to the shaping of the conflict. Churches were rather influential within Korean society; clergymen were active in Korean politics; and many of the top politicians were Christians. Christianity was a major obstacle to Communist control of the North and subversive activities in the South. With the assistance of foreign funding, churches were transformed by the ravages of war into an important source of charitable assistance for millions of impoverished refugees.

Although this study looks at religious factors in general, the discussion focuses primarily on Protestant churches and Protestant missionaries. These Protestant churches, of all religious institutions in Korea, exerted an influence far disproportionate to their per-capita membership. Similarly, these Protestant missionaries, of all religious actors, had significant influence upon the American military and upon the American public. In particular, the majority of missionaries who stayed behind and worked effectively with the Korean government and US military were from the American Presbyterian missions. They took the initiative on relief efforts and set the standard for others to follow.

This dissertation makes an important contribution to religious history as well. In the process of assessing the impact of Christianity upon the Korean War, this dissertation begins by examining Christianity's development within Korea, primarily from the arrival of American missionaries in the late Chosŏn period. Christianity is found to have had a strong impact upon Korea's social development, internal politics, and foreign-relations. The Christian community was an important part of the independence movement against Japanese control. When one considers that South Korea has emerged today as one of the most Christianized of nations, that every elected Korean president has been a Christian, and that Korea now sends out more missionaries than any nation besides America, then the historical value of such a study of into Christianity's origins becomes clear.

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## INTRODUCTION

More than fifty years after the signing of the Korean Armistice (1953), the Korean peninsula continues to be one of the most contentious areas of the globe and a regular subject of the evening news. Under the dictatorships of Kim Il-sung and his son Kim Jong-il, North Korea (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, DPRK) has become one of the most isolated countries in the world. After experiencing rapid economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s, the North's economy began declining in the 1980s. The food crisis in North Korea began, according to the report by the United States Institute of Peace in August 1999, when the country received "a sharp reduction in heavily subsidized food, equipment, and crude oil from the Soviet Union and China in the early 1990s."<sup>1</sup> Then, in 1995, the country suffered a severe nationwide famine due to a prolonged period of successive floods and droughts coupled with severe soil depletion caused by long period of intensive farming and deforestation.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, despite its constant food shortage and lack of foreign aid, North Korea successfully tested a nuclear bomb on October 9, 2006.<sup>3</sup> Today, North Korea poses a great challenge to the security of Northeast Asia and creates serious diplomatic problems for the United States.

Standing in sharp contrast, South Korea (the Republic of Korea, ROK) has broken the chains of military dictatorships and emerged as a model of democracy in Asia. It has

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Natsios, "The Politics of Famine in North Korea," *United States Institute of Peace Special Report* 51 (2 August 1999): 1, <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr990802.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> With North Korea's nuclear program threatening the stability of the region, the United Nations Security Council imposed new economic sanctions pressing Kim Jong-il to abandon his nuclear program.

become fully integrated into the world market economy and developed into an export-oriented industrialized nation. From the 1980s onwards, South Korea has been regarded by economists as one of the “Four Little Dragons” – the four strongest growing economies – in Asia.<sup>4</sup> Since its economic and political stabilization, South Korea has hosted two Asian Games (Seoul in 1986, and Pusan in 2002),<sup>5</sup> the Olympic Games in 1988, and the World Cup in 2002 (co-host with Japan). South Korea is now one of the Top Ten Athletic Nations of the world.<sup>6</sup> Changes in its religious demographics have been just as profound. South Korea is currently the second largest Christian missionary sending nation in the world, after the United States. The South Korea of today is hardly recognizable as the same country that stumbled out of the rubble of the Korean War with the larger portion of its population in abject poverty and most of its natural resources permanently cut off to the north.

The two Koreas represent two strikingly different models of political and economic development. To understand the two Koreas of today, one must look to the origins, nature, and development of the Korean War. Historians generally agree that a civil conflict among Koreans was inevitable in the aftermath of Japan’s defeat, due to the political struggles between leftists and rightists.<sup>7</sup> But the scope, nature, and meaning of the war would have been completely different without foreign intervention. Outside influences were primarily responsible for the emergence of two separate Korean nations. The origins of the war were inextricably linked to the global Soviet-American political

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<sup>4</sup> The Four Little Dragons are South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

<sup>5</sup> South Korea was supposed to host the 1970 Asian Games but had to drop the plan because of a security threat from North Korea.

<sup>6</sup> In 1984, South Korea rose to be one of the top 10 gold medal winners in the Olympic Games and continued to keep its position, except during the Sydney Games in 2000. In addition, from 1986 onwards, it replaced Japan as the second gold medal winner in the Asian Games, except for the Hiroshima Games in 1996.

<sup>7</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 71.

and ideological rivalry that was intensifying at the same time as the Korean peninsula was liberated from Japanese colonial rule.

Originally, the United States pursued a policy of gradual disengagement, letting the Koreans work out their political differences and restore stability in the peninsula; but the consolidation of the Cold War, the sense of national prestige, and public pressure arising out of anti-communist hysteria would not allow the Truman administration to fully withdraw from Korea. Concerns over America's strategic position in East Asia, the security of Japan, and the fear of Soviet expansion elsewhere prompted the Truman administration to actively defend South Korea when war broke out in June 1950.

American intervention under the banner of the United Nations, followed in turn by Chinese involvement, prolonged the war and led to the destruction of nearly all major infrastructures on the peninsula. Gradually, both North and South Koreans lost control over the course of the Korean War, as foreigners began to take larger roles in the fighting and truce talks. From 1950 to 1953, a large number of foreigners from every inhabited continent participated in the war. Most were soldiers, but some were civilians – mainly UN officials, relief workers, educators, medical workers, and missionaries. While the majority of the soldiers returned home after the war, most of the civilian workers stayed behind to take charge of reconstruction programs.

This study is an effort to investigate the role of a particular group of foreigners, American missionaries and their American supporters, and especially their religious ideas and activities before, during, and after the Korean War period. It attempts to facilitate a new understanding of the origins and development of the division of Korea, which had been a unified and independent country with more than a thousand years of recorded

history. Because of the influence of American missionaries, Christianity emerged as an important theme in the ideological struggle of the Cold War. Missionary activities and relief efforts attracted great interest in the US home front that transformed the understanding of the Korean War from a mere police action for collective security to a religious crusade with strong humanitarian connotations. Moreover, the war gave missionaries the golden opportunity to reassert a leadership role in Korean churches that marked a growth of religious and cultural exchange between the two allies. It was also a key factor that elevated the impact of Christianity on Korean political, economic, social, and religious life that eventually changed Korea from a Confucian-Buddhist society to a Christian dominated society.

#### *HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE KOREAN WAR*

Historians across five decades have investigated who started the war. Journalists such as I. F. Stone and Melvin B. Voorhees presented the earliest analysis of the Korean War. Rather than giving any definite answers to the origins of the war, their publications set the stage for historical debates in the years to come. Stone's book, *The Hidden History of the Korean War*, was met with an almost complete press blackout and boycott when it was first published in 1952. The author introduced "a conspiracy theory" that the South Korean government, and probably Chiang Kai-shek and General Douglas MacArthur, had foreknowledge of the surprise attack by the North Koreans on June 25, 1950. Nevertheless, Stone alleged, they all remained silent in order to bring the United States into the Korean conflict. This theory later became the backbone of the revisionist interpretation.

Traditionalists, who agreed with the government's interpretation, rejected this theory. They assigned most of the blame to the Soviet Union, arguing that Stalin was ultimately behind the surprise attack. Adam B. Ulam suspected that Stalin might have intended to divert the increasing U.S. military pressure in Europe after the formation of NATO.<sup>8</sup> Raymond L. Garthoff stressed the Soviet misperception of U.S. intentions due to Dean Acheson's National Press Club speech on January 12, 1950 and Truman's inaction in saving the Nationalists in China.<sup>9</sup> Others suggested that Stalin might have planned the Korean War to trap Communist China into political isolation.<sup>10</sup> Based on these arguments, traditionalists, such as A. Doak Barnett and Harold Hinton, argued that by taking China as its junior partner the Korean War was part of the Soviet Union's grand strategy to "communize" Asia.<sup>11</sup>

Concerning American involvement, traditionalists put forward the credibility argument that, since South Korea was basically an "American creation," President Truman had no choice but to stand behind his allies in facing the Communist challenge. Military personnel and diplomats, such as General Matthew B. Ridgeway and Dean Acheson, also presented their stories to echo the government perspective, supporting the President's decision to intervene in Korea and later to fire General MacArthur.<sup>12</sup> According to Hakjoon Kim, a leading contemporary Korean War historian, missionaries

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<sup>8</sup> Adam B. Ulam, *The Rivals: America and Russia Since World War II* (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), 167-169.

<sup>9</sup> Raymond L. Garthoff, *Soviet Strategy in the Nuclear Age* (New York: Praeger, 1965), 72.

<sup>10</sup> Edgar Snow, *The Other Side of the River: Red China Today* (New York: Random House, 1962), 654-655; see also, Wilbur Chafee, "Two Hypotheses of Sino-Soviet Relations as Concerns the Instigation of the Korean War," *Journal of Korean Affairs* 4 (October 1976-January 1977): 10-11.

<sup>11</sup> See A. Doak Barnett, *Communist China and Asia* (New York: Harper, 1961). See also Harold Hinton, *Communist China in World Politics* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1966).

<sup>12</sup> See Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War: How We Met the Challenge; How All-Out Asian War Was Averted; Why MacArthur Was Dismissed; Why Today's War Objectives Must Be Limited* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967); also see Dean Acheson, *The Korean War* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971).

and their children who had worked in Korea also contributed greatly to the initial analysis of the war in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>13</sup> Philip West called this stage of historiography the “heroic phase” where “historians dwell on the sins of the enemy and the virtues of their friends.”<sup>14</sup> Research efforts were mainly concentrated on issues such as the Truman-MacArthur controversy,<sup>15</sup> Chinese intervention,<sup>16</sup> domestic political problems,<sup>17</sup> and the idea of limited warfare. Only a few, such as Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, questioned the motives of American intervention.<sup>18</sup>

In the 1970s and 1980s, America’s failure in Vietnam sparked a new wave of revisionist efforts to reinterpret the origins of the Korean War. Edward Friedman and Mark Selden were among the early group of revisionists who criticized the traditionalist interpretation.<sup>19</sup> Rather than viewing American intervention as a forceful reaction to Communist aggression, revisionists believed that strong anti-revolutionary and anti-nationalist drives governed American overseas expansion.

Bruce Cumings took the lead in exploring Korean motivations, using many new documents and microanalyses of key Korean provinces to support his arguments in *The Origins of the Korean War* (1981). He concluded that the conflict was in fact a civil war, or even an internal revolution. Border clashes between the North and the South had

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<sup>13</sup> Hakjoon Kim, “Trends in Korean War Studies: A Review of the Literature,” in *Korea and the Cold War: Division, Destruction, and Disarmament*, ed. Kim Chull Baum and James I. Matray (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 1993), 10.

<sup>14</sup> Philip West, “Interpreting the Korean War,” *American Historical Review* 94 (Feb 1989): 81.

<sup>15</sup> John W. Spanier, *The Truman-MacArthur Controversy and the Korean War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959).

<sup>16</sup> Allen S. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960); Alexander L. George, *The Chinese Communist Army in Action: The Korean War and its Aftermath* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967).

<sup>17</sup> Ronald J. Caridi, *The Korean War and American Politics: The Republican Party as a Case Study* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968).

<sup>18</sup> Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

<sup>19</sup> See Edward Friedman and Mark Selden, eds., *America’s Asia: Dissenting Essays on Asian-American Relations* (New York: Pantheon, 1971).

already claimed more than one hundred thousand lives prior to June 25, 1950.<sup>20</sup> In his second volume published in 1990, Cumings further argued that due to Acheson's hegemonic guidance and global vision, American leaders refused to accept the Korean War as an internal struggle between two political entities in Korea and intervened with the selfish hope to expand and sustain the world market system.<sup>21</sup> Cumings' interpretation became the most influential revisionist study of the subject. Under his leadership, the revisionists challenged the traditional orthodox heroic interpretations by exposing the United States' self-interest and its ignorance of Asia's political and social conditions. The historiography of the Korean War entered into its "academic phase," as Philip West suggested, noting that "the study of the conflict [moved] from melodrama to tragedy."<sup>22</sup>

Cumings's view, however, was challenged by Dutch scholar Erik van Ree's study on the Soviet occupation of North Korea, *Socialism in One Zone* (1989). By using memoirs of Soviet officials in Korea, Van Ree pointed out that the Soviet Union had direct control over its occupation zone, playing a far more dominant role than Cumings had described. Although the Soviet Army did not establish a formal military government, Van Ree argued, it ruled over the northern section just as the American Army in the south did.<sup>23</sup> Van Ree observed that the prominent political position of rightists in the city of P'yŏngyang threatened the plan of having a Communist dictatorship in the north, forcing the Soviet Union to seek a coalition with the Christian nationalists.

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<sup>20</sup> Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol.1, Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981).

<sup>21</sup> Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol.2, The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

<sup>22</sup> West, 81.

<sup>23</sup> Erik van Ree, *Socialism in One Zone: Stalin's Policy in Korea, 1945-1947* (Oxford, New York, & Munich: Berg Publishers Limited, 1989), 112.

While traditionalists generally assumed that the Chinese intervened according to Stalin's world conquest scheme, revisionists discussed the rationale behind Chinese intervention. Earlier in the 1960s, Allen S. Whiting rejected the traditional Chinese conspiracy theory and argued that instead of following Soviet direction, Chinese Communists acted according to their own military and political concerns when an impending American victory in North Korea became a threat to their national security.<sup>24</sup> His ideas were widely shared by other revisionists in the 1980s, thinking that even if the Chinese had known North Korea's intention to attack, they could find no evidence of any active Chinese involvement in the process. Chen Jian, however, put forward more complicated arguments in the 1990s, pointing out that rebuilding China as a great power in Asia was Mao Zedong's real political ambition behind Chinese intervention. Therefore, despite the fact that the Soviet Union broke its promise to provide air support in early October 1950, Mao was determined to go ahead anyway in order to drive the American imperialists from Korean soil.<sup>25</sup>

Inspired by Cumings' in-depth analysis of Korean internal conditions, historians began to combine Cumings' ideas of the origins of the Korean War with the international aspects of the conflict. New syntheses came out in John Merrill's and Burton I. Kaufman's studies. They both agreed that the Korean War was a great power struggle between the two superpowers locked in a civil conflict.<sup>26</sup> Callum A. MacDonald further regarded the war as a multi-dimensional struggle. Since the revisionists employed more

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<sup>24</sup> Allen S. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War* (New York: Macmillan, 1960).

<sup>25</sup> Jian Chen, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

<sup>26</sup> See John Merrill, *Korea: The Peninsular Origins of the War* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1989) and Burton I. Kaufman, *The Korean War: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1986).

original sources from both American and foreign archives, historians began to discuss the Korean War in more general terms and to include Chinese and Korean materials in their analyses. Some looked specifically at North Korean factors, arguing that the internal power struggle among Communist leaders in the North sparked the march to the South. Robert Simmons explained that Kim Il-sung was determined to occupy South Korea in order to strengthen his position as “national liberator” in the power struggle against his Communist rival Pak Hon-yong.<sup>27</sup>

William Stueck, however, did not agree with the revisionist assumption that Stalin was ignorant of the attack.<sup>28</sup> By using Nikita Khrushchev’s memoirs, Stueck reasoned that Stalin not only had full knowledge of the planned invasion, but also had control over Kim Il-sung’s action. Without Stalin’s approval, Kim could not have taken any aggressive actions. U.S. intelligence documents also confirmed Soviet domination of the North.

The opening of Soviet archives in the early 1990s further strengthened Stueck’s argument and unleashed a new phase of debate. As a result, Cumings’ revisionist interpretation came under constant fire. Some Korean historians, such as Jin-chull Soh and Youngho Kim, challenged the revisionist arguments, blaming the Soviet Union as “the chief architect” behind the attack.<sup>29</sup> According to James I. Matray, a new consensus among western historians concerning the origins of the Korean War has prevailed in

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<sup>27</sup> Robert Simmons, *The Strained Alliance: Peking, P’yöngyang, Moscow and the Politics of the Korean Civil War* (New York: Free Press, 1975).

<sup>28</sup> See William Stueck, “The Soviet Union and the Origins of the Korean War,” *World Politics* 28 (July 1976): 622-635.

<sup>29</sup> Jin-chull Soh, “A Review on the Causes of Korean War In the Light of ‘New Documents,’” *Korean Observer* 31 (Autumn 2000): 345-377; see also Youngho Kim, “International Dimensions of the Korean War,” *Korean Journal* 38 (Winter 1998): 130-146.

recent historiography.<sup>30</sup> Historians from both sides of the debate up to this point were more willing to accept the importance of domestic factors, as well as to recognize the international dimensions of the conflict. A recent synthesis *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning* (2005) by Allan R. Millett, who has written several books on the Korean War, argued that “the two Koreas may have been the accidental product of the Soviet and Allied rush to liquidate the Japanese imperial presence, but they also represented the political expression of two different visions of a modern Korea, built on the wreckage of the colonial experience and the resistance to Japanese imperialism in all its forms.”<sup>31</sup> He believed that the Korean War was inevitable because “the revolutionaries would have fought one another in some form even if not a single American or Russian soldier had set foot in Korea.”<sup>32</sup>

Although the origins of the war seemed to be getting clearer, the discussion of the Korean War was far from over. More in-depth research work is needed to analyze the development of the Korean War, especially issues such as atomic diplomacy, voluntary repatriation of POWs, and particularly, the role of Syngman Rhee towards the end of the war. Edward Keefer, John Gaddis, McGeorge Bundy and Roger Dingman have tried to assess the effectiveness of atomic diplomacy in bringing the war to an end. Due to a lack of solid evidence from the Chinese side, however, it was hard to determine the level of usefulness of Eisenhower’s atomic pressure on China. Surprisingly, what the historians and practitioners discovered was that Truman came closer to using nuclear weapons than

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<sup>30</sup> James I. Matray, “Revisiting Korea: Exposing Myths of the Forgotten War, Part 1,” *Prologue Magazine* 34 (Summer 2002): 1.

<sup>31</sup> Allan R. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 5.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

his Republican successor.<sup>33</sup> The threat of using the atomic bomb against China was in fact far less effective than the Eisenhower administration had claimed. Dingman further argued that the war ended not due to Eisenhower's nuclear threats, but mainly due to Moscow's success in convincing Beijing and P'yŏngyang to accept the principle of non-repatriation of prisoners of war after Stalin's death.<sup>34</sup> This analysis of how the war was ended shed new light on the crucial role of Stalin throughout the Korean War period. A clear conclusion of how the war was ended, nevertheless, has not yet been reached.

Meanwhile, the impact and the legacy of the Korean War have also been examined by other historians as well. Nancy B. Tucker regarded the Korean War as a crucial turning point in the development of Sino-American relations.<sup>35</sup> Lawrence S. Kaplan pointed out that without the Korean War, the importance of NATO would have been downplayed.<sup>36</sup> Walter LaFeber agreed and observed that the Korean War gave the Truman administration an opportunity "to develop new American policies around the globe."<sup>37</sup> In particular, "the six months between June and December 1950 rank among the most important of the Cold War era," LaFeber pointed out, because the United States adopted an offensive approach rather than being content with mere "containment." The war in Korea was used "to create a new framework for global affairs."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Roger Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy during the Korean War," *International Security* 13 (Winter 1988-1989): 50-91. See also Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).

<sup>34</sup> Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy during the Korean War," 50-91. Dingman's research also supported by Appu K. Soman, *Double-Edged Sword: Nuclear Diplomacy in Unequal Conflicts: The United States and China, 1950-1958* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000), 58-100.

<sup>35</sup> Nancy B. Tucker, *Patterns in the Dust: Chinese-American Relations and the Recognition Controversy, 1949-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

<sup>36</sup> Lawrence S. Kaplan, *The United States and NATO: The Formative Years* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1984).

<sup>37</sup> Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-2002* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 111.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 111-112, 116. LaFeber's arguments were also supported by Thomas G. Paterson, J. Gary Clifford, and Kenneth J. Hagan's book *American Foreign Policy: A History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1991).

However, historians have not thoroughly assessed the impact of the Korean conflict on the home front. As the United States had come so close to using the bomb during the war, the fear of a coming nuclear holocaust induced enormous pressure on American society as well. Paul Boyer and Alan Winkler examined the impact of the nuclear threat on changing the American mind set and way of life permanently.<sup>39</sup> H. W. Brands further pinpointed the way in which American officials sought to exaggerate Soviet power in order to create a “devil” for Americans to fight.<sup>40</sup> In the end, the specter of an enemy searching both at home and abroad haunted American social development in the post-Korean-War decades.

As Michael Hunt introduced religious themes in his cultural analysis of American foreign policy in the late eighties,<sup>41</sup> religion began to draw attention in the academy. Historians have recently begun to look at the role of religion in the general development of the Cold War. Following the trend, SHAFR (Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations) organized a conference on the role of ideology in the Cold War. In his conference paper about religion and U.S.-South Asian relations, Andrew J. Rotter pointed out that “the sense of religious mission carried into the Cold War.”<sup>42</sup>

While this argument might not necessarily apply to every struggle throughout the Cold War, the religious factor had a unique role in the Korean War. What is lacking in the Korean War historiography is the sense of the continuity of missionary influence in Korean-American relations. Since the presence of American missionaries in Korea was a

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<sup>39</sup> See Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon, 1985). See also Allan Winkler, *Life Under a Cloud: American Anxiety about the Atom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>40</sup> H. W. Brands, *The Devil We Knew: Americans and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>41</sup> Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987).

<sup>42</sup> Andrew J. Rotter, “Christians, Muslims, and Hindus: Religion and U.S.-South Asian Relations, 1947-1954,” *Diplomatic History* 24 (Fall, 2000): 596.

major factor in American involvement in Korean affairs since the 1890s, to overlook the role of missionaries during the Korean War is to ignore a major element of American containment policy on the peninsula. Evidence shows that the participation of missionaries in the war shaped the nature, perception, and development of the overall war efforts. It is ironical that the press in the 1950s gave more coverage to the presence of missionaries than did historical texts in the decades to come. It is not historically accurate to ignore the essential role of religious groups that were deeply affecting the public sentiment and opinion towards American foreign policy. Therefore, this research effort aims to explore the background of missionary activities in Korea and to put these missionaries and their supporters back into their proper context as influential players in the historical developments of the Korean War through documenting their actions and examining their influence throughout the war period.

#### *A CULTURAL APPROACH TO DIPLOMATIC HISTORY*

In 1950, East Asian historian John K. Fairbank strongly advised that the US government ought to make full use of non-state actors to achieve its foreign policy objectives in Asia. He pointed out that “American individuals, whether in business or in social services, with all their variety of talents and the multiplicity of organizations which they represent, [were] the apostles of the democratic idea.” Thus, Fairbank argued, “to keep them out of Asia [was] to tie one hand behind us.”<sup>43</sup> In order to enhance America’s competitiveness against Communism in Asia, Fairbank suggested that the US government should arrange more private American contact with Asian governments and

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<sup>43</sup> John K. Fairbank, “The Problem of Revolutionary Asia,” *Foreign Affairs* 29 (October 1950): 112.

expand programs for educational and cultural exchange.<sup>44</sup> Along lines similar to Fairbank's reasoning, the availability of a number of experienced American missionary veterans and well-established Christian institutions in Korea would, in fact, prove to offer a convenient vehicle for state and non-state partnerships during the post-World-War-II and Korean-War period, when the US government was not capable of carrying out its political and military objectives without civilian help.

Because of Fairbank's influence upon the study of East Asia and China-American relations, the role of missionaries as effective non-state actors in the conducting of foreign relations during the late nineteenth century is a well-recognized factor in the study of diplomatic history, although less work has been done to extend this analysis into the Korean War period. Missionaries functioned not only as evangelists, but also as educators, social workers, and medical providers. They were important promoters of "cultural diffusion," transmitting western ideas, customs, and religious beliefs into other parts of the world. Through their churches, schools, hospitals, and circulated printed materials, missionaries did more than preach; they set up new institutions that brought vital, sometimes even revolutionary, changes to the native populations. As historians Kenneth Scott Latourette and James E. Wood, Jr. have observed, the influence of Christianity, Christian workers, and Christian institutions often served as "catalysts for change" that "was far out of proportion to the relatively small number of people involved."<sup>45</sup>

In Korea, missionary activities were responsible for the rapid growth of Korean Christianity throughout the twentieth century. Starting in 1905 when Japan controlled

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> James E. Wood, Jr., "Editorial: Religion, Revolution, and Nationalism in Asia," *Journal of Church and State* 14 (Winter 1972): 9.

Korea, the church, which was seen as an advocate for Korean nationalism, began to gain popular support. The process of cultural diffusion initiated by Protestant and Catholic missionaries never completely stopped, even after the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910. Missionaries continued to carry out their work despite the many pressures and restrictions that Japan imposed upon them. Because a large number of them were Americans, their missionary work and sympathetic attitude toward Korean independence generated a pro-American sentiment within Korean society. After a four-year interruption because of World War II, individual missionaries began to return to South Korea in 1946. American missionaries, in particular, experienced an unprecedented expansion of their personal influence during and after the Korean War period.

This research contributes to the historiography of the Korean War by drawing upon primary sources from various church, government, and public archives in the United States and South Korea to analyze the influence of these religious institutions and their activities during the war period and the years leading up to it. By doing so, it not only adds new materials to the study of the war, but also sheds new light on the development of Korea-American relations and the growth of Christianity in South Korea.

There are three levels of analysis in this study. First, it traces the development of indigenous Korean Christianity, and evaluates its political impact upon Korea. Second, it investigates the role of American missionaries in Korea, particularly those who remained during the Korean War period. Third, it examines the impact of missionaries and American churches on official US policy towards Korea. These three levels of analysis, however, are interdependent and inseparable from each other.

In the pioneering stage, Korean Protestant churches, unlike their counterparts in China and Japan, enjoyed a high level of autonomy as a side effect of the lack of mission funding and missionary personnel. But later events would reverse this autonomy. Intense Japanese persecution of the church, followed by the death of many prominent Protestant leaders before and during the Korean War produced a leadership vacuum. In response, missionaries were called upon to provide assistance. They began to exercise a greater influence on the preservation and reconstruction of Korean churches. Their guidance at this crucial time ensured the survival and continued growth of Christianity in South Korea.

Missionaries gained another sort of influence as well. With the Korean War dominating the headlines, missionaries found themselves in the spotlight. Korean political and religious leaders, lacking communication channels or resources of their own, would seek out missionaries to give voice to their causes before the American people and the western world, hoping to gain political support and foreign assistance to revive and rebuild their war-torn country and religious institutions.

Meanwhile, American churches also turned to these missionaries for information and advice. As a result, with solid support from their home churches, individual missionaries and the overall missionary activities not only shaped the development of Korean Christianity, but also influenced the views of American policy-makers in Washington and American civilian officials and military generals stationed in Korea. The Korean War, therefore, marked an unparalleled intimate collaboration between state and non-state actors in American diplomatic history. It not only maximized American

political, economic, social, and cultural influence in Korea, but also led to the exceptional growth of Christianity in postwar South Korea.

On the whole, missionary activities accomplished what foot soldiers and diplomats alone could not achieve: a sentimental connection between South Korea and the United States. Through religious publications (magazines and pamphlets), mission reports, circulated letters, personal testimonies, documentary movies, and radio broadcasts, missionaries and religious groups connected the war zone to the American home front. They described the extensive war damages and unprecedented human suffering caused by the war. Because of the missionaries and their sponsoring denominations' tireless efforts to promote relief for Korea, Americans church-goers and the general public felt a stronger personal responsibility for the Korean people and the rebuilding of their country.

Though religion played a significant role in developments within both America and Korea during the war period, it would be too simplistic to suppose that the religious community spoke with one voice. While American churches might band together for relief programs, the church community was composed of many people with varied political ideologies and opinions on foreign affairs. This complexity of the religious factor in shaping US foreign policy was shown in the relationship between missionary/church activities and the official direction of American policy in fighting the Korean War. On the one hand, the religious interests and humanitarian concerns of the American churches and missionaries helped to justify American intervention in Korea and fed the popular sentiment of religious anti-Communism in the United States. But on

the other hand, religious interests promoted the desire for peace and the idea of fighting a “limited war.”

On another occasion, when General Douglas MacArthur and South Korean President Syngman Rhee wanted to expand the war by using atomic weapons, some Protestant Church leaders in the United States cautioned Truman against starting a third world war. It so happened that the more liberal elements of the church held many of the key offices in various missionary organizations and inter-denominational agencies, thereby strengthening their influence over the Truman administration. Yet, missionaries in the fields of China and Korea, Protestant fundamentalists, and the American Catholic Church all held deeply anti-Communist sentiments and tended to rally behind General MacArthur and President Rhee in advocating a tougher stance.

To demonstrate the role of religion in the Korean War, this dissertation divides its discussion into two major parts. Part one consists of four chapters on the role of missionaries and religion on Korea and U.S.-Korea relations prior to the outbreak of the Korean War, whereas part two contains another four chapters on the influence of religious actors (missionaries, church leaders, evangelists, and individual lay Christians) on US military and relief efforts during the war period.

Chapter 1 describes long-established American religious interests in Korea since the 1890s and explains how missionary activities affected the rise of modern Korean nationalism. The religious factors of the Korean War were deeply rooted in the influence of religion on Korean nationalism. Famous Korean nationalists, such as An Ch’ang-ho (1878-1938), Syngman Rhee (1875-1965), and Cho Man-sik (1882-1950), were mostly Christian educators who favored a non-violent approach to secure Korean independence

after Japan colonized Korea in 1910. When Christians, together with other nationalist groups, eventually rose up to support Korean independence during the March First Independence Movement in 1919, missionaries reported Japanese atrocities to their Mission Boards, seeking to mobilize public opinion at home to support their Korean brethren. Although their efforts failed to bring forth any immediate political support for Korean independence from the West, these activities became the prologue to the potential political and social influence of American missionaries and the Korean Christians on post-liberation Korea when the peninsula was under the shadow of Communist domination.

Chapter 2 analyzes religious factors and political developments in the northern zone. The end of Japanese colonial rule in 1945 brought forth an intensive postwar power struggle between two opposing groups of nationalists. For the convenience of accepting the Japanese surrender by Russian and American troops, Korea was divided along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. The Allied occupation in the two separate zones intensified domestic competition. In the north, the power of domestic Communists was not strong because only a few Communist organizations of significance existed before 1945. Instead, Christians were more influential and a coalition with different political groups was necessary to form a new government. Cho Man-sik's new government in P'yöngyang, however, was cut short due to his anti-trusteeship position and his unwillingness to compromise with the Soviet officials. As soon as Cho was kept under house arrest, Kim Il-sung rose to power and began a new land reform program at the expense of the capitalists, landlords, collaborators, and Christians. Many fled south in order to escape Communism.

Chapter 3 analyzes the role of Christianity in the political development of the southern zone. Political competition between leftists and rightists, as well as among different rightist factions caused serious instability below the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. While the Christian population in the north was shrinking, the Christian community in the south was growing in numeric strength and political influence. The role of Christianity was strengthened when individual American missionaries began to return to Korea by taking up positions in the American Military Government (AMG). Because of their ability to speak some amount of English, or even, in some cases, because of their relationship with missionaries, Korean Christians found many job opportunities in the military government. From 1946 to 1949, Christians gradually moved from the political periphery to the political center, taking up important roles in the formation of a separate regime in South Korea. With the support of the Christian community, refugees, and rightists, Syngman Rhee emerged as the victor in South Korean politics.

Chapter 4 discusses the role of religion in US foreign policy prior to the outbreak of the Korean War. Most cultural historians agree that Christianity was a key factor in the formation of American nationalism,<sup>46</sup> anti-Communism, and a uniquely American Cold War culture.<sup>47</sup> The formation of an American “civil religion,” according to religious historian Donald Swift, was one of the important characteristics of how the US differentiated itself and its role in the world from that of the Soviet Union.<sup>48</sup> Religious beliefs and values were essential in shaping the American perception of and response to

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<sup>46</sup> See John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

<sup>47</sup> See Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

<sup>48</sup> Donald C. Swift, *Religion and the American Experience* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1998), 261.

the Soviet Union.<sup>49</sup> President Harry Truman carefully defined the Cold War contest through a religious lens. He emphasized the importance of religious freedom in western democracy and hoped to build a western religious alliance to counter the Communist threat in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. In addition, American churches (both Catholic and Protestant) had vast religious interests in East Asia, especially in China, Japan, and Korea. Church leaders wanted the United States to keep the door to China open, to transform postwar Japan, and to assist Korea in obtaining its independence. Taking advantage of the American religious climate, Syngman Rhee's publicity team in Washington tried to mobilize public support for economic and military aid to South Korea through religious channels. Missionaries in Korea also offered their assistance by urging their American patrons to continue their support for the freedom of Korea.

Chapter 5 first traces political and diplomatic conditions in the Korean peninsula in the months prior to the Korean War and examines the role of religious interests in justifying an American military intervention to save South Korea. The civil conflict between the North and the South intensified between 1948 and 1950. Frequent border clashes made the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel a very dangerous boundary. Both the United States and the Soviet Union restrained their client states from launching an all out attack against their enemy. The situation, however, began to change in early 1950. The Soviet Union reversed its policy and decided to support Kim Il-sung's military unification strategy.

In the south, Syngman Rhee's government pressed for more military and economic aid from the United States, but very little aid actually materialized. Meanwhile, for the first time since its creation, Rhee's government succeeded in taking control of the

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<sup>49</sup> Dianne Kirby, "Religion and the Cold War – An Introduction," *Religion and the Cold War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, Ltd., 2003), 1.

guerrilla-infested Chölla regions, minimizing the impact of Communist subversive activities. Tension along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, however, continued to mount. Mixed signals of a potential all-front attack from the North clouded the political atmosphere in Seoul. In the midst of uncertainty and fear, the South Korean Christian community organized a multi-city evangelical crusade. Political and religious visitors from the United States brought hope and assurance, but all these efforts were dashed on June 25, 1950 when the North Korean army finally launched a full scale surprise attack along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. Seoul fell within days and all American civilians were ordered to evacuate to Japan. While the future of South Korea depended on the reactions of the United States government, the future of the Korean churches depended on the decisions of individual missionaries.

Chapter 6 describes the activities of American missionaries in the war zone and evaluates their contribution to the overall war effort. Sixteen Presbyterian missionaries, who volunteered to stay behind, offered their services to the US military and organized relief efforts to assist the refugees. Later, some who had evacuated returned by re-enlisting themselves as civilian chaplains, medical officers, intelligence officers, and interpreters. Their language skills and knowledge of the Korean terrain were invaluable assets for the US Army. They participated in General MacArthur's famous Inch'ön Landing and the battle for the liberation of Seoul. Meanwhile, with limited resources, civilian missionaries within the Pusan Perimeter organized private relief efforts to assist refugees. Throughout the war, their letters and reports on the war provided information that was crucial for the American churches to organize a successful nationwide relief effort.

Chapter 7 discusses the work of missionaries among North Koreans and examines their efforts in preserving and expanding the influence of Christianity in South Korea. When the tide of the war turned in favor of the UN side, the United States decided to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. Following the troops, missionaries marched to North Korea. In P'yŏngyang, Chinnamp'o, Wŏnsan, Hŭngnam, and Seoul, missionaries helped hundreds and thousands of Christian refugees in their efforts to flee south. In addition, they also assisted in the establishment of a Christian-dominated Chaplain Corps for the South Korean Army that placed Christianity in a key position to further political and social expansion in the postwar years.

Chapter 8 examines the influence of American church leaders on Truman's Korean War policy and assesses the importance of religious factors upon the POW issue. Because of China's intervention, the war turned into a military stalemate along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. Different opinions on how to fight the Korean War deeply divided the US government. In the United States, the war grew more and more unpopular as the prospect of victory grew less and less. But truce talks snagged over the issue of the repatriation of the prisoners of war (POWs). American missionaries worked among the refugees and the Communist POWs. The conversion of these Communist soldiers brought a serious problem to the US government, however, because many of the newly converted prisoners refused to be repatriated back to North Korea or Communist China. The United Nations POW camps suddenly became a new war zone between pro-Communist and anti-Communist prisoners. Delivered through the missionaries, anti-Communist prisoners presented petitions signed in their own blood to the US government and the American public. The idea of granting ex-Communist soldiers voluntary repatriation inspired

President Truman to seek a “psychological victory” in Korea. His (and Eisenhower’s) insistence on voluntary repatriation prolonged the war for an additional two years.

The role of religion in U.S. foreign policy has usually been subtle or invisible, but throughout the Korean War, because of missionary activities, religion emerged as a key factor in redefining American war aims. When Eisenhower accepted the Republican nomination for president in 1952, he said, “You have summoned me... to lead a great crusade – for freedom in America and freedom in the world.”<sup>50</sup> Obviously, the battle for freedom in Korea was in the mind of the presidential candidate. The idea of leading a crusade, so common in the American terminology of the 1950s, signifies the influence of religion upon American ideology in the early Cold War decades.

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<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Rotter, “Christians, Muslims, and Hindus: Religion and U.S.-South Asian Relations, 1947-1954,” 596.

**PART I:**  
***Christianity in Korea and U.S.-Korean Relations  
Before the Korean War***

## CHAPTER 1

### Christianity and the Rise of Modern Korean Nationalism

#### *INTRODUCTION*

Historian Walter B. Jung pointed out in his book, *Nation Building: The Geopolitical History of Korea*, that “Korea’s precarious endeavors in defending the national identity in the early periods and the division of the nation into two parts at the outset of the cold war era can be comprehensible only through an adequate understanding of the dynamics of the regional geopolitics.”<sup>1</sup> How did geopolitics relate to Christianity, the rise of Korean nationalism, and the Korean War? There are three aspects of analysis needed to untangle this complex relationship.

The first geopolitical consideration is Korea’s relationship with its neighbors. The location of Korea has a vital strategic value to its neighbors, particularly China and Japan. By taking control of Korea, it would increase the security and the expandability of its controller (or conqueror). In order to survive, Korea had, for centuries, balanced these surrounding powers. The history of collaboration and conflict between Korea and its neighbors during the late Chosŏn period illustrated this geopolitical condition.

The second aspect of geopolitics is Korea’s relationship with the West. Korea, unlike much of East Asia, was slow to attract the attention of the industrialized nations. It was never colonized by a Western imperial power. Nevertheless, the powers of Europe and America did gradually come to recognize Korea’s value to their own political,

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<sup>1</sup> Walter B. Jung, *Nation Building: The Geopolitical History of Korea* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1998), v.

economic, and cultural aspirations. Their desires for political influence, their hope to extend commercial activities, and their responsibility to protect their missionaries and shipwrecked seamen motivated the Western powers to send more gunboats to the Korean coast. Imperialism in East Asia also destabilized the geopolitics of the entire region. The West's imposition of an unequal treaty system upon China contributed to the decline of the Manchu (Qing Dynasty) empire thereby, in turn, weakening Korea's ability to keep Japan and other nations at bay.

The third aspect of geopolitics is Korea's internal condition. As Korea's independence became endangered by the escalation of foreign aggression, it stirred up new nationalistic feelings among the people. The first American missionaries arrived in the midst of this unpredictable period of change. Their activities served as a catalyst and a navigator that not only facilitated the process of transformation, but also to a great extent directed it according to their own ideas. Their vision for Korea influenced the long-term development of Korean society. Christianity emerged as an important political and ideological force to be reckoned with by anyone who would rule Korea.

### *KOREA AND ITS NEIGHBORS IN EAST ASIA*

Located on the far eastern end of the Asian continent, the two Koreas of today now border China and Russia to the northwest by two rivers (the Yalu and Tuman) and face the islands of Japan to the southeast, across 112 miles of water known as the Korean Strait. Throughout most of its history, however, Korea did not border Russia. This border was established in 1860, after China ceded the maritime region east of the Ussuri River to the Czar under the Treaty of Beijing (Peking), which enabled the Russians to

reach the Tuman River and to construct a naval base in Vladivostok. Prior to its contact with Russia and other Western powers, China and Japan were the major forces that affected the stability and development of the Korean peninsula.

### *Korea's Relations with China and Japan before the Chosŏn Dynasty*

Though many Western observers of the early twentieth century perceived Korea as a weak tributary state of China or as a poor victim of its powerful neighbors, more recent research by both Korean and Japanese historians have revealed that Korea maintained its own high level of civilization. In some areas of technological achievement and cultural heritage, Korea was completely independent of and different from China. Far from always being under the control of its neighbors, Korea greatly influenced the development of the Yayoi culture and the formation of a new Yamato state in ancient Japanese history.<sup>2</sup> In fact, throughout its long history, Korea not only retained its independence (most of the time), but also preserved its identity, culture, language, and customs. This identity as a people was the strong force that kept the nation united in the midst of its neighbors.

In its lengthy history of contact with the Han Chinese and other powerful tribal groups of northeastern Asia, Korea had successfully resisted the political and territorial expansion of China. Except for a brief period when the Han emperor, Wudi, set up four provinces in the northern part of Korea in 108 B.C., Koreans remained in full control of the peninsula. Korean independence was hard fought. The Chinese emperor, Sui Yangdi, invaded Korea in 598 A.D., with one million troops, but was decimated. Korea also repulsed the Tang emperors' multiple attempts at conquest.

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<sup>2</sup> See Kenneth B. Lee, *Korea and East Asia: The Story of a Phoenix* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 23-36.

The military strength of Korea could not, however, stand against the powerful Mongol invasion of 1234. Once subjugated, Khubilai Khan (1215-1294), immediately forced Korea to participate in the expeditions designed to conquer Japan in 1274 and 1281. Both attempts, however, failed because Mongol forces were not experienced in fighting sea battles. In 1592, three hundred years after the Mongol assault, the Japanese warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598) decided to invade Korea as part of his plan to take over the Middle Kingdom (China). He sent 150,000 troops, under the command of Konishi Yukinaga (1555-1600), a devoted Japanese Catholic,<sup>3</sup> across the Korean Strait and launched a surprise attack on Pusan. Among Konishi's troops, there were about 18,000 Christian warriors. Father Gregoria de Cespedes, a Spanish priest, was also sent to minister to the troops.<sup>4</sup> Seoul was lost within the first twenty days and the king fled first to Pyongyang and then to the northern border city of Uiju.

Despite suffering great initial losses, the Korean navy, under General Yi Sun-sin's leadership, was able to seize control of the sea, dividing the Japanese forces from their homeland. In 1598, the Korean militia, with Chinese assistance, successfully pushed the Japanese army back to its own shores after six years of grueling war.<sup>5</sup> The war came to an end when Hideyoshi died in 1598. Hideyoshi's invasion completely devastated the Korean peninsula, caused great suffering to the Korean people, and further weakened the Chosŏn Dynasty, marking the beginning of its long decline. When the Manchu rose to

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<sup>3</sup> Konishi Yukinaga brought with him a Spanish Jesuit, Gregorio de Cespedes, to minister to the Japanese Christian warriors. See Kenneth B. Lee, *Korea and East Asia: The Story of a Phoenix* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 109.

<sup>4</sup> W. J. Kang, "Early Korean Contact with Christianity and Korean Response: An Historical Introduction," in *Korea's Response to the West*, ed. Yung-Hwan Jo (Kalamazoo, MI: The Korea Research and Publications, Inc., 1971), 43.

<sup>5</sup> Lee, *Korea and East Asia*, 98-107.

power, Korea was left with little strength to defend itself against its invasion in 1637 and opted to serve the Manchu and end its relations with Ming China.

### *Chosŏn's Diplomacy*

In order to survive between these two potentially aggressive neighbors, Korea adopted the diplomacy of *sadae* ('serving the great') toward China and *kyorin* ('neighborly relations') toward Japan.<sup>6</sup> In dealing with China, Korea paid tribute in order to obtain an informal defensive alliance against Japan. In dealing with Japan, Korea skillfully established an equal-footing, ceremonial relationship. Korea would send occasional "communication envoys" to Edo (Tokyo), and carefully controlled the trading activities in designated trading ports.<sup>7</sup> According to Japanese historian Takemichi Hara, the Korean government tried throughout the Chosŏn Dynasty to "bar all intercourse" of any non-official activities between Korea and its two neighbors, hoping to maintain peace and to minimize contact that might jeopardize the survival of the nation.<sup>8</sup> Thus, it began a rigid foreign policy that would earn Korea the nickname, "the Hermit Kingdom."

According to the traditions of the tributary system, the Korean king would send tribute to China once a year. He was to send the best of native Korean products, such as gold, ginseng, and celadon art works, to offer to the Chinese Emperor. In return, the Chinese would give them a large amount of Chinese goods as "gifts" from the emperor to bring back to their king. Historians regarded these sorts of annual exchanges as bilateral trading activities under the control of the two governments.<sup>9</sup> The tributary relationship

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<sup>6</sup> Takemichi Hara, "Korea, China, and Western Barbarians: Diplomacy in Early Nineteenth-Century Korea," *Modern Asian Studies* 32 (May 1998): 392.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Warren I. Cohen, *East Asia At the Center: Four Thousand Years of Engagement with the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

between Korea and China served as a political and military alliance to guard against their potential common enemies. In this way, Korea not only enjoyed full independence, but also enhanced its national security and strengthened its economy.

### *Christianity Entered Korea through Tributary Missions*

Try as the government might to be a “Hermit Kingdom,” outside influences could not be totally avoided. Those Koreans who were sent on the tributary missions to China brought back with them not only goods, but also new ideas. Korean leaders wanted to maintain national peace and security by keeping foreigners at bay. But once Korean emissaries stepped on Chinese soil, they were out of the control of the Korean court. During the months when the members of the missions stayed in Beijing, they usually crowded into bookstores, searching for the latest Chinese publications.<sup>10</sup> They also visited the *Nan-t’ang* (South Church), where Jesuit priests, who served in the Manchu court as directors of the Imperial Board of Astronomy, lived. These Catholic priests would give them both scientific and religious materials (books about “the Lord of Heaven”) printed in Chinese.<sup>11</sup> *Nan-t’ang* thus served as a tiny window for the Korean visitors to have a glimpse of the mysterious Western world.

When all these materials were brought back to Korea, a small group of officials and scholars that belonged to the *sirhak* (Practical Learning) school would read them with great interest.<sup>12</sup> Some of these officials were also members of the tributary missions who were experts in Chinese literature and language. Through these written materials,

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<sup>10</sup> Kang, “Early Korean Contact with Christianity and Korean Response: An Historical Introduction,” 43. See also Hara, “Korea, China, and Western Barbarians: Diplomacy in Early Nineteenth-Century Korea,” 393.

<sup>11</sup> Kang, “Early Korean Contact with Christianity and Korean Response: An Historical Introduction,” 43; Hara, “Korea, China, and Western Barbarians: Diplomacy in Early Nineteenth-Century Korea,” 393.

<sup>12</sup> Hara, “Korea, China, and Western Barbarians: Diplomacy in Early Nineteenth-Century Korea,” 393.

Catholicism gained its first convert, Li Sŭng-hun, the son of a senior member of a tributary mission.<sup>13</sup> By the time a Chinese Catholic priest, Chou Wen-mo, was sent by the bishop of Beijing to Korea in 1794, there were already four thousand converts waiting eagerly for his arrival.<sup>14</sup>

Catholicism, however, aroused new social conflicts between its converts and the traditional Korea society, because the Korean Catholics were instructed to abolish the practice of ancestral worship.<sup>15</sup> Fearful of the subversive nature of Christianity, tensions began to build and anti-Catholicism fomented among conservative officials and the gentry.

### *'Shinyu' Persecution*

The growth of the Korean Catholic Church came to an abrupt end a few years later during a political power struggle at the Korean court. Some of the Catholic converts were high officials under King Chŏng-jo (1777-1800). When the king died in 1800, the political rivals of these converts found an easy excuse to stir up trouble for them. The Queen Regent, the young king's mother, having a personal dislike of Catholicism, saw an opportunity to assert her political power. She issued an edict in 1801, which was called the year of *Shinyu* by Koreans, to exterminate those who persisted in the "evil teaching," which referred to Catholicism. When the Chinese priest tried to stop the persecution by turning himself in, the Korean government immediately beheaded him without getting permission from the Manchu court.

The wrath of the Queen Regent and her supporters against Catholicism was further intensified when a secret letter to the Bishop of Beijing was found in the

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<sup>13</sup> Kang, "Early Korean Contact with Christianity and Korean Response: An Historical Introduction," 44.

<sup>14</sup> Hara, "Korea, China, and Western Barbarians: Diplomacy in Early Nineteenth-Century Korea," 393-394.

<sup>15</sup> Kang, "Early Korean Contact with Christianity and Korean Response: An Historical Introduction," 44.

possessions of a young Catholic scholar, Hwang Sa-yŏng. The letter, written on a thin piece of silk, described the persecution of Korean Catholics, the power struggle inside the Korean court, the victimization of Korean converts by opportunistic officials, the unjust execution of the Chinese priest, and the desire for foreign intervention to stop the horrible persecution. The request for a Chinese annexation of Korea and the suggestion that European gunboats be sent to protect Korean Catholics served not only to justify the court's charge of treason, but also to confirm the court's fear of the subversive nature of Christianity.<sup>16</sup>

In order to avoid any diplomatic problems over the hasty execution of the Chinese priest, and so as to have a free hand to exterminate all Christian elements, the Queen Regent sent a distorted report to the Manchu emperor, explaining the death of the Chinese priest. Upon hearing the report, the Manchu emperor praised the young Korean king's efforts to exterminate the evil bandits in his country, but he refused to acknowledge that the source of Korean Catholicism was China. The emperor only ordered his border officials to return all Korean-Catholic fugitives back to Korea.

#### *Diplomatic Crisis Caused by the Execution of French Priests*

Since Koreans could not completely control border traffic and the Chinese emperor refused to give any help to cut off the source inside China, Catholicism survived the *Shinyu* purge and regained its strength within two decades, despite the harsh conditions imposed by the Korean government. The success of Korean Catholicism later caught the attention of the Catholic Church in the Western world. In the 1830s, French priests began to arrive, disguising themselves in native clothes. They came either by crossing the Korea-China border or by being dropped off by fishing boats along the

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<sup>16</sup> Hara, "Korea, China, and Western Barbarians: Diplomacy in Early Nineteenth-Century Korea," 396-397.

coast.<sup>17</sup> They were Father Jacques-Honoré Chastan, Father Pierre-Philibert Maubant, and Bishop Laurent-Joseph-Marie Imbert. As soon as the Korean government discovered their existence, they were promptly executed by the Korean court.<sup>18</sup>

At about the same time as these Catholic priests arrived, “strange” ships were being sighted more and more frequently along the Korean coast. Some of them, like the *Lord Amherst*, a ship belonging to the East India Company, came in search of trade, while others, such as the British ships, *Alceste* and *Lyra*, requested food provisions and water. In most cases, the Koreans either rejected their demands for trade politely or answered their requests for aid cordially. However, things began to change in the 1840s following the execution of the three Catholic priests by the Korean government in 1839 and the conclusion of the First Opium War (First Anglo-Chinese War) (1840-1842).<sup>19</sup> Korea witnessed China’s humiliating defeat when the Manchu government signed its first unequal treaty, the Treaty of Nanjing (1842), with the British, yielding to their demands for a large indemnity, more treaty ports, extraterritoriality for British citizens, most-favored-nation status, a fixed tariff, ceding Hong Kong, and evangelical rights of foreign missionaries in the interior part of China. Since then, more hostile gunboats with aggressive commanders soon came knocking on Korea’s door, demanding the country to be opened for trade and evangelization.

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<sup>17</sup> Kang, “Early Korean Contact with Christianity and Korean Response: An Historical Introduction,” 45.

<sup>18</sup> Hara, “Korea, China, and Western Barbarians: Diplomacy in Early Nineteenth-Century Korea,” 401.

<sup>19</sup> The First Opium War started in 1840 because of the conflict caused by the illegal opium trade conducted by British traders and the effort of the Manchu government to confiscate and destroy opium. The British government sent warships with a large force to revenge the destruction of three million pounds of opium by Commissioner Lin Zexu. Although Lin initially succeeded in defending Guangzhou (Canton), the British moved northward to attack other coastal towns at will. Eventually, the British took Guangzhou with another bigger force and sailed up the Yangtze River. They also seized the Manchu government’s tax barges, jeopardizing not only the revenue of the imperial court, but also threatening the security of the interior. Fearing further loss of money and face, the Manchu decided to seek peace. The Treaty of Nanjing was signed in 1842.

In 1845, fearful of further foreign encroachments, Korea asked the Manchu government to restrain Western powers from sailing into Korean waters. The Manchu court tried to assist Korea, but with very limited results. In 1846, the French Admiral Cécille brought three gunboats and presented a letter questioning the execution of the three French priests. He left with a promise to return in a year for an answer.<sup>20</sup>

The French returned in 1847 with two gunboats under the command of Captain Lapierre, but before they could reach Inch'on, the two ships ran aground near the southwestern coast of the peninsula. When the Korean court received Lapierre's call for assistance, it immediately prepared an informal reply that included an explanation of the Korean government's decision to execute the priests and its desires to avoid trade relationships with Western countries. Unfortunately, by the time the note was delivered to Lapierre's location, the crew had been rescued by the British and was on its way to Shanghai. With no other choice, the Korean government submitted a report to the Manchu court and requested that their informal note be forwarded to Lapierre.<sup>21</sup>

### *Taewŏn'gun's Anti-Foreignism and Isolationist Foreign Policy*

Foreign encroachment on China in the late 1850s further endangered the position of Korea in defending itself against Western intruders. The conclusion of the Second

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<sup>20</sup> This event caused serious diplomatic concerns within the Korean court because it had never reported the death of the three French priests to the Chinese court and it could not answer Cécille's request directly due to their tributary relations with China.

<sup>21</sup> Qiyong, the governor-general of Guangdong, passed the note to the French, but because he paraphrased it according to his own ideas and tune, the note did not reflect the exact Korean's tone and rationale of their policy. To make the matter worse, the Manchu government failed to inform the Korean government of Governor Qiyong's recommendation to treat the French courteously to avoid further incidents. Koreans, therefore, found themselves poorly prepared diplomatically to handle new confrontations with the French and other foreign gunboats when they appeared again in 1866. See Hara, "Korea, China, and Western Barbarians: Diplomacy in Early Nineteenth-Century Korea," 409-414.

Opium War in China (1858-1860)<sup>22</sup> disheartened Koreans and threatened the security of Korea. In the Treaty of Beijing (Peking) of 1860, the Manchu government agreed to cede to Russia the maritime provinces of eastern Manchuria down to what is now Vladivostok. These lands used to be controlled by the states of Puyo, Koguryo, and Parhae, who shared a common ancestry with the Korean people. Koreans had tried to reoccupy them after the fall of the Yuan Dynasty in 1388, but Ming forces had claimed the area instead. The Manchu's concession to Russia not only deprived Koreans of their hope of reclaiming their ancestral land, but it brought a Western power, Russia, right up to Korea's border. As Russian gunboats began to appear along the Korean coast to survey the shoreline, the Korean court took serious consideration of its security.

Meanwhile, in early 1863, the young Chosŏn king, Ch'ŏl-jong, died without leaving an heir. The second son of his third cousin ascended to the throne and became King Kojong. Kojong was only a boy, so his father, Taewŏn'gun, controlled the court as regent. Judging that the Manchus had made too many concessions to foreigners and that the power of the Middle Kingdom was in decline, Taewŏn'gun decided to take a tough stand against foreign encroachment and initiated an ambitious but extremely conservative reform aimed at strengthening the power of the central government. One of his strategies

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<sup>22</sup> The Second Opium War was also known as the Arrow War because it broke out following the arrest of the crew of the *Arrow*, which was a British-registered, Chinese-owned merchant ship. The British used this incident as an excuse to attack Guangzhou (Canton) and seek a new treaty to expand their interests in China. An initial truce was concluded in 1858 when both sides agreed to sign the Treaty of Tianjin. The peace, however, was cut short and hostility broke out again when the Manchu officials refused to honor their promise of allowing the British to set up their embassy in Beijing. The joint army of Britain and France entered Beijing, burning the emperor's Summer Palace to the ground. The Manchu government finally ratified the Treaty of Tianjin, now called the Treaty of Beijing, in 1860, agreeing to open more treaty ports, cede the Kowloon Peninsula, pay a huge indemnity, allow foreign governments to set up embassies in Beijing, and give foreigners permission to sail freely on the Yangtze River. Following the Treaty of Beijing, other foreign powers also pressured China to sign treaties so that they could expand their interests and activities in China.

was to tighten the closed-door policy by renewed suppression of Catholicism, which had by then gained as many as 18,000 native converts within two decades.<sup>23</sup>

In early 1866, Korea faced a national crisis. A Russian gunboat appeared at Wönsan, demanding the right to trade and threatening that troops were ready to cross the northern border if Korea refused. While the Korean court deferred the issue to the Manchu government by citing their tributary status with China, there was grave alarm. Taewön'gun was desperate for an effective way to resist Russian demands.

Hoping to avoid another persecution, the Catholics tried to use the crisis to their advantage. It was suggested to Taewön'gun by John Nam, a Catholic official in the court, and by Thomas Kim, an influential Catholic layman, that there were French missionaries in Korea who could help in securing an alliance with England and France.<sup>24</sup> Rumors said that Taewön'gun was interested at first, but due to the fear of offending China and the voluntary withdrawal of the Russian gunboat, the plan was dropped.<sup>25</sup>

### *French Gunboats' Attempt to Take Kanghwa Island*

The Catholic revelation that there were foreign priests inside of Korea turned out to be a terrible miscalculation. Upon their return from Beijing, Taewön'gun's special envoys incorrectly reported that the Manchu government planned to put all Europeans to death.<sup>26</sup> Now knowing that priests were hiding somewhere in the country, Taewön'gun began to hunt them down. Within a month, ten French priests and about forty converts were arrested and executed. Others were either hiding or running for their lives. News of

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<sup>23</sup> Frederick Nelson, *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1946), 115.

<sup>24</sup> Kang, "Early Korean Contact with Christianity and Korean Response: An Historical Introduction," 46.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.; see also Hara, "Korea, China, and Western Barbarians: Diplomacy in Early Nineteenth-Century Korea," 417.

<sup>26</sup> Kang, "Early Korean Contact with Christianity and Korean Response: An Historical Introduction," 46.

the purge reached the commander of the French Asiatic Squadron, Admiral Pierre-Gustave Roze, in Tianjin, China, through one of only three foreign survivors, Father Felix Clair Ridel.<sup>27</sup>

In response, Admiral Roze took a survey trip on September 18, 1866 to plan for a formal campaign against Korea. Before the French chargé, Henri de Bellonet, could even inform the Manchu government of the plan, seven French warships containing about 600 troops and guided by three Korean Catholics arrived at Kanghwa Island on October 16.<sup>28</sup> Situated at the mouth of the Han River, Kanghwa was an important island for the defense of Seoul, and had historically served as a refuge for the Koryŏ king during the time of the Mongol invasion. The security of Seoul was in jeopardy when two gunboats, *la Deroulede* and *Tardif*, sailed up to the Han River.<sup>29</sup>

The Korean government was shocked by the development and in response sent a strong letter to the Manchu court stating its decision to resist the French. Chinese officials expected Korea to be easily defeated, but the war took a surprising turn. Although Admiral Roze captured Kanghwa, he did not have the manpower to hold the island because the French government refused to commit more troops to fight in Korea.<sup>30</sup> Admiral Roze had no choice but to withdraw.

To express their discontent, French troops took out their anger on Kanghwa Island. Many innocent civilians perished and national treasures were plundered by the

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<sup>27</sup> After consulting with the French chargé, Henri de Bellonet, in Beijing, the French sent an angry note to the Zongli Yamen, which was the office of foreign affair of the Manchu court, threatening to attack Korea and dispose the Korean king, if necessary. When the Chinese refused to press Korea to open their country and issue passports to foreign missionaries, the French decided to go to war. See Hara, "Korea, China, and Western Barbarians: Diplomacy in Early Nineteenth-Century Korea," 418.

<sup>28</sup> Nelson, *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia*, 117. See also Soo Bock Choi, "Korea's response to America and France in the decade of the Taewongun, 1864-1873," in *Korea's Response to the West*, 110.

<sup>29</sup> Choi, "Korea's response to America and France in the decade of the Taewongun, 1864-1873," 110-111.

<sup>30</sup> Lawrence H. Battistini, "The Korean Problem in the Nineteenth Century," *Monumenta Nipponica* 8 (1952): 48.

retreating soldiers. The departure of the French fleet, sadly, gave Taewŏn'gun a false sense of security and led him to think that his isolationist and militant approach was the proper way to deter foreign encroachment. The incident also stirred up hatred against all Westerners and their Korean Catholic converts. Over the next four years, about eight thousands native converts were beheaded.<sup>31</sup>

### *The Tragedy of the 'General Sherman'*

Prior to Korea's clash with the French, an American merchant ship *General Sherman*, which was headed by an English captain with a crew of mostly Malays and Chinese, appeared along the Taedong River, heading toward P'yŏngyang.<sup>32</sup> A Scottish missionary Robert J. Thomas was also on board as an interpreter. The ship was loaded with merchandise for trade. Because the sailors were unfamiliar with Korean weather and waters, the ship became stranded in the sand near P'yŏngyang, after the flood waters of the Taedong River receded. Running out of food and getting no local assistance because of the strict edict against contact with foreigners, the sailors chose to raid nearby villages in order to survive. Their action brought down the wrath of the villagers, who mistook them for a pirate ship. An angry mob set the ship on fire and killed all of the crew.<sup>33</sup>

This unfortunate incident could have given America a good excuse to join forces with the French in attacking Korea, but Secretary of State William H. Seward decided to resolve the crisis through peaceful means. Anson Burlingame, the American Minister to

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>32</sup> Patricia Buckley Ebrey, Anne Walthall, and James B. Palais, *East Asia: A Cultural, Social, and Political History* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006), 437.

<sup>33</sup> When Kim Il-sung took power in North Korea a hundred years later, he claimed that his great-grandfather had led the mob to attack the ship. Kim Il-sung described this incident in his autobiography, *With the Century*, Vol.1 (North Korea: Korean Friendship Association, 2003), 10, <http://www.korea-dpr.com/library/202.pdf>. See also Bradley K. Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2004), 13.

China, brought the case before the Chinese court, but got no answer because the Chinese claimed that it would not interfere with the internal affairs of Korea.<sup>34</sup> The United States, therefore, dispatched two gunboats to Korea, the *U.S.S. Wachusett*, under the command of Robert W. Shufeldt, and later, the *Shenandoah*, under the command of John C. Febiger. They were sent to inquire about the *General Sherman* incident, and to chart the rivers leading to Seoul to prepare for further necessary military actions.

In 1871, the United States government sent a special expedition to Korea, in the hopes of obtaining a treaty for the protection of shipwrecked sailors. The mission was headed by Frederick F. Low, the new American Minister to China, with the support of Admiral John Rogers, the American squadron commander. The expedition consisted of the flagship *Colorado*, the corvettes *Alaska* and *Benicia*, and the gunboats *Monocacy* and *Palos*, carrying 85 guns, and 1,230 men.<sup>35</sup> Five Korean Catholic converts served as guides.

Minister Low demanded the Korean government to send high ranking officials to conduct negotiations with him. When the Korean officials brought back the message that Taewŏn'gun wanted peace but had no desire for any treaty, the Americans tried to exert pressure by sending two gunboats sailing towards Seoul. The Korean troops on Kanghwa Island opened fire at the American boats.

Minister Low decided to increase the pressure by destroying all of the fortresses on Kanghwa Island. He thought to improve his position by instilling fear and respect through a show of force. But instead, Taewŏn'gun proclaimed a new anti-foreign edict with the support of the whole country. Another anti-Christian squall swept across the

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<sup>34</sup> Nelson, *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia*, 120.

<sup>35</sup> Choi, "Korea's response to America and France in the decade of the Taewongun, 1864-1873," 118.

peninsula and more Catholic converts were beheaded. Seeing that negotiations were over and that his expedition was too small to storm Seoul, Minister Low decided to withdraw.<sup>36</sup> Taewŏn'gun's policy of seclusion once again triumphed and the door of Korea reminded tightly shut, at least for another five years.

### *THE OPENING OF KOREA BY JAPAN*

While Western gunboats failed to intimidate Korea in opening up for trade and evangelism, Japan made its own attempt at securing a treaty of friendship and commerce. Like Korea, Japan had initially refused to open its door for Western traders, except the Dutch. However, after witnessing Commodore Matthew C. Perry's demonstration of Western gunpower during the 1853 America Expedition to Edo, Japan gave up its seclusion policy and signed Japan's first treaty with the United States, the Treaty of Kanagawa (1854), and later the first commercial treaty with the United States in 1858.

#### *Meiji Reform and Territorial Expansion*

The opening of Japan hastened the downfall of the Tokugawa shogunate (1600-1887) and brought rapid political, economic, and social changes in Japan. The Meiji Restoration (1868) and the ensuing progressive reform movement gradually transformed Japanese government and society. The new Japanese government devised effective means to expand its central power. By both persuasion and threat, the government was able to take the feudal lands back from the daimyo peacefully and to establish a new and effective taxation system that enabled the central government to finance radical reform programs modeled after the West. Meiji reforms included zealous efforts to appropriate and adapt Western industrial technology, judicial institutions, and constitutional theory.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 119-127.

Despite Japan's own history as a closed society, its interaction with and admiration of the West led them to champion imperialism and territorial expansion. The Darwinist idea of the "survival of the fittest" radically altered Japan's foreign policy outlook. Since the Western imperialists had imposed an unequal treaty system on Japan using powerful gunboats, the Japanese were eager to shake off this yoke by building their own powerful gunboats and establishing a strong army. Then they could not only hold their enemies at bay, but also conquer their weaker neighbors.

In the decades following the Meiji Restoration, the Japanese government gradually took steps to secure its borders and to build up its military strength for territorial expansion. Because Russia had acquired China's maritime provinces of eastern Manchuria down to Vladivostok in 1860, it directly threatened Japan's interests in the neighboring Sakhalin and Kuril Islands. In order to safeguard its northern frontier, Japan settled the issue with the Russians in the Treaty of Saint Petersburg (1875). Japan agreed to give up its claim to Sakhalin and, in return, Russia would not challenge Japan's position in the Kuril Islands. Previously, in 1869, the Japanese government had smashed the remaining Tokugawa loyalists in Ezo (Hokkaido), and, by 1886, had assumed full control of Hokkaido by establishing three prefectures there. It then turned its attention to securing its southern frontier by annexing the Ryukyu Islands in 1879. Korea and Taiwan, located to Japan's east and south, were the next potential areas for Japanese expansion.<sup>37</sup>

### *Japan's Gunboat Diplomacy*

The Korean government, under Taewŏn'gun, considered Japan's compromises with the West as a sign of cowardice, and despised Japan's ready acceptance of European

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<sup>37</sup> Ebrey, Walthall, and Palais, *East Asia: A Cultural, Social, and Political History*, 416-426.

ideas. After the Meiji Restoration, Japan had sent several envoys to Korea (in 1868, 1867, and 1871), hoping to re-open relations. But the Korean court refused to receive the Japanese representatives and humiliated them.<sup>38</sup> The aggressive faction within the Japanese government demanded an invasion of Korea in response. Yet, instead of retaliating immediately, the Japanese government decided to wait for an appropriate time.

Their opportunity came in 1875, when the Japanese gunboat *Unyo Kwan* was fired upon by Korean troops near Kanghwa Island, while surveying the coast. In response, Japan destroyed the attacking fort and stirred up a popular clamor for war against Korea. With Japan's gunboats, led by General Kuroda Kiyotaka and Count Inoue Kaoru, holding Kanghwa Island and threatening the security of Seoul,<sup>39</sup> Japan's diplomat, Mori Yurei, negotiated with the Manchu government. He protested against Korea's persistent rejection of Japanese representatives and its unreasonable attack on the *Unyo Kwan*. In his note to the Manchu government, Mori threatened that Korea would suffer "an incalculable calamity" if it refused to accept Japan's demand for a treaty of friendship.<sup>40</sup>

In reality, Japan's diplomacy was a ploy with two aims: to trick China into pressuring Korea into opening its borders and to test the waters of China's commitment to defend Korea. Although China had never given up its suzerain claim over Korea, it was unwilling to dictate Korea's internal affairs or to declare its commitment to defend Korea. China's ambiguous position delighted the Japanese. Mori deceived the Chinese by paying lip-service to China's special position over Korea, even while Japan's true

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<sup>38</sup> Battistini, "The Korean Problem in the Nineteenth Century," 49.

<sup>39</sup> With a force of three warships and eight hundred troops, the Japanese expedition was able to capture Kanghwa Island in December 1875. See Carter J. Eckert et al, *Korea Old and New: A History* (Seoul: Ilchokak Publishers, 1990), 200.

<sup>40</sup> Nelson, *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia*, 127-128.

motive was to expand its own political and economic influence in Korea. Not suspecting Japan's true agenda, Li Hongzhang, who was in charge of the Manchu government's foreign affairs, instructed the Korean court to receive Japan's mission.<sup>41</sup>

Japan's public cry for another war of conquest against Korea, its new gunboats, and its skillful diplomatic maneuvering had left Korea with little choice but to comply with their demands. Vulnerable without China's protection, and still remembering the destruction wrought by Hideyoshi's invasion, Korea had every reason to be fearful. Korea's traditional diplomacy of *sadae* ('serving the great') to China and *kyorin* ('neighborly relations') to Japan was in fact on the brink of collapse. Serving China alone was no longer useful in ensuring Korea's independence.

When the Japanese representatives arrived in Seoul on February 6, 1876, they met a more receptive Korean court. King Kojong's new wife, Queen Min, had ousted Taewŏn'gun to gain control over the court. Korea was now ready to conclude a treaty. Within a month, the Treaty of Kanghwa was signed. Korea agreed to establish diplomatic relations with Japan, open three ports for trade and foreign settlement, and give Japanese the right of extraterritoriality. The treaty also allowed Japanese boats to survey Korean coastal waters at will and granted special economic privileges to Japanese merchants in Korea. In 1880, Japan set up its legation in Seoul.

The most important element of this treaty, however, was that Japan recognized Korea as an independent state which enjoyed "the same sovereign rights" as Japan. It meant that Japan ceased to recognize Korea as a tributary state of China. The treaty paved the way for Japan to detach Korea from the suzerainty of China and to bring Korea under its own influence instead.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 129-130.

### *China's Response to the Treaty of Kanghai*

The 1876 Treaty of Kanghai alarmed many Manchu officials. Li Hongzhang worried about Japan's real intentions in Korea. These fears mounted when, in 1879, Japan annexed the Liu-ch'iu (Ryukyu or Okinawa) kingdom. Liu-ch'iu had been a tributary state of both China and Japan; if Japan could swallow one Chinese vassal state, then why not another? A look at any map would show what a tempting prize Korea would be to an expansionist Japan. Korea had psychological as well as political value to China because it was by then the last tributary state of the Middle Kingdom, Annam having already fallen into the hands of the French in 1863. Losing Korea would be the final blow to the declining prestige of the Manchu government.<sup>42</sup>

China began to look for ways to neutralize Japan's rapidly growing influence over Korea, and to prevent its annexation. Li's solution was to pit "barbarian against barbarian." If two great powers could be played against each other, each might keep the other in check. A Western power had to be invited into Korea to counteract the Japanese. But which nation should it be? Li chose the United States, because it had shown little interest in territorial expansion in East Asia.

### *Commodore Robert W. Shufeldt and his Treaty*

The expedition of 1871, despite its failure, had demonstrated the United States' interest in a treaty with Korea. Japan's success with the Treaty of Kanghai had aroused some US officials to contemplate making another attempt of their own. Commodore Robert W. Shufeldt was sent by Secretary of State William Maxwell Evarts to investigate the possibility of a new attempt. He first approached the Japanese government, seeking their "good offices" for aid in securing a treaty with Korea. The Japanese refused, of

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 135.

course, because, except for Chinese-Korean relations, they enjoyed a monopoly in Korea and did not want to share their influence with other Western powers. By the same logic, the Chinese were eager to assist the US. Hearing of the Americans' rebuff by Japan, Li Hongzhang at once invited Shufeldt to visit him in Tianjin. He promised Shufeldt that he would persuade the Chosŏn government to negotiate a treaty with the United States.<sup>43</sup>

In early 1882, Li Hongzhang convinced the Korean court to sign a treaty with America. Through the treaty, Li hoped to lure the United States into formally acknowledging Korea as a vassal of China. Shufeldt refused to include this language in the treaty,<sup>44</sup> but he did promise to write a letter stating that he had requested China's assistance in concluding the treaty because Korea was its dependency. Shufeldt also agreed to dispatch a letter from the Korean king to the President of the United States, stating that the treaty was concluded with the consent of China.<sup>45</sup> Fearing foreign religious and cultural expansion into Korea, Li also requested that the treaty include the provision that "the [Christian] church shall not be established," but the American representatives refused his proposal.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, when the Korea-U.S. Treaty of Amity and Commerce was finally signed in the city of Tianjin, the anti-religious provision was omitted.<sup>47</sup>

The treaty was historically and politically significant, not only because it was the first treaty made by Korea with a Western nation, but also because it was the first attempt to seek American assistance in preserving Korean independence. Article I of the treaty

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>44</sup> Shufeldt refused because both he and the new American minister to China, John Russell Young, feared that it might drag the United States into defending interests in Korea. See *ibid.*, 144.

<sup>45</sup> Battistini, "The Korean Problem in the Nineteenth Century," 52.

<sup>46</sup> Kyong-man Hong, "Formation of Korean Protestantism and Its Political Nature," *Korean Journal* 23 (1983): 19.

<sup>47</sup> Allen D. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1971), 71-72.

stated clearly that “there shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the President of the United States and the King of Chosŏn [Korea] and the citizens and subjects of their respective Governments. If others deal unjustly or oppressively with either Government, the other will exert their good offices, on being informed of the case, to bring about an amicable arrangement, thus showing their friendly feelings.”<sup>48</sup>

Interpreted broadly, this provision could imply that the United States recognized Korea as an independent country rather than a dependency of China. A letter from King Kojong to President Arthur stated that, even though Korea was a tributary state of China, the king had always retained full sovereignty over internal and external matters, and thus, the Korean government would carry out the provisions of the treaty completely in accordance with international law.<sup>49</sup>

Official relations between Korea and the United States improved markedly when the king sent an eight-man diplomatic mission to the United States under Chief Envoy Min Yŏng-ik and Deputy Envoy Hong Yŏng-sik. In addition to cementing official ties between the two countries, the mission’s goal was to obtain American advisers, teachers, and loans. One official, Yu Kil-chun, stayed in the United States to attend the Governor Dummer Academy in Massachusetts. Upon their return to Korea, some members of the delegation became champions of radical reform based on Western models.<sup>50</sup>

The Korea-US Treaty, according to historian Walter B. Jung, was “typical of the time; two countries agreed to exchange diplomats, to establish consulates at trading ports,

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<sup>48</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Treaties and Conventions Concluded Between the USA and Other Powers* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1889), 216.

<sup>49</sup> Battistini, “The Korean Problem in the Nineteenth Century,” 53.

<sup>50</sup> Eckert et al, *Korea Old and New: A History*, 204.

and to treat each other based on equality.”<sup>51</sup> It also became, in the words of Jung, “a good precedent for other Western powers interested in establishing similar treaty relationships with Korea.”<sup>52</sup> Treaties with similar characteristics were signed by Korea and other Western powers: Britain and Germany in 1883, Italy and Russia in 1884, France in 1886, and Austro-Hungary in 1889. All of these powers agreed to recognize Korea as an independent country.

Despite its amicability and lenient terms, the first Korea-US treaty was, nevertheless, still an “unequal” treaty between a Western imperialist state and a weaker nation. Foreigners enjoyed the protection of extraterritoriality and expected economic concessions from the Korean court. It required no gift of prophesy to foresee that foreign encroachment would eventually hurt Korean sovereignty and worsen the existing political, economic, and social problems, unless the nation undertook substantial reform.

The Korean court was deeply divided over these changes. Most leaders argued that unless Korea reformed itself and began modernization programs, it could not survive. The question was, however: which model of reform should Korea follow? Some Koreans looked to the Japanese model.<sup>53</sup> Some looked to China. Others looked to the United States.

As Korea begrudgingly opened its doors to the West, many of the destabilizations that they had feared were bound to occur. Radical political, economic, and social transformations were on their way. The old Korea was passing away and the shape of the

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<sup>51</sup> Jung, *Nation Building: The Geopolitical History of Korea*, 150.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> I used the word “saw” because many Progressives had visited Japan and were impressed by what they saw in Meiji Japan. The first political coup d’etat initiated by pro-Japanese progressive reformers (mostly young students from the high *yangban* class) in 1884 was the direct result of what they learned after spending two years in Japan. See Se Eung Oh, *Dr. Philip Jaisohn’s Reform Movement 1896-1898: A Critical Appraisal of the Independence Club* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1995), 5.

new Korea was not yet known. It was a tumultuous period of intense rivalries within the Korean court and of frequent diplomatic disputes and of major military confrontations between Chosŏn's neighbors. Foreigners, both diplomats and missionaries alike, did not merely witness this fall, but contributed, directly or indirectly, to the changes that were sweeping the nation.

### *PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES AND THEIR INITIAL WORK IN KOREA*

The conclusion of a Korea-US treaty opened the door for foreigners to reside in Korea, but it did not mean that missionary activities were legal according to Korean law. Anti-foreignism, including distrust of foreign religions, remained strong across the peninsula. Public evangelism was still prohibited, so American churches chose to begin with medical and educational work instead of direct evangelism. Before sending missionaries, the Americans first obtained the Korean king's approval to build schools and to practice medicine.

#### *The Arrival of American Protestant Missionaries*

In 1884, the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions (USA) redirected their first missionary, Dr. Horace N. Allen, a medical worker serving in China, to Seoul. He arrived at In'chŏn on September 20. Although he was a missionary supported by the Presbyterian Board, he also came with an official title (though no official salary) – The Physician of the American Legation in Seoul. His diplomatic status and connections shielded him from religious persecution and gave him legitimacy and influence in Seoul. Being the only Western doctor available at the time, he was warmly welcomed by most of the foreign residents, who were haunted by frequent outbreaks of strange diseases in

this ancient city.<sup>54</sup> Dr. Allen thereby made many friends within the diplomatic and business circles.

A year after his arrival, various American boards of foreign missions started sending ordained ministers and medical workers to Seoul. From the Presbyterian Church (North) came Rev. Horace G. Underwood and Dr. Horace Herod, and from the Methodist Episcopal (North) came Rev. and Mrs. Henry G. Appenzeller, Dr. and Mrs. W. B. Scranton, and Mrs. Mary F. Scranton. Step by step, they began to open hospitals, build schools, and establish churches. These two denominations cooperated closely in their Korean evangelical work. Over the next decade, in addition to the above-mentioned two groups, missionaries would arrive in Korea from many denominations, including Australian Presbyterian in 1889, Canadian Baptists in 1889, Church of England in 1890, Presbyterian (South) in 1892, Canadian Presbyterian in 1893, and Methodist Episcopal (South) in 1896.

### *Missionaries and the Korean Royal Family*

There is little dispute that medical service was the key to the success of American missionary work in Seoul. Dr. Allen's "magic" healing (from the Korean viewpoint) of the Queen's nephew, Prince Min Yōng-ik, set the medical missionaries above all other foreigners in the Hermit Kingdom. The prince, who had visited Washington in 1882 as a Korean representative, was seriously injured during an attempted coup by pro-Japanese progressive reformers.<sup>55</sup> When Dr. Allen saved his life, he earned a high reputation for both himself and Western medicine among the most powerful Korean officials in Seoul.

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<sup>54</sup> In Soo Kim, *Protestants and the Formation of Modern Korean Nationalism, 1885-1920* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 18.

<sup>55</sup> Horace N. Allen, *Things Korea: A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes, Missionary and Diplomatic* (New York: Fleming and H. Revell, 1890), 70.

Afterward, Dr. Allen and his missionary colleagues became the trusted friends of the imperial family, thereby benefiting the position of all American missionaries in Seoul. The doctor was hired as the physician to the Royal Court and was given the status of a Korean nobleman so that he could enter the palace and see the king or his family whenever needed. When Dr. Allen asked for a Western hospital, the king provided all that was needed and named the hospital as *Chai Chung Won* (House of Civilized Virtue).<sup>56</sup> The king later granted permission to the Methodists as well, for a second hospital, named *Sibyŏngwŏn* (Universal Relief Hospital). Dr. Lillias Horton, a Presbyterian medical missionary, became the Queen's personal physician.

As the number of missionaries increased, their relationship with the royal family also deepened. Dr. Allen, in particular, soon became one of the most influential foreigners in Seoul.<sup>57</sup> Although his political views were quite different from most of the other missionaries – and also from the American officials in Washington – his personal influence upon the court promoted the advancement of U.S.-Korean diplomatic and economic relations.<sup>58</sup>

### *Educational Contributions of Missionaries*

In addition to offering medical services, missionaries also set up schools so that they might teach and indirectly minister to Korean people. With the endorsement of the

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<sup>56</sup> Kim, *Protestants and the Formation of Modern Korean Nationalism*, 19-20

<sup>57</sup> In the next two decades of his service in Korea, Dr. Allen emerged from being a medical missionary to become the king's informal adviser; and then he served Korean interests as the Foreign Secretary of the Korean Legation in Washington. When he returned to Seoul in 1889, he was then hired by the American legation as its secretary and from there he was finally promoted to be the Minister of the American Legation in the summer of 1897. Jongsuk Chay described him as the most involved and the most important individual in American-Korean relations from the 1890s to 1905. See Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry*, 119.

<sup>58</sup> Dr. Allen believed that America was the nation that could save Korea and a formal Korean-American alliance would serve the interests of both sides. He had advised the Korean king to give several important mining grants and construction works to American business corporations. See Fred Harvey Harrington, *God, Mammon and the Japanese: Dr. Horace N. Allen and Korean-American Relations, 1884-1905* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1944).

king, the first school, *Paejae haktang* (Hall for Rearing Useful Men), was established in 1886 by Rev. Henry Appenzeller. Soon afterward, a school for young girls was founded by Mrs. Mary F. Scranton; this school later became the famous Ewha University for Women.<sup>59</sup> The Presbyterians and other mission organizations in Seoul soon followed the Methodists' example and set up their own schools, seminaries, and eventually universities. Presbyterian and Methodist became the two most influential Protestant denominations in Korea.<sup>60</sup> In 1886, there were two mission schools. But by 1910, American missionaries were running 1,623 schools of all categories, enrolling more than 130,000 students. These American schools accounted for about 93 percent of all foreign mission schools.<sup>61</sup> In fact, American missionaries established schools faster than they

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<sup>59</sup> Several famous women nationalist activists among Americans were graduates from Ewha Women's University, including Helen Kim and Louise Yim. Both of them were Methodist women and Syngman Rhee's supporters.

<sup>60</sup> The Anglican Church sent its first evangelist, a Japanese convert, to Korea in 1880. But it would be ten more years before the church sent its first British missionary, Bishop John Charles Corfe. He focused his efforts on medical work, instead of education, with the assistance of some Catholic priests and nuns. After seven years, Bishop Corfe found his first Korean convert. Although Bishop Corfe arrived in Korea only a few years later than the Presbyterian missionaries, the Anglican Church in Korea ultimately failed to produce a native ministry. Unable to master the language or endure the harsh living conditions, Bishop Corfe and his Anglican coworkers gradually retired from Korea. During the Japanese colonial period, the church experienced some growth and built a beautiful cathedral in Seoul. But Anglicanism only had marginal influence upon the Korean Christian community. When the English priests were withdrawn at the outbreak of World War II, the church suffered from a lack of native leadership and funding. After World War II, only a few Anglican missionaries returned, but funding from war-torn Britain remained scarce throughout the Korean War and reconstruction period. A change occurred in 1956 when the new Bishop, John Daly, adopted full self-supporting and self-governing policies for the native Church. Since that time, the Anglican Church has begun to expand its influence in Korea. See John B. Whelan, "The Anglican Church in Korea," *International Review of Missions* 49 (April 1960): 157-163.

<sup>61</sup> See Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry: Korean-American Relations to 1910*, 6. Some other sources suggested the amount as 755 (see Table 7) or 778. (See Kim, *Protestants and the Formation of Modern Korean Nationalism*, 65.) Chay's data is from a Korean source which I cannot verify, but it should still be reliable because the new research by the Korean educationists indicates that some non-mission run private schools were actually owned by individual Christians who had connected with the churches or missions. See Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 122.

built churches.<sup>62</sup>

Gradually, Christian education developed into an effective means of transplanting American ideals into young Korean minds.<sup>63</sup> Mission schools not only taught Christian doctrine, but also provided students with a Western liberal education, including the sciences, mathematics, the English language, and the humanities. In 1910, at least a third of the schools in Korea were run by foreign missionaries. Even as late as 1929, after more than twenty years of Japanese colonial control, Christian schools still graduated a third of the high school students in Korea.<sup>64</sup> “These schools,” historian Jongsuk Chay pointed out, “which ranged from primary schools to colleges, not only introduced Western culture to the Koreans, but also produced young patriots who later played an important role in every field of Korean society.”<sup>65</sup>

These mission schools, moreover, became a direct challenge to the traditional Confucian education, which was controlled by the *yangban* (the name for the highest class of scholar-gentry in Korean society) class. Since the beginning of the Chosŏn Dynasty, Neo-Confucianism<sup>66</sup> was Korea’s official ideology and Koreans generally

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<sup>62</sup> There were about 687 Presbyterian churches and 359 Methodist churches and chapels (very primitive churches) in Korea. Data of the Presbyterian churches is taken from Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 33; and data of the Methodist churches is from “Korea Conference 1910,” *Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church: Korea Mission 1884-1943* (Seoul: The Institute for Korean Church History, 2001): 380-381.

<sup>63</sup> Daniel M. Davis, “The Impact of Christianity upon Korea, 1884-1910: Six Key American and Korean Figures,” *Journal of Church and State* 36 (1994): 795-820. Davis’ research is mainly on Henry G. Appenzeller and the influence of Christian education on Korea.

<sup>64</sup> Reported by C. A. Sauer, “Korea Conference,” (1929) *Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church: Korea Mission 1884-1943* (Seoul: The Institute for Korean Church History, 2001): 823.

<sup>65</sup> Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry: Korean-American Relations to 1910*, 3.

<sup>66</sup> Neo-Confucianism was a Zhu-xi style Confucianism.

adhered to its teachings more strongly than the Chinese did.<sup>67</sup> Most of the Korean *yangban* scholars had been educated in Confucian schools in the hopes of passing the government examination and receiving lucrative jobs in public service.

Therefore, before the 1890s, the only school available for Korean children was the male-bastion *sōdang* (Book Hall) in their own village. There, boys learned old Chinese writing and Confucian classics under the guidance of their *sōdang* master. Students were obliged to memorize the *Sohak* (Elementary Learning) textbook, in order to be promoted to a higher level and eventually acquire the status of a Confucian scholar.<sup>68</sup> “These texts were nothing,” said Hong Ŭl-su, a Korean from South Kyōngsang Province who was born in 1905, “but Chinese history, poetry, stories about warriors and artists, you name it.”<sup>69</sup> Both the educational content and the teaching method served to draw the Korean elites closer to China and to resist changes that might subvert the political, economic, and social base. Since Japan did not begin its own educational work in Korea until after the turn of the century, it was the Western mission schools that presented the first major threat to the existing educational system. Later, when Japan attempted to achieve complete control over the colonial school system in Korea and impose the Japanese language, these existing mission schools were a constant obstacle.

These three educational systems can be compared. The traditional Confucian schools emphasized the Chinese language and culture; after 1910, Japanese schools

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<sup>67</sup> Zhu Xi-style Confucianism was a form of Confucianism that was developed by Zhu Xi (1130-1200) in Song Dynasty in China. Zhu Xi-style Confucianism was later completely distorted by the Mongol rulers during the Yuan Dynasty in order to suppress the nationalistic or anti-foreign elements of Confucianism. Instead, it emphasized the familialistic elements and ritual formalism of Confucians so that the Chinese would be kept under the Mongols' control. See Thomas Hosuck Kang, “Changes in the North Korean Personality From Confucian to Communist,” in *The Politics of North Korea*, ed. Jae Kyu Park and Jung Gun Kim (Seoul: 경남대학교 극동문제연구소 Institute for Far Eastern Studies, 1979), 68.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>69</sup> Hildi Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 37.

emphasized the Japanese language and culture; the American mission schools, however, did not focus on the language and culture of America. Although these subjects were taught, the students learned just as much about the *Korean* language and culture. Only the mission schools taught Korean history and used *han'gŭl*.<sup>70</sup> *Han'gŭl* was the Korean alphabetic script invented by King Sejong and a group of Korean scholars in 1450 A.D. It was one of the most perfect phonetic alphabets in the world and was very easy to learn.<sup>71</sup>

Despite its good quality and potential benefits, *han'gŭl* was never popular among the educated *yangban* class, because they valued their superior position as Chinese scholars.<sup>72</sup> Anyone could learn *han'gŭl*, and then what would make the *yangban* special? Therefore, the Confucian masters at the *sŏdang* discouraged the use of *han'gŭl*. As a result, illiteracy was quite high during the Chosŏn period.

Seeing the potential effectiveness of the native alphabet for teaching and evangelism, missionaries used *han'gŭl* widely in their mission schools and publications. The process began when Rev. Horace G. Underwood learned *han'gŭl* through a native Korean teacher, Song Sun-yŏng. He then systemized his learning methods, and published two important books in English on the Korean language in 1890: *An Introduction to the Korean Spoken Language* and *A Concise Dictionary of the Korean Language*.<sup>73</sup> These two books helped Koreans to unify and standardize their language, by providing a standard grammar and terminology. They became important learning tools for both natives and foreigners. With this system, Korean students only needed

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<sup>70</sup> *Han'gŭl* was also known as *Ŏnmun*. For the sake of the *yangban*, the mission schools taught Chinese so that the mission school graduates would not be looked down upon by the educated Confucian scholars, and there was also a general need to know enough Chinese characters in order to master the materials written by traditional and famous Korean scholars at that time.

<sup>71</sup> See Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, 13-14.

<sup>72</sup> The use of Chinese characters for official documents and for other higher level written materials was far more popular than was the native alphabet. *Han'gŭl* was reserved only for low-grade novels. *Ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>73</sup> Lillias H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1983), 94-95.

about two weeks to master *han'gŭl*. Some children brought their materials home and taught their parents and siblings how to read and write *han'gŭl*. In this way, the literacy level of the common people gradually improved. This was the most unique feature of the contribution of missionary work to Korean society, setting the Korea experience apart from that of other Asian countries.

The classes offered by the mission schools prepared students for the changing national and international conditions. Mission school students were required to learn at least three written languages: *han'gŭl*, Chinese, and English. They were also encouraged to study their own history and acquire a basic knowledge of their historical and cultural roots.<sup>74</sup> Initially, these classes were criticized by the *yangban* as lacking scholarly value. But slowly, the study of Korea's own history began to arouse a Korean national consciousness. Just as the *sŏdang* had encouraged students to admire China and thus drew students closer to the Chinese way of thinking, the mission schools taught Western culture and drew students closer to America. Nevertheless, by emphasizing Korean language and history, students at the mission schools were also encouraged to keep their Korean heritage even while they were being exposed to a wider body of knowledge.<sup>75</sup>

### *The Influence of Missionary Publications*

As *han'gŭl* gradually became more popular among both the Korean youth and churchgoers, the demand for reading materials in *han'gŭl* steadily increased. At first, the use of *han'gŭl* was only common among Christians, because the Korean Bible, religious

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<sup>74</sup> Later when the Japanese took over Korea, the students were forced to give up *han'gŭl* and use the Japanese language. The colonial government did not allow any Korean history and cultural classes in order to uproot the Korean national identity and make the Korean people loyal Japanese nationals.

<sup>75</sup> Kim, *Protestants and the Formation of Modern Korean Nationalism, 1885-1920*, 68-69.

books, and mission schools' textbooks were mostly published in the Korean script.<sup>76</sup> The situation began to change when the first Korean newspaper, *The Independent* (*Doklipsinmun*), was published in *han'gŭl* in 1896 by Philip Jaison (Sŏ Chae-pil), a Korean Christian reformer returned from the United States.<sup>77</sup>

Missionaries took the lead in setting up their own religious and academic publication businesses to propagate their religious beliefs and Western ideals. Rev. Henry Appenzeller, for instance, founded the Trilingual Press, allowing Paejae's students to work there to earn money for room, board, and tuition.<sup>78</sup> Later, in 1895, Appenzeller also took over *Korean Repository*, which was originally founded and edited by Franklin Ohlinger, an American publisher. Appenzeller published his own editorials in this magazine in three languages (English, *han'gŭl*, and Chinese). The Methodists even ran their own bookstore, The Methodist Book Corner.

Likewise, Rev. Horace G. Underwood from the Presbyterian Missions also started his own newspaper, *Yesugyo hoebo* (also known as *Christian News* in English), publishing articles purely in *han'gŭl*. In describing her husband's motives for editing *Christian News*, Lillias Underwood wrote that it was:

to carry counsel and comfort to the Christian church, [and] to present to laborer and landlord, to Koreans of country and city, a practical Christianity which interested itself in their fields and finances, and ... brought them word of doings in distant lands... [it] brought to far away provincial officials ... news of foreign countries and articles on subjects of interest and help; the farmer found accounts of cotton and tobacco-raising in other countries, improved methods of fertilization and descriptions of better, though simple, farm implements; the merchant found news and articles on commerce in its columns.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, 15.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. See also Oh, *Dr. Philip Jaisohn's Reform Movement 1896-1898*, 19-20.

<sup>78</sup> Daniel M. Davis, "Henry Gerhard Appenzeller: His Contribution to Korean Independence, Democracy, and Modernization," *Tongbang hakchi* 57 (1988): 211.

<sup>79</sup> Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, 168.

Translated Western materials could reach the minds and souls of the Korean people through these religious publications. Because the materials were quite popular even among non-Christians, the demand was so large that one copy of such a publication might possibly pass through hundreds of Korean hands.<sup>80</sup>

As these papers grew into important channels for Christian education, they gradually shaped the Korean people's interests and opinions regarding both national and international issues. Meanwhile, missionaries also wrote numerous books and articles on Korea for their English speaking audiences.<sup>81</sup> These materials became important sources of information on Korea for further economic, religious, and cultural interactions between Korea and the West.

#### *DOMESTIC DISCONTENT AND FOREIGN INTERVENTIONS*

While missionaries were actively bringing changes to traditional Korean society, foreign governments were also increasing their level of involvement in Korean political affairs. The problems started in 1876, as soon as the Treaty of Kanghwa was signed. In facing Japan's challenge to its rights of suzerainty, the Manchu government decided to assert greater control over the Korean court. This move eventually brought China into direct conflict with Japan.

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<sup>80</sup> Kim, *Protestants and the Formation of Modern Korean Nationalism, 1885-1920*, 73-74.

<sup>81</sup> For examples, Rev. James Scarth Gale, an independent British missionary financially supported by the American Presbyterian Mission in Korea, wrote a variety of books on Korean language, history, and culture. His most famous works were *Korea in Transition* (1909) and *History of the Korean People* (1927). They were scholarly studies of Korean history and culture. Other well-known books on Korea by Dr. Horace N. Allen are *Korean Tales* (1889), *A Chronological Index of the Foreign Relations of Korea from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Twentieth Century* (1900), and *Things Korean: A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes, Missionary and Diplomatic* (1890). Dr. Homer B. Hulbert, a Christian educator and a close advisor to King Kojong, wrote *The Passing of Korea* (1906) to lament the loss of Korean independence to the Japanese imperialists.

### *Power Struggle in the Korean Court*

Taewŏn'gun, who had been out of power since 1873, planned a political comeback in 1881. The anti-foreign faction of the Korean government, who looked to Taewŏn'gun for leadership, were upset at the king's accommodative approach to foreign encroachment. Taewŏn'gun took advantage of their discontent to gain political support from some high officials. He plotted a coup to depose his son, King Kojong, who was under the heavy influence of his wife, Queen Min, and to replace him with another of his sons. This plan was exposed, however, and all of his allies were purged. Only because he was the king's father did Taewŏn'gun escape punishment.<sup>82</sup>

Shortly afterwards, in mid-1882, Taewŏn'gun saw another opportunity. Discontented Korean troops began rioting against the government. They had not been paid for a year, due to corrupt officials from the queen's family, the Min clan. Taewŏn'gun secretly gave his support to these rebels and sent his trusted aides to direct them. The soldiers seized weapons from the government armory and then attacked the prison, where other rebels were being held. Afterwards, they turned to destroy the Japanese legation in Seoul and tried to kill Queen Min. Once the rebels stormed the palace, Taewŏn'gun was back in power and sought to undo all of his son's reforms. His victory was short-lived, however, because the Japanese returned with more gunboats and troops, demanding reparations for all the damages caused by the riot.

### *Chinese Intervention*

This Japanese response led the Manchu government to fear that a takeover of Korea was imminent. With the approval of King Kojong's emissaries in Tianjin, the Manchu dispatched a force of 4,500 troops under the command of General Wu

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<sup>82</sup> Eckert et al, *Korea Old and New: A History*, 205.

Changqing (Wu Ch'ang-ch'ing). It was the first Chinese military intervention into Korean affairs since 1636. General Wu seized Taewŏn'gun and exiled him to Tianjin. Queen Min, who was in hiding, quickly regained power. At that time, Japan was not ready to confront China, due to its own domestic financial difficulties, so the Japanese gunboats held their fire. They did, however, demand a new treaty and reparations for damages to the legation. To avoid war, the Korean court agreed. The Treaty of Chemulp'o (1882) was signed, giving Japan the right to guard its legation in Seoul.

Once they entered Korea, the Chinese forces showed no interest in leaving again. Allied with Queen Min and her supporters in the court, Commander Yuan Shikai, who was General Wu's chief of the military secretariat and concurrently the associate director of Korean military affairs, grew to be the most powerful man in Seoul. He pressured the Korean court to grant new trading rights to Chinese merchants, allowing them to travel and conduct business freely in all Korea. With political support from the Chinese, conservative officials succeeded in blocking many pro-Japanese progressive reform programs. For nearly a decade, Yuan was in control of Seoul, using his power to minimize Japan's monopolistic trading position in Korea.

While the Japanese residents in Korea watched the rise of Chinese political influence and economic competition in Korea, the Japanese government was waiting for the right time to challenge China and assert its own domination over Northeastern Asia. Manipulating the progressive Koreans' anti-Chinese sentiment, Japan positioned itself as the true defender of Korean independence and the model for the Korean reform movement. In 1885, taking advantage of China's conflict with France over Annam, Japanese officials pushed through a treaty with China in Tianjin, agreeing that both

nations would withdraw their troops from Korea and that each should notify the other party in advance if troops were again needed to put down disturbances in Korea.<sup>83</sup>

***The Tonghak Rebellion and the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895)***

After ten years of difficult struggle to overcome domestic opposition and another ten years to stabilize its economy and secure its borders, the Japanese government was finally ready to confront China. The opportunity came when the Tonghak Rebellion, the biggest rebellion in Korean history, broke out in 1894. Tonghak was originally a religious movement with a strong anti-Catholic sentiment. Its founder, Ch'oe Che-u, claimed to have received a revelation in 1860 and to have been miraculously cured of a mysterious disease. When he began to preach his religion, which he called Ch'öndogyo (Doctrine of the Way of Heaven), people confused it with Catholicism. In order to differentiate his religion from Catholicism, Ch'oe renamed his sect *Tonghak* (Eastern Learning), in contrast to *Suhak* (Western Learning). He attacked Christianity furiously whenever he preached. Ironically, Ch'oe was executed on the charge of being a Christian in 1864, during the period of Taewön'gun's nationwide anti-Catholic purge.<sup>84</sup>

Ch'oe's teaching was carried on, however, by his young relative, Ch'oe Si-hyöng. Over the next decade, Tonghak became popular. Its idea that "all men are equal" attracted a number of followers among the oppressed who were tired of government corruption and social inequality. Periodic uprisings were instigated by Tonghak followers in the 1870s. In 1892, the sect had become so powerful that it openly engineered large non-violent demonstrations at Changye and Poun, petitioning the

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>84</sup> R. Pierce Beaver, "Chondogyo and Korea," *Journal of Bible and Religion* 30 (April 1962): 116.

government to remove the guilty verdict of their founder, Ch'oe Che-u, and to permit freedom of worship, end corruption, and eliminate foreign influences.

As the rebellion spread from Kyongsang Province to the north, Seoul was threatened.<sup>85</sup> Doubting the strength of his own troops and fearing the loss of his throne, King Kojong called on China for aid. The crisis quickly subsided, however, when the government reached an agreement with the Tonghak leaders by promising toleration of their faith and allowing them to set up administrative offices in the Chölla provinces.

The uprising was over, but the fallout of King Kojong's premature appeal for aid was just beginning. As soon as the request for assistance reached Li Hongzhang, he sent 1,500 Chinese soldiers to Korea without notifying the Japanese government. His action gave Japan an excuse to stir up a war against the Chinese. Ignoring Korean requests for both China and Japan to withdraw their troops, the Japanese army surrounded the Korean palace in Seoul, ostensibly to protect it from the rebellion. The Japanese army then attacked Chinese troops in the north, while their gunboats engaged the Chinese navy.

The political turmoil in Seoul and fear of Japanese domination over Korea caused the Tonghak worshipers to take up arms again. Its specific purpose was to drive out Japanese invaders from Korea and to remove pro-Japanese officials from the government. With the help of Japanese troops, the Korean army successfully suppressed the rebellion. According to the remnants of Tonghak followers, about 400,000 Koreans were killed in the uprising, including key Tonghak leaders.<sup>86</sup>

The turmoil of war and rebellion lasted for a year. Japan won and thereby imposed a harsh treaty, the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895), on the Manchu government.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. See also Eckert et al, *Korea Old and New: A History*, 221.

The Chinese were forced to acknowledge Korea's full independence and to repudiate all tributary ties with Korea. In addition to a substantial indemnity, Japan also demanded that China cede the Liaodong Peninsula and Taiwan. Through the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Japan joined the unequal treaty system that the Western powers had imposed on China in the mid-nineteenth century. Their victory hastened the downfall of the Manchu government.

While Japanese troops were battling the Chinese and the Tonghak, Japan also took control of the Korean court, pressuring King Kojong to implement a series of progressive reforms without regard for Korean popular wishes. Pro-Chinese officials, mostly from the Min clan, tried to resist these demands. In response, the Japanese executed Queen Min and reinstated Taewŏn'gun in 1895. King Kojong became a prisoner in his own palace, his life hanging on the will of his father and the mercy of the Japanese minister. The queen's loyalists made repeated attempts to save the king, as Korea entered a stage of deep domestic turmoil and political uncertainty.

### *The Growing Russian Influence in the Midst of Turmoil*

Russia was carefully watching Japan's moves in Northeast Asia, because it had its own designs on this region. In 1891, the Russians began constructing the Trans-Siberian Railway to link Moscow and Vladivostok. Russian and Japanese interests in Korea clashed when, in 1895, Crown Prince Nicholas expressed a desire for an ice-free port to the southeast of Korea or on the Liaodong Peninsula.<sup>87</sup> Russia refused to sit idly by while Japan claimed the area due to the gains under the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Joining

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<sup>87</sup> Harrington, *God Mammon and the Japanese*, 283.

with the French and Germans, they advised Japan to return the Liaodong Peninsula to the Chinese.<sup>88</sup>

Unwilling to confront Russia militarily, Japanese leaders swallowed their anger and gave up their claim to the peninsula. Fearing a Russian challenge to their control of Korea, Japan proposed dividing the Korean peninsula into two protectorates along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel.<sup>89</sup> Russia refused this offer, however, because they had eyes on the entire Korean peninsula. They had cut a secret deal with the Manchu government in 1896 for a twenty-five-year lease of the area around Lüshun (Port Arthur), an important ice-free port-city located at the southern tip of the Liaodong Peninsula. The Trans-Siberian Railway was to be linked with the Manchurian Railway, connecting Vladivostok to Lüshun. This arrangement strengthened Russia's position in Northeast Asia. Russian officials calculated that, once they controlled Manchuria, they could easily hold sway over all of Korea.

Russia's first direct challenge to Japanese control of Korea came in late 1896. Japan's domination of the Korean court and its murder of the queen had produced strong anti-Japanese sentiment among the Korean population. King Kojong felt that he could regain control of the country, if he could only escape his gilded cage. He was a prisoner in his own palace and a puppet of his own father. His supporters could not reach him. But there was one exception, one group who had direct access to him: the medical missionaries. Their special status allowed them free access to the palace.

These missionaries had previously demonstrated their concern for the king's safety during the time of the coup against Queen Min. At that time, three American

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<sup>88</sup> Charles A. Fisher, "The Role of Korea in the Far East," *The Geographical Journal* 120 (September 1954): 286.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

missionaries had rushed to the palace to guard the lives of the king and the crown prince, while the king's second son sought refuge in the house of Rev. Horace G. Underwood.<sup>90</sup> Now, with King Kojong fearing that his father might poison him, he would not eat any food other than that prepared by the missionaries or ladies from the European legations.<sup>91</sup>

Then, in February 1896, under arrangement by Dr. Horace Allen, the secretary of the American Legation at that time, King Kojong and the crown prince found their way out of the palace, by disguising themselves as a coolie and a palace woman, and fled to the Russian Legation.<sup>92</sup> For about a year, the king ran the country from the Russian Legation. Dr. Allen was a top advisor. Westerners, especially Americans, received many economic benefits during this critical period of time. Because of his efforts to expand American economic interests in Korea, Allen's diplomatic career also received a boost when, in 1897, the newly-elected President William McKinley appointed Dr. Allen as the United States Minister to Korea.

### *The Independence Club Movement (1896-1898)*

Meanwhile, two American-educated Korean officials, Yun Ch'i-ho and Philip Jaisohn (Sō Chae-pil), who had both converted to Christianity, returned from the United States. They received the king's approval to conduct reforms, which came to be known

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<sup>90</sup> Kim, *Protestants and the Formation of Modern Korean Nationalism, 1885-1920*, 55-56.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. See also Harrington, *God Mammon and the Japanese*, 275-276.

<sup>92</sup> Harrington, *God Mammon and the Japanese*, 288-289.

as the Independence Club Movement (1896-1898).<sup>93</sup> The club organized symbolic projects for promoting Korean independence, such as the building of a great meeting hall, Independence Hall, on the site of the old Chinese embassy, and setting up the Independence Arch at the gate where the Chinese envoys used to be greeted.

The life of this movement was cut short, however, by Philip Jaisohn's lack of political skills. Since the court was still filled with many conservatives, resistance to any radical change remained strong. Jaisohn did not foster friendships or seek understanding among the conservatives. Although his reform programs targeted many of the ills plaguing the nation – an anti-corruption campaign, education reform, transportation improvements, economic development, and the formation of a constitutional monarchy – they also threatened the interests of those in power. Even King Kojong was afraid that Jaisohn's programs would incite a revolution and destroy his imperial reign. Finally, in 1898, King Kojong ordered the club to disband and its members to be arrested.

Although the movement came to an abrupt end and its members were dispersed, the spirit of independence continued both inside and outside of Korea over the next four decades. The club had also played a significant role in arousing anti-Russian sentiment in Seoul. The Russian government at that time did not have a strong urge to annex Korea, in spite of the pressure from expansionists led by Alexis Speyer, the new Russian

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<sup>93</sup> Yun Ch'i-ho (1865-1946) and Philip Jaisohn (1878-1938) were classic examples of Christian officials, who sought to enact reform. Before their conversions, both of them were born into high-ranking *yangban* families and received traditional Confucian training from a young age. Both became pro-Japanese reformers when they were selected and sent to study in Japan by the Korean government in 1882. When the 1885 coup against the Min clan failed, they fled overseas. Both later received an education in the United States with the help of American churches. Both were very successful academically and both became devout Christians. For the case of Philip Jaisohn, see Oh, *Dr. Philip Jaisohn's Reform Movement 1896-1898*, 5-12. For the case of Yun Chi-ho, see Chi-ho Yun, *Yun Chi-ho's letters* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, date of publication unknown).

Minister to Korea in 1897. As soon as the Russians got their ice-free port at Lüshun, they were willing to settle with Japan and recognize Japan's special position in Korea.

In 1898, as anti-Russian sentiment ran high among Koreans due to the Independence Club Movement, Russia voluntarily withdrew from Korea, shut down all their economic activities in Korea and replaced Speyer.<sup>94</sup> Because of Russia's change of policy and the death of Taewŏn'gun, King Kojong finally moved back to his palace and declared himself the Emperor of Chosŏn, a title symbolizing Korean independence.

*The Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5)*

Russia's retreat did not, however, prevent an imminent confrontation with Japan. The Japanese-Russian rivalry over Korea intensified after the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. The Russians took the opportunity to send a huge army to Manchuria. When the Russians refused to withdraw after the crisis ended, the British were alarmed. Japan used this dispute to its advantage, obtaining a secret military alliance with Great Britain in 1902.<sup>95</sup>

Bolstered by this alliance, the Japanese took a tough stance against Russia. They insisted that the Russians leave Manchuria. When Russia refused and instead showed interest in re-entering Korea, Japan resorted to war. In February 1904, Japan launched a surprise attack on Russia's stronghold at Port Arthur. Despite Korea's declaration of neutrality, Japan sent its troops to Korea and imposed an agreement to allow Japan to occupy strategic locations throughout the peninsula during its war against Russia.

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<sup>94</sup> Harrington, *God, Mammon and the Japanese*, 300-301.

<sup>95</sup> While Japan recognized Britain's rights and interests in China, the British acknowledged Japan's special interests in Korea. They agreed to assist each other if either side got involved in war against a third power. See Eckert et al, *Korea Old and New: A History*, 237.

After a year of fighting, Japan had the upper hand against Russia. Westerners, especially President Theodore Roosevelt, were impressed by Japan's power. Roosevelt made a secret deal with the Japanese, known as the Taft-Katsura Agreement in July 1905, acquiescing to Japanese control of Korea in exchange for Japanese acceptance of American control of the Philippines. Roosevelt then stepped into the Russo-Japanese War to mediate a peace settlement, upon the request of Japan. The Treaty of Portsmouth was signed in September, with Russia agreeing to withdraw from Manchuria, to hand over the lease on Port Arthur, and to cede the southern half of Sakhalin Island to Japan.

Nevertheless, Japan's biggest windfall of the war was not the land taken from Russia, but its now-unchallenged supremacy in Korea. With troops all over the country, Japan set up the office of Residency-General in Seoul, taking a crucial step toward the colonization of Korea. In accordance with the Taft-Katsura Agreement, the American government did nothing, even though Emperor Kojong sent several secret emissaries to seek American aid. It was a great disappointment to Minister Allen and some of the American missionaries. Because of his strong protest against America's inaction and pro-Japanese attitude, Dr. Allen was dismissed from his position by President Roosevelt.

### *The Colonization of Korea*

Without any international objections, Japan declared Korea as a protectorate in 1905, after they forced Korea to sign the Protectorate Treaty. In 1907, the Japanese demanded another treaty surrendering all prerogatives on internal affairs to the Japanese Resident-General and disbanding the Korean defense forces. This treaty allowed the Japanese to reorganize the Korean central administration and judicial system. Japanese advisers who had been in the Korean government earlier became assistant ministers in

their respective departments and gradually took over all crucial sectors of the government. There were, for example, more Japanese officials than Koreans in the Departments of Finance, Justice, and Agriculture, Commerce and Industry.<sup>96</sup> Finally, in 1910, Japan formally annexed Korea through the Treaty of Annexation. After 518 years, the Chosŏn Dynasty came to an end. Korea was now a Japanese colony. Japan appointed Terauchi Masatake as the first Governor-General. He ruled Korea with an iron fist from 1910 to 1916.

### *Annexation and the Growth of Korean Nationalism*

Since 1905, Japan's aggression had provoked a strong nationalistic response among Korean nationals. While Japanese troops suppressed all peaceful protests, radicals organized the *Uibyeong* (the Righteous Army) in the countryside. For a time, the demobilization of the Korean army in 1907 added strength to the Korean resistance forces.<sup>97</sup> But the nation had not yet experienced the full extent of Japanese brutality. These unorganized uprisings of the early period were quickly curbed by the better-equipped Japanese police forces. The colonial government was able to pacify some of the unemployed soldiers by incorporating them into the Japanese-controlled police force and gendarmerie.<sup>98</sup> As a result, the number of riots decreased from 1450 in 1908 to 147 in 1910.<sup>99</sup>

Japanese rule revoked many freedoms and rights of the Korean people. Land was systematically extorted from the peasants and handed over to Japanese overlords, who began to stream across the strait, seeking land and jobs. The colonial government banned

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<sup>96</sup> C. I. Eugene Kim, "Japanese Rule in Korea 1905-1910: A Case Study," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 106 (15 February 1962): 54.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-58.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>99</sup> David Brudnoy, "Japan's Experiment in Korea," *Monumenta Nipponica* 25 (1970): 160.

political organizations and the right of assembly, and closed down most Korean newspapers. Yet, it was against the backdrop of such oppressive Japanese rule that Christianity would not only experience astounding growth, but also emerge as a beacon of nationalistic hope.

### *CHRISTIANITY AND KOREA'S STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE*

While some of the American missionaries were deeply troubled by Japan's growing influence in Korea between 1885 and the 1910 annexation, these developments had, in the short term, unforeseen positive repercussions upon the Korean church. Opposition to Japan diverted traditional anti-foreign sentiment away from Christianity. In fact, for many Koreans, Christianity lost its associations with imperialism, and began to be identified with Korean nationalism. This process had begun through the missionaries' educational work. It was reinforced by the missionaries' actions in protecting King Kojong and his crown prince after the death of Queen Min, which earned them the trust of anti-Japanese Koreans and marked them as champions of Korean independence.

As Chong-sik Lee, a leading historian of Korean nationalism, observed, "Japan, through her conquest and rule of Korea, awakened and sustained Korean nationalism. Japan provided the negative and yet most powerful symbol for Korean nationalism, a national enemy."<sup>100</sup> Lee also recognized the influence of Christianity in this process. "A significant number of older-generation leaders," Lee pointed out, "were transformed in their thought pattern and behavior through close contacts with the missionaries. Along

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<sup>100</sup> Chong-sik Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1963), 275.

with Christian ideas the missionaries brought liberal Western thought upon which much of the Korean nationalism was nurtured. The churches produced not only spiritual leaders, but also reformers and educators.”<sup>101</sup> By the time Japan formally annexed Korea, Christianity had emerged as a dynamic ideological, political, social, and religious force that directly challenged Japan’s colonial control of Korea.

### *American Missionaries and Korean Nationalists*

Christian education through mission schools not only improved the literacy level of the young Korean people, but also produced a generation of Korean nationalists who were willing to embrace Western principles and Christian beliefs. Missionaries from America, in particular, were key players in the development of Korean Protestantism. By the time of the Japanese annexation in 1910 there were a total of 207 Protestant missionaries in Korea; 157 of them were Americans. There were also, by that time, more than 1,700 Korean Protestant churches with about 160,000 members, and more than 1,600 mission schools with about 130,000 students.<sup>102</sup>

Those missionaries who were involved in education envisioned their students becoming new leaders to modernize Korea according to Western models.<sup>103</sup> Mission schools became practical training grounds for students to participate in Western-style democracy, through various extra-curricular activities. Students were encouraged to conduct elections in their own organizations and to express themselves freely through

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

<sup>102</sup> There were 47 Catholic missionaries in Korea, but only one was American. Catholics had about 150 churches with 38,000 members. They also operated 73 schools with 778 students. See Takayoshi Matsuo and S. Takiguchi, “The Japanese Protestants in Korea, Part One: The Missionary Activity of the Japan Congregational Church in Korea,” *Modern Asian Studies* 13 (1979): 419.

<sup>103</sup> Davis, “Henry Gerhard Appenzeller: His Contribution to Korean Independence, Democracy, and Modernization,” 225.

group discussions and debates.<sup>104</sup> In this way, teachers in the mission schools led their students to learn about independence, democracy, and modernization, as they advocated American principles, the Christian faith, and the Western way of life.

Rev. Henry Appenzeller, for example, had strong aspirations to transform Korea into an independent Protestant nation under American democratic influence and protection so that it might serve as an outstanding example for other Asian countries to follow.<sup>105</sup> Since Appenzeller was a bold champion of American ideology, according to historian Daniel Davis, who has done extensive research on the life and work of Appenzeller, he “worked to reform Korean society in the image of United States society ... not exactly according to [the] reality of nineteenth century America, but rather, according to the Evangelical Protestant vision for America.”<sup>106</sup> Ella Appenzeller, Henry Appenzeller’s wife, also confirmed that her husband intended to train Korean Christian leaders to have the American Protestant vision of the Korean nation and the idea of Korean independence.<sup>107</sup> His school, *Paejae haktang*, became an important meeting place for Christian reformers, and served as a prolific breeding ground for future Korean political leaders.

Syngman Rhee (1875-1965), the future President of South Korea, for instance, was particularly affected by his interactions with Appenzeller during his years as a student in Paejae. Appenzeller’s ideals found fertile ground in the mind of Rhee. While taking classes in Paejae and at the same time working to pay his tuition and living

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 221.

<sup>105</sup> Daniel M. Davis, “Building a City on a Hill in Korea: The Work of Henry G. Appenzeller,” *Church History* 61 (1992): 422.

<sup>106</sup> Davis, “Henry Gerhard Appenzeller: His Contribution to Korean Independence, Democracy, and Modernization,” 198-199.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 211.

expenses, Rhee also actively participated in the school's Mutual Friendship Society, a debating club for students to express their views on Korean independence. One of his most famous speeches was "The Independence of Korea," which he presented as the valedictorian of his graduating class. Rhee delivered this speech in English before his teachers and his fellow students during the commencement ceremony in June 1897.<sup>108</sup>

Rhee was arrested and imprisoned by the Korean government shortly after his graduation, however, because he demanded the release of political prisoners.<sup>109</sup> While in prison, Rhee converted to Christianity with the help of Rev. James S. Gale, an independent missionary from England. Shortly after his conversion, Rhee began his own prison ministry, leading to the conversion of at least forty other inmates.<sup>110</sup> He also used his time to write editorials for his own daily newspaper, the *Maiyil Sinmun*, which was widely circulated among students, intellectuals, and even the royal family,<sup>111</sup> and later a book, *The Spirit of Independence*, which outlined his programs for Korean independence. There were five major aspects of his political thought at this time.

First, in spite of his *yangban* background, Rhee attacked the corruption of the Korean court and the ignorance of the *yangban* class who enslaved and exploited the commoners for their own political, economic, and social gains. He disliked the pro-Chinese and pro-Russian Korean officials who had frustrated the progressive reformers' various efforts to modernize Korea since 1884.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 218.

<sup>109</sup> Robert T. Oliver, *A History of the Korean People in Modern Times: 1800 to the Present* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1993), 86.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>111</sup> Lady Um, consort of the king and mother of Prince Lee, the second heir to the Korean throne, was Rhee's faithful reader. See Robert T. Oliver, *Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth* (New York: Dodd Mead and Company, 1954), 54, 59-60.

<sup>112</sup> Syngman Rhee, *The Spirit of Independence: A Primer of Korean Modernization and Reform* translated by Han-kyo Kim (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 8.

Second, Korean people needed to reform themselves, Rhee argued, and unite together to save the nation, which he portrayed as a sinking boat in the midst of a hurricane.<sup>113</sup> Education, Rhee believed, was the key means to transform the nation. His exaggerated descriptions of the political merits and economic prosperity of the United States revealed his deep admiration of the country as a virtual paradise on earth.<sup>114</sup> It is not surprising that he was unequivocal in his desire to learn from America and hoped to adopt American values and principles, though not unselectively, into the new Korean nation.<sup>115</sup>

Third, Rhee understood that Korean independence did not mean isolation.<sup>116</sup> Korea needed friends, but not all its Asian neighbors were trustworthy. His deep distrust of Russian intentions was revealed through his descriptions of the aggressive behavior of czarist Russia since the days of Peter the Great. His book's portrayal of the barbaric misbehavior of Russian soldiers in Manchuria and northern Korea highlighted his view concerning Russia's presence in Korea.<sup>117</sup> Concerning Japan, another neighbor of Korea, Rhee admired Japan's successful modernization efforts and the hardworking spirit of the Japanese people, but voiced his worries about the intentions of its leaders.<sup>118</sup> Among all the Western powers, the British model of constitutional monarchy, Rhee suggested, would be best suited to Korea.<sup>119</sup> Nonetheless, it was American principles and values that would benefit the Korean people in the long run. A close friendship with the American people, in Rhee's mind, was deeply desirable. Somehow this pro-American

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 32-33.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 54-58, 253-255.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 9.

attitude was shaped by what he personally witnessed and experienced -- the benevolent work of foreign missionaries in Korea.<sup>120</sup>

Fourth, Rhee strongly believed in the usefulness of diplomacy. “Because a solitary nation is vulnerable to a sudden assault by a strong power,” he explained, “many nations unite to form a community and maintain mutual relations so that no one may exploit another’s weakness and commit an unlawful act.”<sup>121</sup> In particular, Rhee thought that obtaining political support from the United States would greatly facilitate the cause of Korean independence.<sup>122</sup> Therefore, it was not surprising to later find Rhee working tirelessly for three decades in Washington, despite the fruitlessness of his efforts, lobbying American leaders to support the cause of Korean independence.

Fifth and finally, Rhee unabashedly declared his Christian faith, and expressed his deep conviction that a Christian foundation for a new Korea was necessary in order to bring forth any successful political, economic, and social reform. His final words for his people in the book were:

As our nation struggles to rise up from its fall and new buds try to sprout from decayed morass, unless we base ourselves on this religion, we may not reap true benefits even from our contacts with the [outside] world. Even hard work in the new learning may not be effective. Even with an emphasis on diplomacy, deep friendship may not develop. Even an emphasis on [preserving] the nation’s sovereignty may not help in attaining a status of equality. Even a respect for moral obligations may not lead to constancy [in behavior]. Even a desire to uphold the right of freedom may suffer from ignorance of its bounds. *We must adopt this religion as the basis for everything.* Everyone must forget about themselves and work for the benefit of others. We must do our best in supporting the nation to achieve the same level of civilization as that of Great Britain and the United States. Let us then meet again in the Kingdom of Heaven.<sup>123</sup> (Italics added)

Such a deep religious testimony from his own words should not be ignored in analyzing Rhee’s political position, domestic policies, and diplomatic tactics in the post-liberation

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 257-258.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 265.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 282-283.

era, especially when Rhee rose to become the top political figure in Korea, having the means to act upon his convictions.<sup>124</sup>

In 1904, Rhee was pardoned by the king and released from prison. Then, on the eve of becoming a protectorate of Japan, King Kojong sent Rhee on a secret mission to the United States to plead for American aid to support Korea's independence by invoking the "good offices" clause in the Amity Treaty between the United States and Korea.<sup>125</sup> At the age of 29, with no official status and no money, Rhee sailed to the United States with the hope of saving his country from Japan. His journey was mainly funded by individual American missionaries, church ministers, Korean Christians, and American Christians, whom he met along his route to Washington.<sup>126</sup>

With the help of Senator Hugh A. Dinsmore from Arkansas, who had served a term as American minister in Seoul, Rhee was able to meet with the Secretary of State, John Hay. After hearing Rhee's appeal, Hay promised to do everything he could to fulfill US treaty obligations, but the effort was to prove fruitless because Hay died shortly afterwards.<sup>127</sup> Rhee was later betrayed by Kim Yun-jōng (Kim Yun Jung), who was a Japanese spy in the Korean Legation in Washington. Eventually, Rhee's efforts failed

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<sup>124</sup> Syngman Rhee (1875-1965) is the most controversial figure in Korean modern history. Even when he was alive, there were individuals, both Koreans and Americans alike, who loved him and were willing to assist him whole-heartedly, and at the same time, there were people who hated him and wanted him out of the political scene. He was such a stubborn and divisive figure that he caused much debate even years after his death. Research works from both sides were biased by several factors. People who worked with him and wrote for him, such as Henry Chung, Robert Oliver, and Louise Yim, might be affected by the factors of human loyalty and personal passions. Westerners and foreign researchers who observed him from a distance were crippled by certain degrees of blindness due to religious differences, cultural misunderstandings, or even language and generation gaps. To cite his book *The Spirit of Independence* as an example, it was written in such an old form of the Korean language that even contemporary Korean native readers have difficulties in understanding his writing, not to mention those foreign researchers who possessed limited linguistic skills. Very few had actually read his book, but yet they passed judgment on Rhee as "experts." Korean writers might be burdened by their ideological differences, political grievances, and personal memories so that their analyses were also not free from bias.

<sup>125</sup> Oliver, *Syngman Rhee*, 75.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 76-80.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 81-83.

when the Secretary of War, William Howard Taft, who had met with Rhee cordially prior to his mission to Japan, concluded a secret agreement with Japan that sealed Korea's fate. When Japan finally annexed Korea, Rhee became a political exile in Washington. Without a country of his own, Rhee went on to get Master's and Ph.D. degrees in International Relations, with the help of the American and Korean churches.

An Ch'ang-ho (1878-1938), like Rhee, was another student who was influenced by Appenzeller's teaching while studying in Paejae and then went on to become a famous nationalist leader at home and abroad during the colonial period. In 1899, after the end of the Independence Club Movement, he returned to his hometown of P'yŏngyang and established the first Korean-owned modern co-educational private school, Cheomjin School (Gradual Progress School). An Ch'ang-ho believed that the new generation of Koreans needed to be ready for leadership before Korea could obtain complete independence.<sup>128</sup> The name of the school reflected his political philosophy of evolutionary social change through effective education.

In 1902, An Ch'ang-ho immigrated to the United States with his wife Lee Hae-ryon (Helen An) and became an influential nationalist leader among Korean immigrants in California. While working as a farm worker in a California orchard, he initiated a social reform movement in San Francisco to guide Koreans to form a respectable community within the United States. When he returned to Korea in 1907, he established a nationalist organization, *Sinminhoe* (the New People's Association), whose members were mostly Protestant Christians from northwest Korea. Their goal was to bring forth a new generation of Korean patriots through effective education.

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<sup>128</sup> Oliver, *A History of the Korean People in Modern Times*, 127.

The main rationale behind An Ch'ang-ho's eagerness in building up Korea through education was, in fact, rooted in his religious faith. Like Rhee, An had also converted to Christianity and he became a Presbyterian.<sup>129</sup> He believed that personal regeneration was the foundation of national renewal. "Christ told the Jews," An Changho explained in his newspaper, *Kongnip Sinmun* (Independence News), in 1907, "that it was because they were full of evil deeds and devoid of all goodness that God took their rights from them and handed them over to others, and this surely applies to Korea today."<sup>130</sup> From his Christian viewpoint, since the Korean people were not good enough, they needed to be changed. An Ch'ang-ho envisioned that the best method was through nationwide Christian education to achieve individual transformation. His ideal of national revival through personal improvement and reform was a combination of utilitarianism and Protestant piety that was popular among Western thinkers in the late nineteenth century.<sup>131</sup>

An Ch'ang-ho was both a writer and an eloquent speaker who attracted many listeners and enthusiastic supporters.<sup>132</sup> Throughout his sixty years of life he gave countless speeches and his travels took him all over Manchuria, Japan, China, and America. He established many organizations to propagate his political philosophy and

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<sup>129</sup> The P'yŏngyang Presbyterian Church was very influential throughout the imperial and colonial period. The rapid growth of the Protestant church in Korea was closely related to the successful evangelical work in P'yŏngyang. See Roy E. Shearer, "The Evangelical Missionary's Role in Church Growth in Korea," *International Review of Missions* 54 (1965): 465.

<sup>130</sup> Quote in Kenneth M. Wells, *New God, New Nation: Protestants and Self-Reconstruction Nationalism in Korea 1896-1937* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 41.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>132</sup> In Kim Il-sung's memoir, Kim described how excited he and his friends were when they heard that An Ch'ang-ho was in town to give a speech. Kim was a middle school student in Manchuria at that time. See Kim Il-sung, *With the Century*, Vol.1, 112. The first two volumes of *With the Century* were published by Pyongyang's Foreign Languages Publishing House in 1992. Volumes 3 and 4 came out in 1993, volume 5 in 1994 and volume 6 in 1995. Altogether, these six volumes of Kim's autobiography gave details information from his birth in 1912 to the late 1930s, when Kim became a guerrilla fighter in Manchuria. Lee Wha Rang made the English version available on the web.

acquire followers. In addition to *Sinminhoe*, he also established *He Ŭngsadan* (Society for Fostering Activists), which was an influential Christian political group that built its base in P'yŏngyang and enjoyed a wide following in the U.S., China, Manchuria, and Korea.<sup>133</sup> His associates, such as Yi Tong-hwi, Yi Kap, and Yang Ki-tak, were mostly Christians and/or educators. His political ideas even influenced non-Christian intellectuals, such as Yi Kwang-su, a famous nationalist writer, and Kim Sŏng-su, a well-known educator, both of whom patiently advocated and defended the ideas of cultural nationalism.

The beliefs of Syngman Rhee and An Ch'ang-ho had a deep influence on Korean nationalism. These two friends and political-rivals-to-be led two major forms of resistance that colored the cause of Korean independence. Both Rhee and An believed in the importance of education, but the main difference between them was that Rhee focused his effort on obtaining diplomatic recognition in Washington, while An did not think that anyone could "grant" independence to Korea unless Korea was herself ready for it. Since Korea was not ready for self government in the eyes of many Westerners at that time, he thought it would be more beneficial to encourage gradual change through education and industrial advancements.<sup>134</sup> According to reports by Japanese spies in Korea, An Ch'ang-ho had told his audience, "If we believe in Christianity then we have no real enemy under Heaven.... The nation's independence is up to you citizens, not the protection of foreign peoples. God alone can be called our Protector."<sup>135</sup> His teaching was open to two interpretations. Either the Koreans must equip themselves and become

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<sup>133</sup> See Wells, *New God, New Nation*, 129 and Oliver, *A History of the Korean People in Modern Times*, 127.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>135</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 66.

better than the Japanese (which did not exclude the idea of positive and beneficial collaboration), or they might have faith in the Christian God and through self-improvement achieve national salvation and eventual independence. Later when Korea was liberated, An's followers, some of them labeled as collaborators, would continue to be important players in the ideological competition between the various factions of Korean politics.

The experiences of Syngman Rhee and An Ch'ang-ho, together with other famous nationalists and Christian educator, including Kim Kyu-sik, Cho Man-sik, Kil Sŏn-ju, Yun Ch'i-ho, Yim Yŏng-sin (Louise Im), and Kim Hwal-lan (Helen Kim), reveal the crucial role of Christianity in confronting the rapid political, social, and cultural transformation of Korea. Japan's intensified aggression in Korea gave rise to a new sense of Korean identity and a new urgency for both personal and national salvation.

Because Korea was not colonized by a Western country, Korean nationalism never took on the anti-Western flavor found in other Asian countries. And just as mission schools provided a temporary safe haven for the growth of nationalism among young Koreans, Christian churches served as a convenient arena for preaching the message of national deliverance and as a secret meeting place for anti-Japanese nationalists. The growth of Korean Christian churches was tied closely to discontent with the process of colonization, and it paved the way for Christians to lead the way in planning and implementing the historic March First Independence Movement of 1919.

### ***The Rapid Growth of Korean Protestant Churches***

Compared to other Asian countries which enjoyed higher numbers of American missionaries and more funding (see Table 1.1 for the case of the Methodist Church),

missionary work in Korea was generally regarded as a great success in spite of its lack of resources.<sup>136</sup> For example, in 1898 there were only about five thousand overall Korean Protestant converts on the peninsula, a mere fraction of the forty-one thousand in Japan. Ten years later in 1907, however, the number of Christians in Korea had reached forty-one thousand, while Japan had increased by less than ten thousand. The Korean Church had experienced a 720 percent growth rate, while Japan (with far more missionaries and American church funding) experienced only a 22 percent increase (see Table 1.2).

Data provided by Rev. Horace G. Underwood concerning the conditions of all the Christian churches in the critical years of 1905 and 1907, highlights the correlation between political distress and church growth. Japan began colonizing Korea in 1905. In just the next two years, the number of Korean Christian churches doubled to about 642. More Koreans showed their interest in Christianity than ever, especially during the time when the survival of their nation was threatened by the Japanese (see Table 1.3). The Methodist Mission was also growing at a rapid rate, despite the fact that Korea had fewer foreign missionaries and resources than in Japan (see Table 1.4).

It is important to note that the 41,000 Korean Christians in 1907 were not spread thinly across the country, but were highly concentrated within certain key cities (particularly P'yŏngyang) and within certain key demographics (young, educated leaders). The proportion of Christian population against the overall population in certain provinces was much higher than one might expect. For instance, considering the distribution of Korean Presbyterian churches in 1910 alone, the two northern provinces, P'yŏngan Province and Hwanghae Province, where the population density was lower

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<sup>136</sup> According to the data in the *Missionary Review of the World*, Korea had only 0.9 percent of the total number of American missionaries in 1900. See Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry*, 5.

than the southern provinces (see Map 3), had the highest concentration of Christian churches. This area contained roughly 53 percent of all the Presbyterian churches in Korea. Whereas the southern part of the peninsula, Kyōngsang Province where the city of Taegu was located, had the second largest number of churches, double the number found in Kyōnggi province, where Seoul was located (See Table 1.5).

By considering the city of P'yōngyang as a case for further elaboration, the concentration of church influence becomes more apparent. P'yōngyang was the ancient capital of the Koguryō Kingdom. For geographical reasons, it was economically and politically connected to Manchuria. The people used to be very hostile to foreigners before 1895.<sup>137</sup> Due to the destruction caused by the Sino-Japanese War in 1894-5, however, the survivors became more receptive to foreign missionaries.<sup>138</sup> As a result, the church grew from about 80 Christian converts in 1896 to about 14,000 church attendants in 1906. Given that the P'yōngyang population in that year was around 42,000, it means that a third of the total population in P'yōngyang city attended worship services on Sunday.<sup>139</sup>

In another case, church workers in Chōngju, a city with a population of about 20,000 in North P'yōngan province, boasted that they had as many church attendants as P'yōngyang.<sup>140</sup> Although the actual data presented by the Korean churches might be hard to verify, the point was clear: Christian influence on the local level, especially in the

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<sup>137</sup> In 1893, the Presbyterian missionaries "succeeded in buying a house, but when they attempted to occupy it, the authorities [sic] drove them out and threw some of the native Christians into prison." For details see "Soldier of the Cross in Korea," Presbyterian Church Archive, Record Group 360, Folder: Samuel A. Moffett – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>138</sup> Alan Carter Covell, "Korean Conversion to Christianity," *Asian & Pacific Quarterly of Cultural and Social Affairs* 19 (1987): 32-33.

<sup>139</sup> See Wanne J. Joe, *A Cultural History of Modern Korea: A History of Korean Civilization* (Elizabeth, NJ & Seoul: Hollym, 2000), 538.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

northern provinces, was much higher than one might expect. Thus, it was reasonable for the Presbyterian Foreign Mission Board Secretary Robert Speer to describe the situation by saying, “In the north, the church has spread and penetrated as we saw nothing to surpass anywhere else in the world. The churches are crowded: the opportunities are unlimited.”<sup>141</sup>

Even though the Japanese colonial government tried to curb the growth of the Korean churches after Japan’s annexation of Korea in 1910, Christian churches in the northern provinces continued to grow. In general, the further away from Seoul, the political center, the stronger was the influence of the Christian church. While Seoul served as the political capital of Korea, P’yŏngyang was growing as the Christian capital of Korea.<sup>142</sup> By 1934, there were twenty-five Presbyterian churches and eight Methodist churches in the city of P’yŏngyang and its suburbs, and 1,000 Presbyterian churches, with over 100,000 Christians, in the northwestern district alone.<sup>143</sup> According to church statistics, the estimated total membership of Korean churches was about 420,000 communicants just prior to the outbreak of World War II.<sup>144</sup> The Japanese government’s own figures closely match these numbers (see Table 1.6).<sup>145</sup> Three northwestern provinces, South P’yŏngan, North P’yŏngan, and Hwanghae (see Map 2) contained about a quarter of the overall Christian population.

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<sup>141</sup> Quoted by Martha Huntley, *Caring, Growing, Changing* (New York: Friendship Press, 1984), 121.

<sup>142</sup> A Japanese scholar in 1907 said that P’yŏngyang was the “hotbed” of Christianity and estimated that at least half of its population was Christian (somehow exaggerated). See Wells, *New God, New Nation*, 65.

<sup>143</sup> The Methodist data is not available. For the Presbyterian data, see William N. Blair, “Samuel A. Moffett: On His Seventieth Birthday,” *The Presbyterian* (1934): 6, cutting found in Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 360, Folder: Samuel A. Moffett – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>144</sup> “Samuel Austin Moffett, D.D.” Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 360, Folder: Samuel A. Moffett – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>145</sup> The Japanese figure should be more accurate because it was a comprehensive census done by the colonial government.

It is important to note that the listed membership in the church only included those who were baptized and had their names recorded as full members of the church. It usually did not include probationers and seekers, even if they attended church regularly. Such people were also influenced by the church or they might use the church as a convenient place for their own political or social purposes. It would certainly be hard for any fast growing church to discipline their members when the church workers already had their hands full. In addition, the data for church membership only listed adults, whereas the census data for the Korean population listed children as well. Therefore, if the children being raised under Christian parents were properly included, the proportion of Christians in the population would become much higher. If the students of the mission schools were also included, the number of people who were connected to the Christian church, would be higher still, especially in certain areas where mission schools and private schools run by Christian leaders were particularly popular (see Table 1.7).

### *Reasons for the Rapid Growth*

Why did the Korean church grow at such a fast rate? The above data suggest two possible reasons, aside from spiritual explanations. For one, the growth might, paradoxically, be the result of a lack of missionary personnel and a shortage of mission funds. When the Presbyterian missionaries saw that their home boards were slow to respond to their requests for more workers and funding, they began to adopt a new method of encouraging the Korean Christians to be self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing.<sup>146</sup> Native Christians were given more responsibilities and opportunities

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<sup>146</sup> It was known as the Nevius Method, designed by Dr. John L. Nevius (1829-1893) of Shandong, China. This method was popular neither in China nor in Japan, but flourished in Korea after Dr. Nevius visited Seoul in 1890. It was a practical means for the struggling Korean church to grow by depending on native methods.

to lead and partake in the evangelical work. The positive effect, however, was quite unexpected. As Rev. Archibald Campbell, a Presbyterian missionary who labored in Korea during the Japanese colonial period and later during the Korean War, observed:

The million that have come to the Saviour [sic] and received Him into the hearts have not been won by foreign missionaries. Only a few of them [sic]. Nearly all have heard the good news from the lips of their own countrymen. The story goes from mouth to ear and from heart to heart.<sup>147</sup>

In this way, there was little direct social or cultural conflict between the foreign missionaries and the unconverted populace. It might be noted that the Methodists initially sent a comparable number of missionaries to Korea as the Presbyterians did, but they did not adopt the self-propagating model, and they did not experience the same degree of growth.

Moreover, the self-propagating method also preserved the self-determination of church leadership, allowing individual leaders to be active in the independence movement against Japanese colonization. In analyzing Protestant work in Korea, Rev. Allen D. Clark, the assistant commission representative for the United Presbyterian Mission, wrote in 1962:

The idea that these Korean churches are controlled or financed from abroad is quite incorrect. No foreign missionary has been moderator of the Korean Presbyterian Church for almost 50 years, and the same is true of other Christian bodies. This is a Korean church at work in its own communities.<sup>148</sup>

Rev. Clark's idea was also strongly supported by Professor David Chung, President of Kōn'guk (Keun-kuk) University. Professor Chung argued that "the Korean Christian, not foreign missionary and institute, played a leading role in founding the Christian Church in the modern history of Korea."<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Archibald Campbell, *The Christ of the Korean Heart* (Columbus, OH: Falco Publishers, 1954), 12.

<sup>148</sup> Allen D. Clark, "Protestant Work in Korea," *Korea Journal* 2 (1962): 9.

<sup>149</sup> David Chung, "Christianity in Modern Korea," *Koreana Quarterly* 5 (1963): 138.

A second reason for the success of mission work was probably political. The most exceptional growth happened during the years of 1905 to 1907, when Korea was losing its national independence as a Japanese protectorate. In the case of China and India, the loss of independence had driven native people to be more anti-foreign and violently opposed to missionaries; but this was not the case in Korea. Not only was mass violence against foreigners rare, but the people were also rather tolerant of the presence of Westerners.<sup>150</sup> This was because Koreans perceived Japan as their chief enemy, not the United States or other Western countries.

According to diplomatic historian Jongsuk Chay, ever since the first establishment of relations, Koreans generally held a favorable view of Americans.<sup>151</sup> Together with American diplomats and businessmen, missionaries contributed to the building of this good image.<sup>152</sup> In 1898, there were a total of 118 Westerners residing in Seoul, about thirty-five of whom were missionaries (see Table 1.8).<sup>153</sup> These missionaries were active in the Korean community. They traveled from the cities to the countryside, appearing in villages to preach, teach, hand out leaflets, or sell books. Some women from the *yangban* class were invited to the homes of the missionaries and socialized with them.<sup>154</sup> These informal, but personal, contacts were very important to maintaining the influence of the growing church.

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<sup>150</sup> There were individual attacks against certain missionaries, but the people in general were quite respectful to foreign missionaries. No missionary, except Ethel Underwood in 1949, lost his or her life in Korea due to any violent attack. Underwood was killed by two gunmen. They were not actually looking for her, but for one of her female guests.

<sup>151</sup> Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry*, 14.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> Samuel H. Moffett, "The Westerner," in *First Encounters: Korea 1880-1910* ed. Peter A. Underwood (Seoul: Dragon's Eye Graphics, 1982), 36.

<sup>154</sup> Donald N. Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience 1900-1950* (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2003), 20-26. See also Martha Huntley, "Presbyterian Women's Work and Rights in the Korean Mission," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 65 (Spring 1987): 37-48.

When the United States refused to come to the aid of Korea after Japan declared it a protectorate in 1905, the image of America among Koreans was likely tarnished. Nevertheless, instead of losing members, church attendance actually grew steadily. There were four basic reasons why.

First, turning to embrace the Christian faith was itself a revolutionary act against the traditional imperial corruption and a rejection of Japanese colonial rule. Progressive reformers, both in China and in Korea, generally agreed that Confucianism was a source of weakness and decay. In both countries, alienated, young, educated elites, and commoners alike began to rise up against the old Confucian system and the corrupt imperial courts. In the case of Korea, since the Christian churches insisted that each new member make a clear break with the past, including activities such as ancestor worship, concubinage, drinking, smoking, and gambling,<sup>155</sup> the church provided a sense of spiritual renewal and moral strengthening for some frustrated young Korean elites. What made the church even more attractive was the strong anti-Japanese sentiment within the church and among church members. For instance, as colonial exploitation intensified in 1905 and Japan prepared the formal signing of the humiliating treaty for the protectorate, native leaders in the Presbyterian Church demanded that each church in the country protest against the treaty by holding meetings for seven days after Thanksgiving Day. When the treaty was signed in 1906, prayer services for the nation spread all across the country.<sup>156</sup>

Second, while the Protectorate Treaty of 1905 did cause grievance, dissatisfaction, and mistrust between the Korean converts and foreign missionaries,

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<sup>155</sup> Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 120.

<sup>156</sup> Kim, *Protestants and the Formation of Modern Korean Nationalism, 1885-1920*, 36-37.

things began to change when the missionaries from different denominations decided to unite with the churches in prayer. Their efforts sparked a wave of revival meetings that gave birth to the Great Revival of 1907. This revival began in an annual Bible-study meeting at a Presbyterian church in P'yŏngyang. It soon spread to other cities and provinces and from one denomination to another. Since the revival was an unprecedented nationwide experience without any human planning or control, church leaders regarded it as an act of the Holy Spirit to make the Korean church born again.<sup>157</sup> One practical result of the Great Revival was that individual Christians who had experienced the revival turned to focus on spiritual growth and repented of their angry feelings towards the missionaries.<sup>158</sup> In this way, the Korean churches maintained peaceful co-operation with foreign missionaries and preserved unity.

Third, the churches also served as a source of comfort, inspiration, unity, and even a secret meeting place for the struggle of independence. Ch'oe Myŏng-sik, a reform activist in the late Chosŏn period, explained the importance of the Christian church in Korean social life:

There was in the Anak district only one primary school managed by the Anak Church if one is to name an organization representing the new cultural movement.... Christian churches were in fact the only places where Koreans would come into contact with new Western culture, and thus where people could readily assemble for meetings.<sup>159</sup>

Shortly after Korea became a Japanese protectorate, Korean Christians organized a nationalist movement called either the "Movement for the Return of National Sovereignty" or the "Movement for Encouraging Patriotism." It aimed at awakening Korean people's political consciousness because they believed that a successful

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<sup>157</sup> See Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, 154-168.

<sup>158</sup> See Huntley, *Caring, Growing, Changing*, 130-150.

<sup>159</sup> Quoted in Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 122.

independence movement needed the support of the masses.<sup>160</sup> Taking advantage of the churches, Korean nationalists began to gather in churches to plot anti-Japanese activities.

Even Kim Il-sung, the Communist-leader-to-be in post-liberation North Korea, recognized the importance of church life in the cause of Korean independence during the colonial era. His biography asserted the importance of church activities in his early life. His maternal grandfather, Kang Ton-uk, was an elder in a P'yöngyang Presbyterian church in Taedong County<sup>161</sup> and a principal of Ch'angduk Elementary School.<sup>162</sup> Kim's father, Kim Hyöng-jik, was a student from Soongsil (Sungsil) College in P'yöngyang.<sup>163</sup> When his parents moved to Manchuria to escape Japanese persecution, they all went to church faithfully each Sunday. For Kim's father, Popyong Church was his favorite place to meet his nationalist comrades.<sup>164</sup> For his mother, it was a place to rest from her toils at home.<sup>165</sup> For Kim Il-sung himself, even though he was not a believer, it was a place he found inspiration, friendship, and support from Rev. Son Chöng-do (Son Jung Doh or Sohn Jong-do), the pastor of a Korean church in Jirin, where Kim attended middle school from 1925 to 1927.<sup>166</sup>

Regardless of whether Kim's ideas concerning his parents' faith were right or not, his account revealed the importance of the Christian church for the underground anti-Japanese activities and for the cause of Korean independence. Local churches turned out

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<sup>160</sup> Takayoshi Matsuo and S. Takiguchi, "The Japanese Protestants in Korea, Part One: The Missionary Activity of the Japan Congregational Church in Korea," *Modern Asian Studies* 13 (1979): 420.

<sup>161</sup> Yong-ho Choe, "Christian Background in the Early Life of Kim Il-sung," *Asian Survey* 26 (October 1986): 1087.

<sup>162</sup> Kim Il-sung, *With the Century*, Vol.1, 52-53. Kim wrote that the school was a relatively famous private school. The size of the school was about 200 students, which was not a small school at all in those days.

<sup>163</sup> Soongsil College was a famous Christian technical college in P'yöngyang. It followed the ideal of Protestant self-reconstruction nationalism. Many political activists were graduates from Soongsil. The admission was strictly limited to Christians and all students were required to attend Bible study lessons. See Choe, "Christian Background of the Early Life of Kim Il-sung," 1086.

<sup>164</sup> Kim Il-sung, *With the Century*, Vol.1, 45.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 190-191.

to be convenient places for disillusioned Koreans to gather and to find a sense of mission and direction during the darkest hours of their nation's history.<sup>167</sup> It was an ideal location and network for anti-Japanese underground activities. Wherever Koreans lived, from Japanese controlled Korea, to Manchuria, to mainland China, to Russia, or to the United States, the Christian population became a major group in supporting and sustaining a long and painful struggle for regaining Korean independence.<sup>168</sup>

Before the coming of any mass movement, individual Christians had already risen up as anti-Japanese fighters. For example, Chŏn Myŏng-un and Chang In-hwan, who were members of the Methodist Church, assassinated the pro-Japanese Durham White Stevens, a foreign advisor to Marquis Itō Hirobumi, in Los Angeles in 1908, and a year later in Harbin, An Chung-gŭn (a Catholic) and Uh Yon-joon (a Protestant) assassinated Prince Itō, the architect of Meiji modernization and the Japanese colonization of Korea.<sup>169</sup> Although such violent acts were praised by the general public and brought excitement to the cause of independence, Christian nationalist leaders understood that it was not an effective way to fight colonialism in the long run and it was also not consistent with Christianity. Instead, they hoped to achieve independence through peaceful means.

The most famous pastor to advocate non-violence was Rev. Kil Sŏn-ju (Sun Chu Kil) from the P'yŏngyang Presbyterian church, who later became one of the thirty-three signers of the Korean Declaration of Independence in March 1919.<sup>170</sup> His theology was a kind of messianic nationalism, believing that the church and individual Christians were

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<sup>167</sup> Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 121.

<sup>168</sup> For more information see Wi Jo Kang, *Christ and Caesar in Modern Korea: A History of Christianity and Politics* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), 37.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-42.

<sup>170</sup> Kim, *Protestants and the Formation of Modern Korean Nationalism*, 109.

an “extraordinary group” that came to save the nation from its misery and sufferings. The only way for the Korean people to recover their independence, Kil argued, was for the entire country to be evangelized.<sup>171</sup> He often used the old stories of the Exodus and the history of the Israelite nation, also surrounded as it was by stronger neighbors, as examples to show the Korean people that God would also deliver them. Because he believed in God’s will and the importance of spiritual reconstruction instead of the violent restoration of Korean rights, he laid out the important blueprints of the Christian principle of non-violent resistance in the struggle for regaining Korean independence.

In this way, Kil skillfully impressed upon his Korean audience that the Christian faith belonged to their race and nation. Christianity, therefore, could no longer be described only as a Western religion.<sup>172</sup> His preaching was so popular among Korean Christians during the colonial period that it was widely known as the “Chōsen theology.”<sup>173</sup> As a result, people were naturally attracted to Christian teachings because they found the gospel message directly connected to their national experiences as well as their desires for national deliverance and freedom.<sup>174</sup> Beginning in 1907, many of the disillusioned -- those who had taken part in the Tonghak Movement (1894), members of the Independence Club, failed reformists, and former soldiers -- all joined the church with the hope of doing something for the country.<sup>175</sup> The churches, as a result, became “centers for the nationalist movement and [the] salvation of the nation.”<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 112-113.

<sup>172</sup> Wells, *New God, New Nation*, 37.

<sup>173</sup> Kim, *Protestants and the Formation of Modern Korean Nationalism*, 123.

<sup>174</sup> Kyong Bae Min, “On the Question of Understanding Korean Churches,” *The Northeast Asia Journal of Theology* 24-25 (1980): 123.

<sup>175</sup> Kim, *Protestants and the Formation of Modern Korean Nationalism, 1885-1920*, 129.

<sup>176</sup> Min, “On the Question of Understanding Korean Churches,” 126.

Fourth, Japan's harsh policies against Christian churches in Korea also helped identify Christianity with the Korean cause and contributed in large measure to the Korean independence movement. Since Korean leaders had taken up leadership roles in most local churches, the nationalistic tone of their preaching irritated the Japanese government.<sup>177</sup> In addition, the church's foreign connections through the missionaries, especially with the United States, worried Japanese officials. On top of all of this, the organizational structure of the Korean church, for example its national conferences,<sup>178</sup> and its history of effective interdenominational cooperation,<sup>179</sup> was also regarded as a potential threat to the colonial authoritarian control because it could harbor anti-Japanese individuals and serve as an underground network for anti-Japanese activities. The Japanese Governor-General Terauchi Masatake, who had escaped a Korean assassination attempt in 1911, told his Japanese audience in Tokyo on December 1913, "The Christian Church is the most powerful force in Chosen. Therefore [we] must keep special watch on the Christians there."<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Missionaries generally recognized the negative implication of this trend and tried to cope with it by directing the church to be less politicized. Their effort was successful in keeping the church in line, but less effective in controlling individual Christians and their personal convictions. See Yang, *Reformed Social Ethics and the Korean Church*, 112-115.

<sup>178</sup> Both Methodists and Presbyterians had their own national conferences. Missionaries and Korean Pastors met together annually (some even more often) to discuss church business. In the case of the Presbyterian Church which controlled more than 80% of the Korean Christian churches, it had several major local presbyteries that allowed individual churches to gather on a regional level. It was hard for any authoritarian government to tolerate organizations that were not under its direct control. The colonial government's fear of the potential threat of the Christian church was also the same fear that the Communists had in 1945.

<sup>179</sup> Since the beginning of missionary work in Korea, foreign missionaries, regardless of denominations, had succeeded in working together. Different Presbyterian missions (North USA, South USA, Canadian, and Australian) agreed to unify their effort to build one Korean Presbyterian Church. The Methodist missions did the same. In addition, both Presbyterians and Methodists agreed to divide among them provinces and areas so that there would be no overlapping of work and thereby avoid unhealthy competition. (See Map 1).

<sup>180</sup> *Sinhan Minbo*, 26 February 1914. Quoted by Wells, *New God, New Nation*, 77.

Consequently, the Japanese government devised many ways to weaken the effectiveness of the Korean church. It imposed new laws to limit the curriculums of the mission schools, and forbidding religious classes to be taught. It also required the presence of police at all formal church meetings. When the Christian community continued to expand, the Japanese government used the attempted assassination of Governor-General Terauchi as an excuse to arrest many Christian leaders, including Yun Ch'i-ho, a founding member of the Seoul YMCA, and Kim Ku (also known as Kim Chang-am), an educator and an active member in *Sinman-hoe*.<sup>181</sup> It was the beginning of what later became known as the Conspiracy Case of 1911-1913.<sup>182</sup> Even American missionaries were dragged into the trial. In the end, 157 individuals stood trial; among them only 22 were not Christians. A total of 105 were convicted, including Yun Ch'i-ho, who was accused of masterminding the conspiracy.<sup>183</sup> Missionaries, Korean Christians, Japanese lawyers, and even Japanese residents and police agreed that it was not a fair trial, but rather a Japanese effort to threaten the Christian population and to destroy the life of the church.<sup>184</sup> Nevertheless, this effort failed to weaken the church. Instead, it advanced the Christian cause by bolstering the common belief that, "To the Japanese, the most worrisome element is the Christians. To the Koreans, the most hopeful thing is the expansion of the Christian Church."<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Oliver, *A History of the Korean People in Modern Times*, 127-128.

<sup>182</sup> In Sonchon, a provincial center in North P'yongan province, where over half of its 8000 residents were Christians, more than eighty people, including five pastors and students and teachers of the Christian Boy's Academy were arrested. More Christians were arrested in P'yongyang, Seoul, and other cities where Christians were influential.

<sup>183</sup> Yun Ch'i-ho was singled out not because he was guilty, but because he refused to serve in the colonial government. See, Wells, *New God, New Nation*, 76-76, 78.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>185</sup> It was from an article written by Cho Tungnin, "Han'guk hyonshi chonghwang," *Sinhan Minbo* 16 September 1915. Quoted by Wells, *New God, New Nation*, 77.

*Japanese Colonial Rule and Korean Discontent*

From 1910 to 1919, Japan's harsh rule incited deep discontent among Koreans. Nationalistic, anti-Japanese sentiment spread from the educated elite to the general public who all shared in the bitter experience of Japanese repressive control and the growing scale of systematic economic and social exploitations. The Japanese residents in Korea enjoyed more rights and privileges than the native Koreans, received higher pay in their salaries, enrolled in better schools, lived in bigger houses, and owned larger pieces of land. By 1914, 76 percent of the Korean farm population had become tenant farmers.<sup>186</sup> When the Korean people realized that they had become "second-class" citizens in their own land and that their long history and culture were being systematically destroyed by the colonial government, their hatred for the colonial government and their desire for national independence intensified.<sup>187</sup> Nevertheless, because of the tight control by the police, most of the anti-Japanese activities went underground. Korean nationalists were waiting for the right opportunity to mobilize the whole nation to throw off the colonial yoke.

In January 1919, King Kojong died suddenly. Rumors spread across the country that he was forced to commit suicide by the Japanese. Although he was never a popular figure among the people and very few people mourned personally for the fall of the imperial family, his death brought forth a new tide of anti-Japanese sentiment. Nationalist leaders used this opportunity to arouse public interest in support of a nationwide uprising against the Japanese rule. The movement was planned by the collaboration of several nationalist groups: the Chungang School group (non-Christian)

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<sup>186</sup> Brudnoy, "Japan's Experiment in Korea," 168.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

under the leadership of Kim Sŏng-su, Song Chin-u, and Hyŏn Sang-yun, and the Ch'ŏndogyo group under the leadership of Son Pyong-hui, Kwŏn Tong-jin, O Se-ch'ang, and Ch'oe Rin.<sup>188</sup> The date of the uprising was set for March 4, the day of the funeral service for the king. Since the Japanese police exerted tight control on travel, the funeral would allow people to move around and gather for meetings without causing too much suspicion.<sup>189</sup> Later, the organizers of the uprising changed the date to March 1 because word had leaked out to the police that a disturbance was coming.

In order to maximize public support and to acquire foreign sympathy and recognition, the nationalists strongly urged all religious groups, particularly Christians, to participate.<sup>190</sup> Their goal was to stimulate international interest in the Korean cause with the hope that the United States as well as other Western countries would honor their pledge of national self-determination that President Woodrow Wilson had recently put forth in his Fourteen Points prior to the Paris Peace Conference.

#### *Christians' Participation in the March First Movement (1919)*

Initially, Christian nationalists had their own plans and were reluctant to partake in a secular uprising that was beyond their control. Secular leaders, however, were eager to form alliances with all religious groups because through them the movement would have a stronger spiritual tone and enjoy a higher moral ground to attract international recognition. They particularly valued Christians' participation because of the benefit of the church network and its foreign connections so that the movement would gain legitimacy both inside and outside of Korea. Therefore, in order to gain Christian

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<sup>188</sup> Choong Soon Kim, *A Korean Nationalist Entrepreneur: A Life History of Kim Songsu, 1891-1955* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998), 50-53.

<sup>189</sup> Carlton Waldo Kendall, *The Truth About Korea* (San Francisco, CA: The Korean National Association, 1919), 26.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.* See also Hong, "Formation of Korean Protestantism and Its Political Nature," 25.

confidence and support, non-Christian nationalist leaders agreed to establish the movement on the principle of non-violence.

When the secular leaders' approved of the non-violence principle, Christian groups began to join the movement individually even without the official consent of the churches or the missionaries. The first Christian clergyman who answered the call was Yi Sŭng-hun, the founder of Osan School in Chŏngju and one of the most respected and influential Christian leaders of the time.<sup>191</sup> Other Christian leaders such as Ham T'ae-yŏng, who later became a vice-president under Syngman Rhee, Pak Hŭi-do, secretary of the Korean YMCA, and Kim Wŏn-byŏk and Yi Kap-sŏng, student leaders at Chosŏn Christian College (today's Yonsei University), joined the movement. As a result, the movement became a united effort of all anti-Japanese nationalists.

From its preparation to the day of the uprising, the role of churches was vital and the participation of Christians was remarkable. Secret preparation meetings were organized throughout the churches in Korea. Christians were informed of the upcoming uprising and were instructed to follow non-violent principles. From there, the word spread quickly through the church network.

On March 1, Koreans throughout the land read a Declaration of Independence signed by thirty-three leaders of various religious and underground patriotic groups on the previous night. Of these thirty-three signers, sixteen were famous Christian ministers including Kil Sŏn-ju, Kim Pyŏng-jo, Yu Yŏ-dae, and Chŏng Ch'un-su (see Table 1.9).<sup>192</sup> Seven of them were Presbyterians, six Methodist-North, and three Methodist-South.

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<sup>191</sup> Kim, *A Korean Nationalist Entrepreneur*, 53.

<sup>192</sup> Hong, "Formation of Korean Protestantism and Its Political Nature," 26.

There were no Catholic signers because the Pope had, for unknown reasons, ordered the Korean Catholic Church not to participate in the movement.<sup>193</sup>

Home-made Korean flags were waved on the streets, and slogans, such as “*manse*” (“ten thousand years”) and “*Taeahan tongnip manse*” (“Long Live Korean Independence!”), were shouted by hundreds and thousands of demonstrators in every major city and town. On that day, Korea showed to the world that the desire for national independence was not the wish of a few people, but the general sentiment across the peninsula.

Churches became the most effective channels for the distribution of copies of the Declaration and national flags, and for mobilizing people.<sup>194</sup> In Seoul, Sung-Dong Church and Jung-Dong Church were used as meeting places by the student representatives. Church-supported schools became “sources of demonstrations.”<sup>195</sup> Across the country, mission schools and church buildings were used as arenas to hold declaration ceremonies. One American missionary who was *not* sympathetic to the involvement of Korean Christians in politics described the role of the church saying:

At P’yöngyang, the so-called Christian capital, where the writer happened to be on March 1 last year, permission was secured from the police to hold memorial services for the ex-emperor in the chief churches. At the close of these services the declaration of independence was read in the churches and the first ‘mansei’ were shouted. At Chinnampo, where I went on March 2, the mobs each time collected at the churches and started from there... to the streets for the demonstration.<sup>196</sup>

Despite his negative view, his comment showed that churches were the centers of this mass movement.

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<sup>193</sup> Matsuo and Takiguchi, “The Japanese Protestants in Korea, Part One: The Missionary Activity of the Japan Congregational Church in Korea,” 586.

<sup>194</sup> Kim, *Protestants and the Formation of Modern Korean Nationalism, 1885-1920*, 135.

<sup>195</sup> Matsuo and Takiguchi, “The Japanese Protestants in Korea, Part One: The Missionary Activity of the Japan Congregational Church in Korea,” 583-584.

<sup>196</sup> D. Frank Herron Smith, *The Other Side of the Korean Question* (Seoul: Seoul Press, 1920), 6.

### *Japan's Brutal Suppression*

The police were shocked by the scale and the scope of this event. Some Korean policemen were so moved by the crowd that they took off their uniforms and joined the protest. Intent on bringing the situation under immediate control, the Japanese police forces, supported by hundreds of gendarmes, armed with swords and rifles, were sent to disperse the demonstrators and arrest trouble-makers. When this method failed to stop the gatherings of people, the military stepped in and opened fire on the peaceful demonstrators. Old men, women, and children were knocked down with the butts of rifles. In some remote cities where foreigners were not around, the gendarmes fired at the people until their ammunition was exhausted. Countless people died either on that day or the days afterwards due to police retributions. Foreigners estimated that over fifty thousand Koreans had either been killed or wounded in the first three months after the uprising.<sup>197</sup>

In one particular case, Japanese authorities demonstrated their distaste for Christianity. In Cheam-ni, which was about forty-five miles from Seoul, Japanese soldiers ordered all Christian men of the town to gather at the local church. As soon as they assembled, the soldiers fired at them and thirty-five men died at the spot. This event was confirmed by the investigations of both British and American consular agents and was admitted by Governor-General Hasegawa.<sup>198</sup> A similar event also happened in Suwon, where Japanese soldiers locked all the villagers of one town in a church, set it on fire, and shot those who tried to escape.<sup>199</sup> Widespread violence against Christians was

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<sup>197</sup> Kendall, *The Truth About Korea*, 33. This estimation is also supported by Korean historians' figures. See also Brudnoy, "Japan's Experiment in Korea," 170.

<sup>198</sup> Kendall, *The Truth About Korea*, 31-32.

<sup>199</sup> Brudnoy, "Japan's Experiment in Korea," 171.

reported everywhere across the peninsula. In some areas, Christians were crucified in public. Extremely gruesome methods were witnessed, recorded, and reported by the missionaries and other foreigners.<sup>200</sup>

Four months after the movement, the Korean Presbyterian Church alone had lost 2,486 of their members. Among them, forty-one church leaders were killed during the uprising and six more were tortured to death while in prison. A total of 12 churches were completely destroyed.<sup>201</sup> In the end, 134 Presbyterian pastors and elders lost their lives.

The Methodist missionaries described their loss this way:

When it came time for District Conference one of the Korean pastors said, 'I think the best place to hold our District Conference this year would be the prison.' This remark was brought out by the fact that 160 of our pastors, local preachers, exhorters, stewards, class leaders, day school teachers, Sunday school workers, and others were in prison on the account of the independence movement.... Of the eleven ordained Conference men eight were cast into prison and one was forced to rest on account of poor health. We close the year with two Conference members only. In the city of P'yŏngyang the five churches were supporting six ordained pastors. These were all sent to prison....<sup>202</sup>

Among all the 19,525 arrested demonstrators, there were 3,428 Christians (the total of all denominations), which was about 18 percent of those arrested (see Table 1.10). Another source suggested the number imprisoned was 9,458 and among them 2,987 were Christians, which was about 22 percent of the total.<sup>203</sup> These figures are startling when one considers that Christians comprised only 1.3 percent of the population in 1919 (roughly 200,000 out of 16 million people).

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid. See also Moffett, "Missionaries Contributed to Korea," In *D.R.P.: The Official Bulletin of the Democratic Republican Party* 10-11 (November 1975): 19-20.

<sup>201</sup> The Commission on Relations with the Orient of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. *The Korean Situation: Authentic Accounts of Recent Events by Eye Witnesses* (New York: The Commission on Relations with the Orient of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 1919), 8-9.

<sup>202</sup> Korea Conference: P'yŏngyang District (1919) *Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church: Korea Mission 1884-1943* (Seoul: The Institute for Korean Church History, 2001), 602.

<sup>203</sup> Man-yol Yi, *Han'guk kidokkyo minjok uishik* (Christianity in Korea and National Consciousness) (Seoul: Chishik Sanopsa, 1991), 349.

Although Christians did not participate in the movement as an organized religious body, the prominent role of churches in the movement was further evidenced when the nation witnessed forty-seven churches burned down, hundreds of Christians killed in the demonstration, and thousands more, including women, subjected to imprisonment and torture.<sup>204</sup> Christian religious beliefs were a strong ideological force behind the movement. Many believed that they had planned the independence movement with God's help and they could not stop even if they had to die. Patriotism backed by religion and the desire for religious freedom were two major motives for Christian participation in the demonstration.<sup>205</sup>

The blow to the churches caused by the loss of personnel and property was so great that evangelical work had to be largely halted for a time. Nevertheless, church membership began to increase again the following year, once the turmoil had died down. It had returned to its pre-1919 strength by 1921 (see Table 1.11). Because a great number of students of the mission schools had participated in the uprising, many were arrested or dropped out of school soon afterwards due to intense police pressure and surveillance. In contrast, the Korean Catholic Church did not suffer as much police harassment as other denominations and enjoyed an undisrupted growth of membership.<sup>206</sup>

Another important aspect of the March First Movement was the role of Christian women in the cause for independence. Of the 471 women who were arrested, 309 were Christians, which was roughly 66 percent of the total (see Table 1.10). Yim Yöng-sin, (whom was commonly known as Louise Yim by foreigners), a Methodist woman who

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<sup>204</sup> Kyong-bae Min, *Han'guk kidokkyohoesa* (A History of the Christianity in Korea) (Seoul: Taehan Kidokkyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1982), 311-313.

<sup>205</sup> Matsuo and Takiguchi, "The Japanese Protestants in Korea, Part One: The Missionary Activity of the Japan Congregational Church in Korea," 585.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 420.

later became a loyal supporter of Syngman Rhee, was one of the major organizers of the local demonstrations. She was imprisoned for months and later sentenced to 42 months of house arrest.<sup>207</sup> In a time when the majority of Korean women were still confined to their homes, Christianity brought the first major challenge to the traditional role of women in Korean society. It soon became fashionable for women to participate in underground anti-Japanese activities. The most famous of these women's groups was *Songmae-hoe* (the Pine and Plum Society), in which Christian women led an underground network of nationalists.<sup>208</sup>

In spite of their high cost of thousands of lives, the peaceful demonstrations went practically unnoticed by a disinterested American public. Although individual reports were sent to the American churches by missionaries concerning the violent suppression of the peaceful demonstrations, American churches refused to throw their support behind Korean independence due to a strong pro-Japanese sentiment among church leaders in the United States. The US government made only a half-hearted effort to pressure the Japanese government to stop the oppression.

Meanwhile, although missionaries witnessed this unprecedented nationalistic political movement and were very sympathetic to it, they were not free to express their thoughts. They feared that their association with the movement would anger the Japanese government and thereby jeopardize their missionary activities in Korea. Their hesitation to openly side with the Korean nationalists and the failure of the American church community to respond to the movement or to pressure the US government to take bolder

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<sup>207</sup> Louis Yim, *My Forty Year Fight for Korea* (Seoul: International Culture Research Center Chungang University, 1951), 107-117.

<sup>208</sup> Famous women leaders included the teachers and students from Sungsil Girl School in P'yŏngyang. Hwang Ae Tok, Kim Yong Hui, Yi Hyo Tok, An Chong Sok, Pak Hyon Suk, Yi Ma Tae, Ch'ae Kwang Tok, Song Pok Um, Hwang Sin Tok.

steps to stop the Japanese persecution were examples of inaction that would be long remembered, though few Americans recognized their importance at the time. When the next opportunity came (this time in the struggle against Communism), American church leaders and missionaries were quite determined to prevent the United States government as well as themselves from making the same “mistakes” again.<sup>209</sup>

The effect of American missionaries in Korea during the colonial era was mixed. Some people accused them of helping the Japanese colonial government by keeping Korean Christians submissive to the Japanese government.<sup>210</sup> Nevertheless, the same point can also be reversed by considering that the presence of missionaries helped the Korean churches by keeping the Japanese restrained. They prevented further unnecessary loss of lives and properties as the church suffered under a heavily oppressive policy put in place since March 1919.<sup>211</sup> In fact, because American missionaries did not initiate or participate in the March First Independence Movement directly, the Japanese had no excuse to charge them. Behind the scenes, therefore, missionaries negotiated with the Japanese government so that they could continue their missionary activities in Korea. As a result, American missionaries succeeded in enabling Korean Christianity to survive and continue to grow steadily throughout the 1920s. Although it was not the missionaries' intention, the continuing existence of the Christian churches did pose a constant threat and challenge to the Japanese colonial authoritarian government.

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<sup>209</sup> The word “mistakes” was used in the resolution adopted by the Foreign Mission Conference of North America in January 1947. The resolution was reported by *The Voice of Korea* 6 (15 February 1947): 1. This publication was found in the Vertical File: Truman Subject File – Religion, Truman Library.

<sup>210</sup> Joe, *A Cultural History of Modern Korea*, 555-563.

<sup>211</sup> Here I pass no judgment on the moral issue of the stand of the missionaries, but present the background of their views during the colonial era so that it might shed light on their potential influence in post-war Korea-American relations as well as Korean domestic politics.

### *Christianity and Cultural Nationalists*

In the post-March-First independence struggle, the temporary union among various nationalist factions began to fall apart. The cultural nationalists, by-and-large Christian laymen, began to dominate the independence struggle inside Korea, while the radicals were either heavily suppressed by the Japanese police or fled overseas for survival or recruitment. These groups marked the two competing versions of Korean nationalism that split the resistance into opposing camps. For the rest of the colonial period, these two groups struggled to survive under Japan's surveillance and competed for supporters from among both domestic and oversea Korean patriots.

Inside Korea, because of the bad publicity of their brutal suppression of the independence movement, the Japanese government adopted a new policy known as *Bunka seiji* (cultural rule), allowing more freedom for the Korean people in order to appease the Korean nationalists and to satisfy the international community. The new Governor-General, Admiral Baron Saitō Makoto, sought reconciliation with Korean political and social leaders. The colonial government allowed Koreans to publish their own newspapers, but with strict government censorship, and to hold meetings, but with careful police scrutiny. It also provided loans for Korean investors and industrialists, but only to develop small-scale industries using local raw materials.<sup>212</sup> Governor Saitō also agreed to establish more schools for Korean children, end discrimination of salaries in government services, and abolish flogging. Nevertheless, these were empty words because flogging and discrimination against Koreans continued throughout the colonial

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<sup>212</sup> Brudnoy, "Japan's Experiment in Korea," 176.

period, and the schools for Korean children were not comparable to the schools for Japanese children.<sup>213</sup>

While the government agreed to lessen its social and political control, it tightened its control over the Christian churches. On the surface, the colonial government made some concessions to the missionaries in order to pacify them, by allowing religious teachings in mission schools and lessening the requirements for the construction of new churches, but deep down, the Japanese held the Christian community in great contempt. Although there was no more persecution and brutality against Christians under Governor Saitō's rule, the Japanese police watched everything. One missionary reported:

They [the policemen] often insist on attending the services of the churches and schools and in regulating what is said and done. They frequent the halls of the schools and arrest the students on all sorts of suspicion. They censor all publications and often object to articles in the weekly church's paper.<sup>214</sup>

Their policy was aimed at preventing the Christian churches from ever again becoming a hot-bed for anti-Japanese sentiment. The policy would become tougher when Japan began to prepare to wage a war of conquest in East Asia in the 1930s.

In order to keep the church weak, the colonial government discriminated against Christians economically. When Japanese landlords took over Korean farmlands, Christian tenants were often thrown out and the right to farm the land was given to non-Christian tenants. In this way, the Japanese government was successful in disabling the long-term growth of the Christian church by indirectly denying the economic support it needed. According to Samuel H. Moffett, the son of an early missionary pioneer in P'yōngyang, "A 1927 study of church giving in Korea concluded that the church was

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 175-176.

<sup>214</sup> Harry A. Rhodes, *History of the Korean Mission Presbyterian Church, 1884-1934* (Seoul: Chosen Mission Presbyterian Church U.S.A., 1934), 503.

paying only half enough toward an adequate income for its church workers.”<sup>215</sup> Because the church did not have enough resources to train and retain qualified leadership, the growth of most local churches in the later period of the colonial reign was stunted (see Table 1.12).

The fruitless result and the cost of human suffering also brought important changes to the minds of the church leaders and Christian intellectuals. They were willing to take a more conservative role in the independence movement. Japanese brutality caused American missionaries and Korean pastors to redirect the focus of their flocks to a peaceful path of resistance to avoid any further direct conflict with the colonial authorities. They advocated the importance of education and industrial development. As a result, the gradualist, cultural-nationalistic approach was commonly adopted by most Korean churches. While pastors focused their responsibility on preaching, individual Christian elders took up the responsibility of social improvements.

Cultural nationalism, as a result, gained a wider domestic following during the colonial period from 1919 to 1945. Christian schools and small businesses sprang up throughout Korea within the boundaries that were set by Japanese colonial authorities. Whoever chose to remain in Korea would be forced to make hard decisions whether to comply or face imprisonment. Dr. Kim Hwal-lan (Helen Kim), the President of Ewha Women’s University from 1939-1961, related that it was hard to define who was a collaborator and who was not, because in order to survive and carry on their educational work, Korean leaders all had to collaborate in one way or another. The same situation also applied to Kim Sŏng-su, who sought to build up the Korean economy through both

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<sup>215</sup> Samuel H. Moffett, “Missionaries Contributed to Korea,” 72.

educational and economic means.<sup>216</sup> He later became the most famous and influential cultural nationalist in postwar Korea.

### *CONCLUSION*

Korea fell to Japan because of the weakness of the late Chosŏn court, which was infected with corruption and power struggles. Lacking good political leadership and determination, most reform efforts failed as soon as they started. The decline of the Middle Kingdom due to foreign encroachments left Korea at the mercy of its neighbors. Korea's hostile actions against foreign priests and native Christians, in turn, aroused the attention of Western powers that in the end brought many gunboats to the Korean coast. Nevertheless, it was eventually the growing power of Japan and its desire for territorial expansion that fundamentally disrupted the stability of the region and brought wars to the Korean soil. When Western powers, particularly the United States, not only refused to restrain Japan, but also gave their consent to Japanese control of Korea, there was little hope for Korea's survival as a nation.

While the US government had very little interest in defending Korea, and while most American businesses in Korea gradually yielded their operations to the Japanese in the midst of Japan's encroachment on Korea, there were small groups of Americans who were determined to stay. Instead of giving up their fruitful field, missionaries continued their religious activities despite the constant hostile interference of the Japanese colonial government. Throughout these difficult decades, missionaries stood behind the Korean Christian churches, although they did not support anti-Japanese activities by individual Christians. Missionaries fought for greater religious freedom and liberty, and their

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<sup>216</sup> Kim, *A Korean Nationalist Entrepreneur*, 117-120.

influence was felt all over the peninsula, from the biggest cities to even remotest villages of the north.

Although there were no formal diplomatic relations between Korea and America in the three decades of Japanese rule, informal relations between the Korean people and the American people continued to flourish. Under missionary sponsorship, Korean students came to the United States and Canada to pursue higher education, and then returned to serve their country. In this way, the religious connection opened a channel of communication between the colonized peninsula and the Western world, planting hope for an alternative vision for the future development of the country based on the Western democratic model.

Missionary activities not only influenced the Korean image of America and the American people, but also affected the Koreans' image of themselves and their nation as well. Some students magnified what they learned from the missionaries and then turned the religious messages of personal salvation into political sermons to inspire their own people. Christian nationalists, who lived and grew under the shadow of the American missionaries, became dominant political figures in modern Korea.

Therefore, it was at least some missionaries, if not all, who impressed the Koreans with the promises of national and personal salvation that partially boosted the Koreans' grand expectations from the United States and motivated them to seek American aid persistently.<sup>217</sup> It was also their evangelical teachings, education work, and medical

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<sup>217</sup> This point has been clearly presented and elaborated by Harrington, *God, Mammon and the Japanese*, when Harrington analyzed how Dr. Horace Allen gave assurances to the Korean king about potential American aid, and by Kim, *Protestants and the Formation of Modern Korean Nationalism, 1885-1920*, when Kim presented Horace Underwood's positive assurances the American support behind the cause of Korean Independence. Both Allen and Underwood spoke their own convictions rather than the board's position.

services as a whole that induced crucial elements of change in the struggling Korean nation. Western education, undoubtedly, gave new understanding and new hope to the Korean people during the dark colonial era.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Religious Factors in North Korea**

#### *INTRODUCTION*

While nationalism helped to stir up many Koreans to resist Japanese colonial rule, the failure of the March First Movement and Japan's new "cultural rule" policies caused serious disagreement among Korean nationalists. The split between the radicals and the gradualists affected the future development of Korean politics. While the gradualists had more influence and power inside Korea, the radicals earned their fame through political assassinations and armed struggles against the Japanese forces in China and Manchuria. In the post-colonial era, these divergent views of how the country should be liberated and developed became a constant source of tension among Korean nationalists, affecting the development of Korean politics and its foreign policy outlook.

The competition between leftists and rightists did not begin in 1945, but had instead been developing throughout the colonial period, as cultural nationalists were challenged by radical Communist nationalists. The dispute went beyond fractional differences and power struggles between ambitious politicians; at its core, it was a clash between two incompatible philosophies. It was a battle over the vision that would guide Korea's future: a radical revolution to achieve a Communist dictatorship or a gradual

transition into a Christian-influenced democracy.<sup>1</sup> The division of the country by two ideologically-competitive powers in August 1945 watered those seeds and caused them to flourish. While the Communists sought support from the Soviet Union, the Christian nationalists desired an alliance with the United States.

In the northern part of Korea, where Christianity had taken a strong hold in the hearts of the people, the clash between the gradualists and the radicals was intense even within the first three months of the liberation in 1945. To analyze the postwar political struggle in the north, it is important to first understand the final decade of Japanese colonial rule in Korea, in particular Japanese policy toward Christian churches. Christian nationalists, who had survived Japanese persecution, were the main political obstacle to Communist dominance in the north. Thus, when the Communist government sought to control the native religions in the north, it singled out Christian groups for more severe treatment.<sup>2</sup> Their political rivalry and open confrontation had a significant impact on the polarization of Korea politics during the inter-war years.

### *THE DARKEST HOURS OF THE COLONIAL ERA (1931-1945)*

Japan's policy of *bunka seiji* (cultural rule) drew to a close as Tokyo began to mobilize for war in the 1930s. Ever since the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War,

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<sup>1</sup> According to John K Fairbank, there were many kinds of nationalism. He simplified them into two major categories: the conservative and the reformist-revolutionary. See John K. Fairbank, "The Problem of Revolutionary Asia," *Foreign Affairs* 29 (October 1950): 107. Fairbank was speaking of East Asia in general; a more careful analysis of the specific case of Korea, however, reveals a political landscape that was too complex to be adequately described by these two simple categories. The Korean rightists consisted of more than conservatives who wanted to preserve their power at the expense of change, but also of Christians and other reformers who embraced some elements of the leftist agenda for positive political, social and economic changes. A temporary alliance between these groups was possible only because their interests, though different, were all equally threatened by Communism.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. State Department, *North Korea: A Case Study in the Techniques of Take Over* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), 96.

Japanese troops, known as the Kwantung Army (Guandong Army), had been stationed in Manchuria to protect Japan's newly-acquired railroad interests. The Kwantung Army was controlled by a militant faction of Japanese expansionists, eager to start a war of conquest against China. In September 18, 1931, two Japanese junior officers, Colonel Itagaki Seishiro and Lt. Colonel Kanji Ishiwara, both militant extremists, blew up a section of Japan's South Manchuria Railway near Mukden.<sup>3</sup> This event stirred up conflict between China's troops under Zhang Xueliang and the Kwantung Army. The Japanese seized upon the crisis to send 10,000 troops to Mukden, ostensibly for the "protection" of the railroad system. Without facing any strong resistance from the Chinese army, Japan occupied Manchuria and established a puppet state, Manchukuo.

After the Manchurian Incident, political pressure mounted for Korea to assume a bigger role in Japan's expansion. As a result, totalitarian measures were taken to tighten the control of the Korean peninsula, suppressing all potential domestic opposition and foreign influences that might jeopardize the war effort. In 1931, General Ugaki Kazushige replaced Admiral Saitō Makoto as Governor-General of Chōsen. The new government remilitarized the nation, ruthlessly suppressing opposition. Later, in 1936, General Minami Jirō, a pro-war militarist, replaced Ugaki and ruled with an even heavier hand. Japan was preparing for war against China.

### *A Full Scale "Japanization" of Korea*

Korea, as the gateway that connected Japan to Manchuria, was an indispensable base for Japan's invasion of the Asian continent. A full scale war between China and Japan started in July 1937, after Japanese and Chinese forces clashed at Marco Polo Bridge. As Japan ramped up its production for war, Korean factories were quickly

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<sup>3</sup> Japan seized Manchuria from China and established a puppet regime called *Manchukuo*.

converted into a vital element of its war machine, and Korean natural resources were seized upon to fuel the Japanese Army. War factories were established in P'yŏngyang, Hamhŭng, and Wŏnsan. In order to supply enough energy to keep the factories running for long hours, the colonial government developed hydro-electric power in northern Korea that supplied electricity not only to the whole peninsula but also to Manchuria as well. In the south, the Japanese took over Korea's most fertile farmland and exported the rice to feed Japan and Japan's army, while they imported barley and wheat from Manchuria to feed the Koreans. The Japanese also conscripted young Korean men into the Japanese army and forced young Korean women to become "comfort women" for the Japanese soldiers.<sup>4</sup> The railroad network was used to transport troops and war materials from Pusan to Manchuria.

Economic and military mobilization, however, was not seen as enough to transform Korea into an essential partner in the war. The Japanese government demanded all Koreans to be fully assimilated into the empire. A complete program for the "Japanization" of the Korean people began. The colonial authorities ordered Koreans to adopt Japanese names and forbade them from using their own native language in public. Only Japanese history was to be taught, and only the Japanese language was allowed in schools.

Shintoism, the Japanese national religion of emperor worship, was enforced throughout Korea in the 1930s. Students were required to participate in Shinto worship on a regular basis. Shinto temples were built in each city, town, and village. At first, the Japanese authorities planned their propaganda campaign carefully, hoping to confuse

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<sup>4</sup> "Comfort women," also known as *wianbu* in Korean, were young women forced by the Japanese to serve as prostitutes for Japanese soldiers on the front. While the majority of them were Japanese and Koreans, there were also Chinese, Taiwanese, and some other women under Japanese occupation.

church opinion by making a distinction between “State” and “Sect” Shinto. They argued that State Shinto was a mere patriotic ceremony and they promised noninterference with church activities. But the Japanese later intensified their demands and sought to enforce Shintoism by any means necessary. Shrines were put in all Christian churches and Buddhist temples. The police also ordered a *kamidana*, which was an individual household shrine, to be placed in each Korean home. Churches were only allowed to hold Christian services before or after working hours.

### *The Influence of American Missionaries in the Korean Christian Community*

While most religious groups in Korea did not have a serious problem accepting Shinto worship, Korean Christians adamantly refused because of the main Biblical invectives against idol worship. Foreign missionaries were caught in the middle of this controversy. During the earlier period of *bunka seiji*, the Shinto issue was seldom raised because the Japanese government guaranteed some level of religious freedom. But when the Shinto rites became a test of loyalty to the emperor, they carried a deep political meaning. Japanese militarists feared that foreign religious influences would weaken support for the war, so they pressured all Christian institutions to perform Shinto rites in order to show their loyalty and patriotism.

Japan’s fear of foreign influence among Korean Christians was not unfounded. By 1931, foreign missionaries had established successful and influential mission enterprises in the Korean peninsula. The French Catholics’ strongholds were in Seoul and Taegu. The German Benedictines, though they came to Korea in 1909, began to focus their activities in the northeast region in 1921, from Wösan through the Hamgyöng Provinces into Jiandao and all the way to Khabarovs. American Catholic missionaries

(the Maryknoll Fathers) did not arrive until 1923 and their works were mainly in the northwest region.<sup>5</sup> By 1941, their most successful mission area was in Yöngyu, a city near Ŭiju on the Yalu River.<sup>6</sup> The Irish Columbans came in the early 1930s. All together, the four Catholic missions had more than 140,000 converts by 1939 (see Table 2.10).

Although the Catholics had started 100 years earlier than the Protestants, the Protestants had already outgrown the Catholics in term of numbers of missionaries, converts, and mission institutions as early as 1910. At that time, more than 80 percent of foreign missionaries were Protestants and they controlled about 90 percent of all missionary premises, 91 percent of all mission hospitals, and 95 percent of all mission schools (see Table 2.9). When the first American Maryknoll missionary, Father Patrick Byrne, arrived in P'yöngyang, he was shocked by the success of the Protestant churches in northern Korea and exclaimed, "Pyeng Yang [sic] is the most Protestant city I was ever in, in America or elsewhere."<sup>7</sup>

American missionaries, in fact, were the most influential within the Korean Protestant community. In 1910, over 75 percent of all Protestant missionaries were from the United States and they controlled the majority of mission schools and hospitals (see Table 2.9). More than two decades later, in 1939, Americans still represented more than 76 percent of all Protestant missionaries and had influence over 72 percent of all of the Korean Protestants that were under the care of foreign mission stations (see Table 2.10).

Among them, the Presbyterian missionaries were the most successful. There were six main Protestant missions working in Korea. Four were Presbyterian: Northern

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<sup>5</sup> Donald N. Clark, *Christianity in Modern Korea* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 11.

<sup>6</sup> Donald N. Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience 1900-1950* (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2003), 140.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted by Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 137-138.

(U.S.A), Southern (U.S.), Canadian, and Australian. While the Northern Mission had ten stations across the peninsula, the Southern Mission had four stations in two Chōlla provinces.<sup>8</sup> Altogether, the American Presbyterian missionaries had influence over 70 percent of the Presbyterian churches with more than 200,000 members. In addition, the American Methodist missionaries had more than 800 churches with 50,000 members. Other American sects, such as the Seventh Day Adventist Mission and the Holiness Church had a total of 390 churches with about 12,000 members (see Table 1.6).

Missionaries from other countries, except the Catholics from France, were only marginal in their overall influence among Korean Christians. While working closely with their American counterparts, the Canadian Presbyterian Mission focused its work in two Hamgyōng Provinces in the north and the Australian Presbyterian Mission had its main center in Pusan, South Kyōngsang Province. In 1939, the Canadians had 38 missionaries, taking care of about 17,000 converts in the north, and the Australians had 29 missionaries, ministering to about 19,000 converts in the south. The English Church Mission had 136 churches with about seven thousand members in 1910, but by 1939, its four missionaries ministered to only about six thousand converts. The Salvation Army had 140 centers with 4,876 members in 1910, and its membership grew to be 18,000 in 1939 (see Table 2.9 & 2.10). The Greek Orthodox had only six churches with 115 members, mostly White Russians (see Table 1.6) in 1941. All of these, even added together, formed a relatively small fraction of the American mission enterprises.

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<sup>8</sup> In 1929, the Southern Missions had 10,809 baptized membership in its area. See George Thompson Brown, *Mission to Korea* (USA: Board of World Mission, Presbyterian Church U.S., 1962), 134.

*Controversy over the Shinto Issue*

In Japan, foreign missionaries did not challenge the idea of “State Shinto,” because it was part of the expression of Japan’s nationalistic sentiment. For practical reasons, they accepted it as they did the Confucian notions of loyalty and filial piety. But, the case in Korea was completely different. The Christian community, including missionaries, church leaders, and native converts, were deeply divided over Shinto worship. The Korean Catholic Church took its official position from the example of the Japanese Catholic Church and interpreted the ceremony as a patriotic ritual, but individual priests, such as Monsignor John Morris, refused to accept it.<sup>9</sup> In response, Morris was fired from his position. Likewise, after intensive debate, the Methodist missionaries and the Korean Methodist Church yielded under intense political pressure from the colonial government. The Seventh Day Adventists and Congregationalists also followed a non-resistant approach under pressure from the Japanese authorities.

Concerning the Presbyterians, who represented more than 78 percent of all Protestants (see Table 2.5), the scale of controversy was much bigger and the resistance was much stronger. Since the American Presbyterian missionaries controlled the majority of the mission schools and had influence over many churches, their opinions on this matter had a great impact on many people, including non-Christians. Some (mostly from the Presbyterian P’yŏngyang Mission Station and Southern Presbyterian Mission), such as Rev. Samuel A. Moffett, Rev. Otto DeCamp, Dr. DeWitt Lowe, and Dr. George McCune, objected to Christians’ participation in Shinto worship.<sup>10</sup> Dr. McCune’s argument was based on one of the Ten Commandments: “Thou shalt have no other gods

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<sup>9</sup> Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 213.

<sup>10</sup> Brown, *Mission to Korea*, 149-152.

before me.”<sup>11</sup> His opinion persuaded the Presbyterian Mission in the north to vote to close its schools rather than have its students participate in Shinto shrine worship. As a result, the famous Sungsil College in P’yŏngyang (also known as Union Christian College) was, under Dr. McCune’s leadership, closed in 1938. The Southern Presbyterian Mission also decided to close down all of their mission schools if Japanese authorities forced their students to perform Shinto rituals.<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, other missionaries, especially those in Seoul, took a more practical view of Shinto worship, hoping to preserve their institutions. Dr. Horace H. Underwood, for example, advanced an argument based on the idea, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s.”<sup>13</sup> He regarded the Shinto ceremony more as a citizen’s political obligation, and therefore, one that should be honored. His position was supported by many in the southern Christian community, who valued education and wanted to preserve the mission schools. Underwood’s position influenced the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Mission in New York to decide to continue supporting Christian institutions in Korea, overruling the Presbyterian Mission’s decision to close down all mission schools and ordering the missionaries to transfer ownership of individual schools to the hands of the Koreans if necessary. In the end, the mission schools that stayed open until 1945 were those who were transferred to non-mission management.<sup>14</sup>

The final decision on how the individual churches should respond fell on the shoulders of the Korean church leaders of the different denominations. After a long

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<sup>11</sup> Horace G. Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace: The Recollections of Horace G. Underwood*, ed. Michael J. Devine (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2001), 64.

<sup>12</sup> Brown, *Mission to Korea*, 156.

<sup>13</sup> The debate between the two groups of missionaries was reported in “A Debate,” *The Presbyterian Tribune*, 20 January 1938. See also *ibid.*, 64.

<sup>14</sup> Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 63-65.

period of discussion and facing strong government pressure, the Presbyterian Church followed Underwood's reasoning and adopted a conciliatory approach. The General Assembly declared that attendance at a Shinto ceremony was merely a patriotic rather than a religious act.<sup>15</sup>

The decision of the General Assembly did not, of course, represent the beliefs of all Presbyterian ministers or their congregations. Many pastors who had graduated from P'yŏngyang Presbyterian Seminary disagreed with the decision of the assembly, and many Christians left their churches in protest.<sup>16</sup> The Japanese colonial police arrested most anti-Shinto church leaders. In the north, 40 percent of Protestant pastors were imprisoned. The most famous anti-Shinto pastors were Rev. Chu Ki-ch'ŏl, the pastor of Sanjŏngnyon Church in P'yŏngyang, and Rev. Son Yang-wŏn, the pastor of the Leper Colony in Sunch'ŏn. Neither were the anti-Shinto missionaries immune to punishment. When Rev. DeCamp and Dr. Lowe removed shrines from churches and Christian homes, they were also arrested, tried, and sentenced to prison. They were expelled from Korea shortly afterwards.

In the end, 1,200 churches were closed, and about 3,000 church leaders, mostly from the north, were thrown into prison due to their opposition to Shinto worship. All of them were subjected to brutal torture at the hands of the Japanese police.<sup>17</sup> About fifty of them, including Rev. Chu, died as martyrs before the day of liberation.<sup>18</sup> The religious fervor of these inmates led to nationalistic fanaticism as well. Rejecting Shintoism, they

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<sup>15</sup> Chung-Shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2003), 155.

<sup>16</sup> Edward Adams, "Report on Korea," 15 January 1946, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 29 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, see also Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 156.

<sup>18</sup> Chu, Kwang-jo, *More Than Conquerors* (Seoul: Daesung.com, 2006), 121-127.

reasoned, was rejecting the emperor. Enduring years of abuse in prison had refined the resolve of these Christians. When these church leaders and laymen were later released from prison following liberation, they were intensely anti-Japanese and anti-Communist, with no interest in compromise. They had also earned the respect of the Korean people and were recognized as courageous, principled, uncompromising nationalists. They would enjoy enormous public support from both Christians and non-Christians, and many became national leaders.

The confrontational stance of some American missionaries encouraged the Japanese government to impose tough restrictions upon the Korean churches. First, it ordered the Japanese churches to take control of all Korean churches and Christian organizations.<sup>19</sup> For instance, the Korean Y.M.C.A. (Young Men's Christian Association) was forced to merge with the Japanese Y.M.C.A., prompting the International Y.M.C.A. to deny Korean representatives permission to participate in Y.M.C.A. international conferences. Such restrictions gradually expanded to all Christian denominations, cutting off Korean religious affiliations from their outside organizations. In 1939 and 1940, the Presbyterian Church of Korea was bracketed with the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Japan, and the Korean Methodist Church with the Japanese Methodist Church.<sup>20</sup>

Second, Japan carefully regulated any personal interaction between Korean Christians and foreign missionaries. Missionaries were asked to withdraw from local church organizations. They were forbidden from conducting mass evangelism or

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<sup>19</sup> Seijiro Niwa, "The Federated Union of Japanese and Korean Churches in the Peninsula," *The Korean Mission Field*, (August 1940). The source was used by Yoko Okuyama, "Helen Kim's Life and Thought Under the Japanese Colonialism, 1918-1945" (MA Thesis: Yonsei University, 1989), 40-41.

<sup>20</sup> "Korea Report, 1943," *Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church: Korea Mission 1884-1943* (Seoul: The Institute of Korean Church History, 2001), 890.

speaking in churches. As the pressure continued to tighten, Japanese police would stop any church meetings where missionaries were present. Even innkeepers were instructed not to host missionaries. In this way, the colonial authorities succeeded in curtailing all missionary evangelical activities by June 1940.<sup>21</sup>

### *The Deterioration of Japan-America Relations*

Meanwhile, Japan's aggression in China aroused international concerns. When Nanjing, the capital of China, fell, reports of unconscionable brutality against civilians were told by missionaries and reporters around the world. Public opinion in the United States turned against Japan. In 1938, the United States government imposed an embargo on war materials to Japan. Tensions between the two countries intensified when Japan signed the Tripartite Mutual Defense Pact with Germany and Italy in September 1940. In response, the United States declared an embargo on scrap iron and steel to Japan.

American missionaries began to discover that, even if they were willing to compromise with the Japanese government, it would not save them from eventual banishment from Korea. The colonial police forces began full scale surveillance of all foreigners. Korean Christians were ordered not to interact with missionaries because all foreigners were considered possible spies. With the worsening of US-Japan relations, Gaylord Marsh, the American consul general in Korea, advised all American citizens to leave. The US government provided special transportation for the evacuation.<sup>22</sup> Many missionaries chose to go because their mission services were no longer possible in such a hostile environment. On November 16, 1940, the *S. S. Mariposa* took 219 Americans,

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<sup>21</sup> Brown, *Mission to Korea*, 159-160.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

mostly missionaries and their children, back to the United States.<sup>23</sup> The British also followed the American lead and evacuated their nationals, including Canadians and Australians.<sup>24</sup> The missionary community in Korea thus shrank to a dozen families in major cities.<sup>25</sup>

The attack on Pearl Harbor followed soon afterward on December 8, 1941 (Korean time), and all remaining foreigners and missionaries in Korea were arrested. One of them, Dr. John Van Neste Talmage, was chief of the Southern Presbyterian Mission juridical body. He was jailed for 121 days on charges of possessing certain maps, even though they had been registered with the authorities. The real purpose of his imprisonment was to force him to sign over various mission properties. When Dr. Talmage refused regardless of threats of torture and further imprisonment, he was expelled from the country.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile, the Japanese police also tried to prove that the Presbyterian Mission was a spy organization. They tortured Dr. Frederick S. Miller, Dr. Edwin W. Koons, and Mr. Ralph O. Reiner, who were key members of the Mission, in an attempt to force them to make false confessions.<sup>27</sup> The missionaries refused to comply. On May 31, 1942, after five months of confinement, Japanese authorities transferred their foreign prisoners to Kobe, where the Japanese gathered all foreigners and repatriated them back to America and Europe in two separate ships.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 252.

<sup>25</sup> Seven Southern Presbyterian missionaries chose to stay behind. They were Dr. and Mrs. Wilson, Dr. and Mrs. Talmage, Dr. J. C. Crane, Miss Mary Dodson, and Miss Florence Root. See Brown, *Mission to Korea*, 162.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 162-164.

<sup>27</sup> Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution, and Peace*, 81-82.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 84-86.

### *Christians who Collaborated with the Japanese*

Meanwhile, Christian churches in Korea faced another challenge after the departure of foreign missionaries. As soon as war broke out between the United States and Japan, Japanese authorities automatically assumed that all Christians were against the colonial government and began to exert tighter control over the churches.<sup>29</sup> Church services were largely reduced to once a week, usually in the evening because Christians were required to work on Sunday. Pastors were forced to perform manual labor on defense projects. Church services were censored, and Shinto elements were forcibly incorporated into them. Many Christian schools were closed or transferred to non-Christian ownership. No religious instruction was allowed to continue in any schools. The government also closed down the Christian Literature Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society so that no more Christian literature was published. Most seminaries and Bible schools were also closed down, with only a few exceptions.<sup>30</sup>

In June 1945, the Japanese authorities issued a new order to require all Protestant denominations to join together and form a new amalgamation called *Kyodan* (“church federation”), also known as the United Church of Korea, which was completely under colonial government control.<sup>31</sup> Representatives were called and asked to vote for a “moderator” of the new church, but the result was never made public. Instead, the Japanese colonial government appointed Rev. Kim Kwan-sik to be the moderator. Clergymen and laymen who resisted the process were purged from their churches or institutions. About one third of Korean Christian churches closed their doors and church

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<sup>29</sup> Adams, “Report on Korea,” 2.

<sup>30</sup> “Survey 1947: Korea Mission, Presbyterian Church, USA,” Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 34 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>31</sup> “Korea Report, 1942,” *Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church: Korea Mission 1884-1943* (Seoul: The Institute of Korean Church History, 2001), 878.

buildings were taken over by the government and used for secular and military purposes.<sup>32</sup>

Japan's policy against the Christian churches in Korea left serious divisions and scars within the Christian community. During those darkest hours of colonial history in Korea, some clergymen and laymen who were determined to keep their churches and schools open had no option but to collaborate with the Japanese.

Dr. Kim Hwal-lan (Helen Kim), for example, the President of Ewha Women University at that time who was one of the most influential women in Korea, had to work with Japanese government agents in the school and write pro-Japanese articles endorsing government policies. Some charged that she made pro-Japanese speeches in villages, and even assisted in the recruitment of prostitutes for soldiers on the war front.<sup>33</sup> Regardless of her reasons for collaboration, Dr. Kim's effort did not bear much positive results. Normal academic programs were eventually halted by the Japanese government and Ewha girls were sent to villages as war propagandists, telling the Korean people what they must do to help the Japanese win the war.<sup>34</sup>

The most egregious case was that of Dr. Sōng Ch'ang-gūn, President of the Chosŏn Seminary. In order to keep his seminary open, Dr. Sōng actively supported Japanese policy, making speeches on behalf of the government. He even acted as a priest

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<sup>32</sup> Adams, "Report on Korea," 2.

<sup>33</sup> Okuyama, "Helen Kim's Life and Thought Under the Japanese Colonialism, 1918-1945," 45-46. In her autobiography Dr. Helen Kim confessed that she had made pro-Japanese speeches in Ewha, but did not mention her pro-Japanese articles. See also Helen Kim, *Grace Sufficient* (Nashville: The Upper Room, 1964), 101.

<sup>34</sup> Okuyama, "Helen Kim's Life and Thought Under the Japanese Colonialism, 1918-1945," 48.

at a Japanese shrine, going through its rites of cleansing like a Japanese priest. Many charged him with being the guiltiest collaborator in the Christian community.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the willingness of many Christian leaders to collaborate with the colonial government, Japan's mistrust of Korean Christians remained unchanged. Japanese authorities feared that their hidden pro-American attitude would jeopardize the government's effort to defend the Korean peninsula against an American invasion. The colonial government thus formed a list of Christian leaders whom they planned to execute on August 17, 1945. Fortunately, liberation came before the designated date. The lives of these Christian leaders were spared.

#### *THE LIBERATION OF NORTH KOREA*

The Pacific War came to a quick end in August 1945 after Truman ordered the use of atomic bombs against Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, respectively. The Japanese government's hope to avoid an unconditional surrender was dashed as soon as the Soviet Union declared war on Japan on August 8.<sup>36</sup> These two main factors led Japanese Emperor Hirohito to announce his decision to terminate the war on August 15, 1945. It was supposed to be good news for Korea, which had been under Japan's colonial rule for four decades. Nevertheless, what disappointed many Koreans was that shortly after the liberation, they found that their country was not only divided, but also forcibly occupied by two new foreign powers.

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<sup>35</sup> Letter from Fran Kinsler to John Smith, 19 March 1949, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>36</sup> For a detailed analysis of Japan's serious effort to keep the Soviet Union neutral, see Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).

### *Drawing a Demarcation Line*

The division of Korea along the line of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel was initially the result of a military agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union when Japan surrendered. On August 15, 1945, President Harry Truman cabled a draft message of General Order No.1 to Generalissimo Joseph Stalin, which contained an order to the Japanese troops in Korea to surrender to the Red Army north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and to the American army south of that line. Stalin accepted Truman's proposal without dispute, and as a result, a demarcation line along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel was drawn. It was a strange and arbitrary arrangement that has troubled many Koreans to this day. Why did Truman propose this demarcation, and why did Stalin accept it?

Truman wrote about his decision years later, testifying that it was merely a "convenient allocation of responsibility for the acceptance of the Japanese surrender."<sup>37</sup> However, historians have suspected that the real reason for Truman's proposal was to prevent the Soviet Union from occupying the whole Korean peninsula.<sup>38</sup> Keeping Seoul in American hands strengthened the U.S. position in steering Korea's political development, since Seoul was the political, economic, and cultural center of Korea. In addition, by securing the lower half of the Korean peninsula, the United States prevented the Soviet Union from controlling the Tsugaru Strait, the water between Honshu and Hokkaido, which was an important sea route for the movement of submarines.

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<sup>37</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs of Harry Truman, Vol.1: Years of Decisions* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1955), 444-445.

<sup>38</sup> See Erik van Ree, *Socialism in One Zone: Stalin's Policy in Korea, 1945-1947* (Oxford, New York & Munich: Berg Publishers Limited, 1989), 63. See also Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy*, 252.

Nevertheless, according to Dean Rusk, a colonel in the army at that time, who wrote in 1990 about his experience, the demarcation line was selected in “great haste” and “under great pressure”:

Working in great haste and under great pressure we had a formidable task: to pick a zone for the American occupation. Neither Tic [Charles H. Bonesteel III] nor I was a Korea expert, but it seemed that Seoul the capital, should be in the American sector. We also knew that the U.S. Army opposed an extensive area of occupation. Using a *National Geographic* map, we looked just north of Seoul for a convenient dividing line but could not find a natural geographical line. We saw instead the thirty-eighth parallel and decided to recommend that....<sup>39</sup>

Rusk’s testimony led historians to wonder just how serious the United States was about occupying South Korea. Clearly, Washington was distracted with many post-war concerns in both Europe and Asia, and the U.S. Army in the Pacific was quite unprepared to occupy a land of nearly 20 million people.

Soviet motives were even less clear. Historians have puzzled as to why Joseph Stalin would promptly agree to limit the advance of the Red Army when it seemed that it could have easily outrun the United States and captured Seoul first. One possible reason was that Stalin might have expected the United States to allow the Soviet Army to occupy the northern part of Hokkaido as a Soviet occupation zone in Japan if he complied with the American request on Korea.<sup>40</sup> Although the Americans had never made such a promise, it was a plausible hypothesis explaining Russian motives in August 1945.

Nevertheless, the readiness of Russia to keep its promise over the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel did not necessarily mean that it was willing to cooperate fully with the United States concerning Korea. Korea had far more vital strategic value to the Soviet Union than to the United States. For one thing, Korea was on Russia’s back doorstep. Moreover, if the

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<sup>39</sup> See Dean Rusk, *As I Saw It* (New York: Penguin Book, 1990), 124 and 167.

<sup>40</sup> For details of the Russians’ motives, see Van Ree, *Socialism in One Zone*, 63.

Soviet Union could extend its sphere of influence over the whole peninsula, then the U.S.S.R. would be in a stronger position to influence the post-war political and military development of China. It would also be in a far better position to challenge American dominance of Japan.

### *Soviet Occupation above the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel*

When the United States received the news of Japan's unconditional surrender, President Truman ordered American commanders in the Pacific to suspend their offensive operations against Japanese forces. The Soviet Union, however, continued their offensive operations against the Japanese forces on all fronts. Russian troops were battling to push their position deeper into Manchuria, Korea, and the Kurils, hoping to seize all the territories promised at Yalta.<sup>41</sup> On August 16, 1945, the Soviet Army had not yet occupied any territory on the Korean peninsula because the Japanese were still resisting the advancing Red Army from various strategic positions.<sup>42</sup> The cease-fire order from Tokyo was not issued to the Kwantung Army until August 18. The Soviet Union and Japan eventually reached their cease-fire agreement on August 19.

As soon as the Soviet Army entered Korea, the majority of its troops were sent to stand guard along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. Southbound routes were generally open, but northbound movement was closely watched. The natural flow of information and transportation between the north and the south gradually came to a halt. The northern section became entirely cut off from Seoul once the Soviet Army sealed the border. Hence, crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel became more and more difficult and dangerous.

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<sup>41</sup> Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy*, 253.

<sup>42</sup> The Japanese did not stop fighting on August 16, 1945, because they claimed that they had not yet received the formal order from the emperor. See Van Ree, *Socialism in One Zone*, 62-64.

The immediate impact of the demarcation line was to create a deep sense of uncertainty among Koreans on both sides. Koreans were a homogenous people with a unified language, culture, and set of customs. The northern and southern half mutually depended on each other economically. The north needed southern food, particularly rice; the southern factories needed northern electricity, and the southern peasants needed northern fertilizers. The overnight appearance of an artificial line dividing the country caused immense logistical problems and frustrations. The electricity supply for Seoul and the rest of the south was now in Russian hands in the north. Meanwhile, with the influx of 100,000 Russian soldiers, who normally lived off their occupied lands, the north faced an immediate food shortage.

In addition, Seoul had long been the center of Korea's political activities. Historically, whoever controlled Seoul usually controlled the nation. Most of the nation's top political activists such as Yŏ Un-hyŏng, Song Chin-u, and Pak Hŏn-yŏng resided in Seoul. For this same reason, even the leftists' stronghold was in the south. By isolating the north from Seoul, the Red Army created a sudden power vacuum in the north, which none of the leaders in Seoul were able to fill.

***Christian Domination of Local Committees for the Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI) in North Korea***

While the Russians were fighting their way to P'yŏngyang from August 11 to August 24, the Japanese were searching for some means of safeguarding the lives of Japanese civilians and of preserving peace and order during the transition period. Knowing that their country was about to surrender to the Allies, Japanese officials in the north contacted Cho Man-sik, a prominent Christian nationalist in P'yŏngyang, to manage security in the northern part of the peninsula. Cho Man-sik's high reputation

among anti-Japanese nationalists was indisputable. He had founded *Sin'ganhoe* (New Korea Society), a united nationalist organization that enjoyed the strongest political following in the north prior to liberation and had a membership of thirty thousand.<sup>43</sup>

In the south, the Japanese approached Song Chin-u, a famous educator and cultural nationalist. Cho accepted the offer, but Song declined. Yŏ Un-hyŏng became Song's substitute. Yŏ Un-hyŏng had studied in the Paejae School (the first mission school established by American Methodist missionaries). He dropped out of school when he was punished for not attending religious services. In 1908, he was baptized by Rev. Charles A. Clark, an American Presbyterian missionary, and became an assistant minister in Seoul for two years in the Sŭngdong Church. From 1911 to 1912, he studied theology at the P'yŏngyang Presbyterian Seminary. Like An Ch'ang-ho, Yo advocated both education and military preparation. He was a major figure in the Korean Provisional Government in Exile (KPG) in Shanghai.<sup>44</sup> He was a moderate, leaning to the left, an ideal figure for a leftist-nationalist coalition.<sup>45</sup> On September 6, 1945, a "Korean People's Republic," under Yŏ's leadership, was proclaimed in Seoul.

While Yŏ mobilized all the underground rightists and leftists to form a temporary alliance under the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI) in the south, Cho was simultaneously doing the same thing in the north. On August 17, 1945, Cho Man-sik organized a local committee in P'yŏngyang, which he affiliated with the CPKI in Seoul. Both the northern and southern CPKIs were therefore headed by

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<sup>43</sup> The US government document translated *Sin'ganhoe* as the "National Foundation Association." See State Department, *North Korea: A Case Study in the Techniques of Takeover*, 13.

<sup>44</sup> The Korean Provisional Government (KPG) was established in Shanghai by around 1,000 Korean nationalists in April 1919. Syngman Rhee was chosen as its Premier, while Kim Kyu-sik was its foreign minister. Among its best known leaders were also Yi Tonghwi, An Ch'angho, Yŏ Unhyŏng, and Kim Ku. Finally, under Kim Ku's leadership, KGP earned its fame through terrorist activities against Japanese leaders.

<sup>45</sup> See Lee Wha Rang, "Who Was Yŏ Un-hyŏng?" <http://www.kimsoft.com/2002/mongyang.htm>.

prominent Christian laymen. Also, Christians were heavily represented in both the north and the south CPKIs, outnumbering the Communists in almost every local council.

Nonetheless, relatively speaking, the strength of the Communists and their leftist allies was concentrated in the south, and the Christian nationalists were most powerful in the north.<sup>46</sup> According to Korean historian Kim Nam-sik, “the People’s Committees were not created from the center but organized from the bottom up.”<sup>47</sup> In other words, the leadership of the People’s Committees (PCs) and CPKIs revealed the relative political strength of the leftists and rightists in local settings. In South P’yŏngan Province, where Cho Man-sik received the most support, Communists had a difficult time in controlling the local PCs.

For instance, among the twenty members of Cho’s committee, there were only two Communists. Likewise, all CPKIs in the north were under the control of Christians, except the North and South Hamgyŏng Provinces, who were either influential local pastors, such as Rev. Yun Ha-yŏng and Rev. Han Kyŏng-jik, or prominent Christian nationalist leaders who had been imprisoned by the Japanese following the March First Independence Movement. Even though there were Communists and other leftists present in all local PCs in northern Korea, they tended to be a minority and less influential. Therefore, in order to boost the political standing of the Communists, whenever the Red Army entered a town, they would force the local CPKI to reorganize by enlisting more Communists as committee members, and would change their name to a People’s Political Committee, a term which was not used in southern Korea.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 50-51.

<sup>47</sup> Quote in *ibid.*, 49.

<sup>48</sup> Ree, *Socialism in One Zone*, 93-95.

The influence of Christians in the local CPKIs was so powerful that the Communists could not use the CPKIs to push their agenda. The Soviet army had two options: to allow the CPKI to continue to function, or to impose its own political system immediately. The Soviet leaders chose the first option. With very few Communist national figures available to them, they were willing to work with Cho Man-sik, since this would buy time for the Communists to build up their own network and to tighten their grip on the power system.<sup>49</sup> It was not a surprise that Cho led the South P'yŏngan Provincial People's Political Committee (SPPPC) immediately after liberation<sup>50</sup> and later headed the Five-Provinces Administration Bureau (FPAB) under the sponsorship of the Soviet Union.

#### ***POLITICAL COMPETITION BETWEEN RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND COMMUNISTS IN POST-LIBERATION NORTH KOREA***

According to Charles K. Armstrong, the author of *The North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950* (2003), religious groups, such as Christians and Ch'ŏndogyo followers (from the Tonghak Movement), had a strong influence in North Korea and thus competed with the Communists for political domination.<sup>51</sup> Although the population of these two groups

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<sup>49</sup> Most of the famous Communist leaders were in the South. The headquarters of the Korean Communist Party was located in Seoul. Kim Il-sung did not return until September 1945.

<sup>50</sup> Actually the Soviet leaders forced Cho to include more Communists in his committee. According to a CIC document, "On 27 August 1945, Soviet troops entered P'yŏngyang, largest city in Korea north of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. They found there already established a Nation Reconstructing Preparatory People's Committee composed primarily of Christians, businessmen, and educators. Head of the Committee was Cho Man Sik, a Presbyterian minister. On that same day Soviet authorities informed the Committee that they were turning over the government to the Koreans, and that they desired this Committee to be composed of 15 members from the Preparatory Committee and of 15 members from the Communist Party, no members from which were on the original body. This request was acceded to and Cho Man Sik was elected Chairman of the new group." See "Weekly Information Bulletin#20," 4 September 1947, *美軍政期情報資料集: CIC (방첩대) 보고서 1945.9 - 1949.1* (Seoul: Hallym University, Institute of Asian Culture Studies, 1995) 2: 381.

<sup>51</sup> *Tonghak* meant Eastern Learning. See Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 14-15.

was less than four percent of the overall Korean population, their political influence remained strong among the Korean nationalists.

It was true that the most common religious practice in Korea was ancestor worship, but since it was organized according to each clan on a local level, it did not generate a nationwide political force to support Korean independence. Like the case of China, Korean ancestor worship was a direct result of the cultural influence of Confucianism and Buddhism, but these two religious faiths did not have strong organized structures and overseas connections.<sup>52</sup> Their political influence in Korea was declining while Christianity and other messianic types of religious sects, such as Ch'öndogyo, were gaining popular support during the colonial period.

While Ch'öndogyo's power base was among poor peasants in the countryside, particularly in the Hamgyöng region, Christians' influence lay more in urban areas and among intellectuals, especially in the P'yöngan region. After liberation, both groups resisted the Soviet-inspired Communist revolution, using peaceful as well as violent means.<sup>53</sup> This section describes the political competition between the religious groups and Communists prior to the Communist take-over in February 1946.

### *Ch'öndogyo's Strong Influence in Rural Areas*

Ch'öndogyo was a religion with roots in the Tonghak peasant uprising in the late Chosön dynasty. Nationalist Kim Ku, the President of the Provisional Korean Government in Chungking, China, was once a member of this movement before he was converted to Catholicism.<sup>54</sup> With the help of the Chinese government, the Chosön

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<sup>52</sup> State Department, *North Korea: A Case Study in the Techniques of Take Over*, 96.

<sup>53</sup> Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 115 and 119.

<sup>54</sup> Kim Ku, *Packpom Ilchi: The Autobiography of Kim Ku*, translated, annotated and introduced by Jongsoo Lee (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000).

government crushed the Tonghak rebellion in 1895, and many Tonghak believers moved north. Son Pyŏng-hŭi, the third head of Tonghak escaped to Japan and when he returned in 1905, he renamed the religion Ch'ŏndogyo, the original name applied to the doctrine by the founder in his own Scriptures.<sup>55</sup>

Under the leadership of Son, Ch'ŏndogyo expanded quickly and set up places of worship in every province and county. Priority was also given to the establishment of schools. Ch'ŏndogyo's strongest base was in the P'yŏngan area.<sup>56</sup> In 1919, since Ch'ŏndogyo's followers were active participants in the March First Independence Movement and Son was the first signer of the 1919 Declaration of Independence, the Japanese authorities arrested Son. According to Japanese statistics, there were about 111,000 Ch'ŏndogyo followers in 1920 (see Table 2.1). The actual number, however, was actually about 3 million, much higher than the official figure because of the secret nature of the group.<sup>57</sup> By the 1920s, it had founded more than thirty schools in the north, and was active in organizing peasants, merchants, women, young students, and even children.<sup>58</sup> After Son's imprisonment, the work was carried on by a new leader, Yi Ton-hwa.<sup>59</sup>

From its beginning, the religious teaching of Ch'ŏndogyo always contained a strong political element. It advocated the idea of *in nae chon* ("man and heaven are one"), which generated the belief of social egalitarianism, quite a radical idea for Korea's traditional class-conscious and hierarchical society. The religion stressed *kaebyok*, which

<sup>55</sup> R. Pierce Beaver, "Chondogyo and Korea," *Journal of Bible and Religion* 30 (April 1962): 117.

<sup>56</sup> Songbo Kim, "The Decision and Development Process of North Korean Land Reform" (unpublished manuscript), 11. See also Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 15.

<sup>57</sup> Wi Jo Kang, *Religion and Politics in Korea under the Japanese Rule* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), 70-73.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 73. See also Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 126.

<sup>59</sup> Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 127.

meant “awakening.”<sup>60</sup> Individuals needed religious enlightenment, the nation needed independence, and Korean society needed a new social order so that all people could reach their full potential.<sup>61</sup> Their version of “new democracy” was the elimination of feudal relationships, the end of colonialism, the removal of “reactionary fascism,” and the promotion of the leadership of the unified working masses.<sup>62</sup>

Since Ch’ōndogyo members were mostly stern nationalists, they formed a “Young Friends’ Party” (YFP) (*Ch’ongudang*) as the political wing of the religious group in 1923 to carry out their work of education, reform, and religious teaching. Although the YFP had branches all over Korea, the party recruited most of its supporters from the northern provinces (see Table 2.2). Its religious publication, *Kaebiyok*, was a major literary journal in the early 1920s. The Japanese colonial government therefore regarded Ch’ōndogyo as a “quasi-religion” that posed a great threat to the reign of the Japanese. The government forced all Ch’ōndogyo-affiliated schools to shut down in retaliation for their involvement in the March First Movement.<sup>63</sup>

In 1931, when the YFP attempted to organize a Second March First Movement, the colonial government launched a major campaign to arrest YFP members. Since the police effectively cracked down on Ch’ōndogyo’s activities throughout the 1930s, the YFP was forced to go underground. The official membership of Ch’ōndogyo gradually declined to about 72,000 in 1944 (see Table 2.1) after its central headquarters in Seoul

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Beaver, “Chondogyo and Korea,” 118.

was converted by the government into a factory that manufactured Japanese army uniforms.<sup>64</sup>

Ch'ōndogyo, nevertheless, remained popular in rural areas, especially in North P'yōngan and South Hamgyōng. Its followers in the P'yōngan area organized the Korean Peasant Society (KPS) to lead peasant protests against the Japanese colonial authorities. They agreed to cooperate with the leftists (“the Red Peasant Unions”) against the Japanese when the colonial authorities tightened up control over all the underground political groups. The leftists, however, did not trust the KPS because they believed that the Ch'ōndogyo followers were “reformists,” not revolutionaries. Since Ch'ōndogyo had a strong base and deeper historical roots than the Communists in the countryside, the Young Friends Party became a major competitor for political power in the post-liberation period.<sup>65</sup>

#### *Underlying Conflicts between Christians and Communists*

While Ch'ōndogyo was a sectional religious group with strong influence in rural areas, Christianity was more a national religious organization that enjoyed a prominent position in the cities and among educated elites. Although it was true that Christians in general often did not work effectively as an organized political group – holding disparate political opinions, not standing behind one leader or supporting one political party – nonetheless, the Christian community was reasonably well organized in northern Korea. In particular, five unique features of the Christian community of northern Korea gave the Soviet occupiers many headaches.

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>65</sup> Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 15.

First of all, among the major organized religious groups (Buddhists, Christians, and Ch'öndogyo), the Christians had the largest official membership in Korea in 1944 (see Table 2.1) and they were highly concentrated in the north. The population of northern Korea in 1941 was about 9.3 million, which was about 37.6 percent of the overall Korean population (see Table 2.4b). The majority of Koreans, therefore, lived in the south. The distribution of the Christian population, however, was the opposite of the national trend. There were more than 2,000 churches in the north with about 300,000 registered members (compare Table 2.5).<sup>66</sup> The three northern provinces alone (South P'yöngan, North P'yöngan, and Hwanghae) had about 1,000 churches, and around a quarter of the overall Christian population on the whole peninsula.<sup>67</sup> According to a survey presented by Dr. H. A. Rhodes in 1944 on the proportion of Presbyterians to the overall population, northern stations, such as P'yöngyang, Sönc'h'ön (near Sinüiju and Uiju) and Chairyöng (near Sariwön), had the highest ratios (see Table 2.6). This proportion of Christians to the overall population in these areas would be even higher if other Protestant and Catholic populations were included.<sup>68</sup>

In P'yöngyang, for example, there were two seminaries, one Christian college, two technical colleges, and several hospitals. There were nearly 400 churches and 150

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<sup>66</sup> "The List of Worship & Religions in Korea" by the Training Dept., Education Bureau of the Governor General of Chosön, December, 1941, pp.55-57 recorded in "Statistics – Japan & Korea" / General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Box#5780, RG331 GHQ/SCAP records, CIE ©, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington National Records Center. Concerning the official members of the churches in North Korea, the five Presbyteries in the north reported 300,000 members. See Allen D. Clark, *History of the Korean Church* (Unpublished manuscript), 14, Presbyterian Church Archive – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>67</sup> William N. Blair, "Samuel A. Moffett: On His Seventieth Birthday," *The Presbyterian* (1934): 6. The cutting was found in Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 360, Folder: Samuel A. Moffett – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>68</sup> Dr. H. A. Rhodes' presentation "Survey of the Stations" during the Korea Consultative Conference (September 22-24, 1944), Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 30 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

ordained ministers responsible for the city and its vicinity.<sup>69</sup> *Time Magazine* reported in November 1950 that about 50,000 Christians lived in the city, about 17 percent of the population.<sup>70</sup> The P'yongyang Presbyterian Mission Station was the largest American Presbyterian station in the world in terms of the number of both missionaries and native Christians.<sup>71</sup> These Christian institutions were influential in the city life. Throughout the colonial period, foreign missionaries, church pastors, elders, and Christian laymen operated many mission schools from the elementary level through high school level. Clearly, Christians had a dominant role in medicine and education, fields of particular honor in East Asian societies.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, a high concentration of the Christian population in major northern cities posed a great challenge to the Communist revolution because the Christian community tended to give less support to Communist ideology or Communist leaders.

Second, the Christian community in Korea was historically pro-American, and indirectly served to foster pro-American sentiment among the general population. Most of the church members, mission school graduates, and hospital patients had some degree of interaction with American and Canadian missionaries. Many young people, believers and non-believers alike, had come to know the benefits of Christianity through the humanitarian work and social services provided by missionaries and perceived Americans as their teachers or doctors; a number hoped one day to study in North

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<sup>69</sup> Rhodes' presentation, "Survey of the Stations."

<sup>70</sup> "Carrots and Radishes," *TIME*, 13 November 1950.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. See also Roy E. Shearer, "The Evangelistic Missionary's Role in Church Growth in Korea," *The International Review of Missions* 54 (1965): 465.

<sup>72</sup> In the 1930s, Rev. Samuel A. Moffett received a reward from the Japanese colonial government on his contribution to the education work in Korea. See William N. Blair, "Samuel A. Moffett: On His Seventieth Birthday," *The Presbyterian* (1934), newspaper cutting found in Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 360, Folder: Samuel A. Moffett – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

America.<sup>73</sup> Such pro-American sentiment was stronger in P'yŏngyang than in Seoul or any other major city. Therefore, when this northern city fell into the hands of the Russian Army, a deep sense of fear and disappointment was felt among its dwellers. Earnest efforts were made by Christian nationalists and capitalists to join together in preserving self-autonomy and hopefully ultimate independence.

Third, the concentration of the Christian population into specific local communities would allow them to unite in resisting Soviet policies. Their high influence in the local CPKIs showed the reality of their political strength. The determination of church leaders in the north to stand against Shinto worship during the Japanese colonial period would also not bode well for the Communists' own efforts at cracking down on the Christian community. Having learned from the years of persecution and imprisonment, Christian leaders would present a real obstacle to the ultimate threat of a Communist revolution. Foreseeing these potential problems, the Communist government decided on a gradual policy of containing Christian influence, while slowly carrying out its revolutionary reforms and consolidating its control.

Fourth, to compound Russia's troubles, not only was Christianity strongest in the north, but Communist influence was also the weakest there. The center of the Korean Communist Party was in the south, because the majority of the population was landless farmers and Communism offered a better alternative promise for landless serfs. The tenancy issue was less of a problem in northern rural life than in the south, partially

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<sup>73</sup> Such desire was not limited to merely Christian believers, but affected non-Christians as well. In the memoirs of No Kum-sok, even though he was not a Christian, he and other fellow classmates still had a desire to study in the United States. See Kum-sok No, *A MiG-15 to Freedom: Memoir of the Wartime North Korean Defector Who First Delivered the Secret Fighter Jet to the Americans in 1953* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1996). See also the interviews in Hildi Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea 1910-1945* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 15, and 77.

because northern farmland was generally less desirable for commercial rice cultivation, so northerners had been less harassed by Japanese investors.

According to Dr. Edmund deSchweinitz Brunner's 1925 survey,<sup>74</sup> the percentage of Korean families that owned a farm was far higher in the north than in any other part of Korea. Christian families in the north, in particular, had enjoyed a higher rate of land ownership than their non-Christian neighbors (see Table 2.7b).<sup>75</sup> It was hard to say that all these northern Christian farmers were landlords and therefore supported reactionary policies, but it was certainly possible, from the data of Table 2.7b, that Christian farmers were slightly better off than others in the region, and thus less receptive to the appeal of radical land reform. Facing the institution of Communist land reform, moreover, it was highly possible that Christians would become the victims of the Communist policy. Not only did churches themselves hold a large amount of land but, in addition, Christian landowners might be specifically targeted as a means of weakening the Christian community.

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<sup>74</sup> Although Dr. Edmund deSchweinitz Brunner's survey only consisted of 35 villages in Korea, the villages selected were typical in each region. This study was presented in *The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council* (24 March – 8 April 1928). The US State Department also received a copy of this research. The value of Brunner's results was that it provided data on the Christian population so that the relative difference of rural experience between Christians and non-Christians was shown in the figures. The data closely resemble other studies conducted later by historians. See Gi-wook Shin, *Peasant Protest and Social Change in Colonial Korea* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1996), 202. See also Kim Songbo, "Land Reform and Agricultural Collectivization in North Korea" (Ph.D. diss., Yonsei University, 1996), 35.

<sup>75</sup> The survey in 1925 (Tables 2.7a and 2.7b) showed general rural conditions during the colonial era. Certainly, rural-urban migration did occur during the next two decades of Japanese rule and the rate of tenancy did increase due to the Japanese policy, especially among Christian villages in the south where the land was more fertile and more suitable for rice cultivation. Because the Japanese government targeted Christians and took their land by force or through false charges in order to weaken the influence of the Church, more southern Christian farmers lost their land. As the figure showed in 1925 (five years after the March First Independence Movement), Christian families in the north still owned land (even higher than the regional overall percentage), whereas in the central region, where the capital Seoul was located, Christians shared a far lower percentage of landownership than the overall figure. Thus, the north still enjoyed a relatively higher percentage of families who tilled their own land by 1945.

The Communists were more successful in the Hamgyŏng region, which ironically was the highest non-tenancy area in all Korea. More than fifty percent of the peasants in North Hamgyŏng Province were owner-cultivators and in South Hamgyŏng had the second highest figure (32 percent).<sup>76</sup> The main reasons for their popularity were, therefore, not the promise of land reform, but the result of its further distance from the colonial power centers (in P'yŏngyang and in Seoul), its closer proximity to the Russian and Manchuria borders, and the smallest numerical presence of Christian and Ch'ŏndogyo population. In the P'yŏngan region, where the Christian and Ch'ŏndogyo populations were concentrated, the Communists faced strong resistance. If the Communists wanted to control the political center in P'yŏngyang, they would need to nullify the religious influence in the P'yŏngan region before they could secure firm control over the cities and the countryside.

Fifth, the prominent position of individual Christian leaders within the cultural nationalist circle also produced a natural union between Christians and other non-religious rightists, especially landowners, educators and capitalists. Since mission schools had graduated about one third of all Korean high school students, and since Christians were famous for their zeal for evangelism through their churches and their schools, Christian education competed directly with Communism in capturing the hearts, minds and souls of the youth.

### *The Rise of Cho Man-sik*

The Soviet Army was willing to work with Cho Man-sik because of his undeniable popularity in North Korea. Cho was a renowned Christian conservative in

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<sup>76</sup> Kim, "Land Reform and Agricultural Collectivization in North Korea," 35. See also Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 14.

P'yŏngyang and his reputation among Christians was high throughout the colonial period. In 1916, he became the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the P'yŏngyang YMCA. Cho was also an elder of the famous Sanjŏnghyon Church, where Rev. Chu Ki-ch'ŏl was a pastor before he was arrested by the police due to the Shinto controversy. During Rev. Chu's imprisonment, Cho continued to provide for Chu's family, defying the order of the colonial government.

Cho's influence as a Christian educator was also well-known in Korea. After his graduation from Meiji University in Japan, he took up a position as a teacher and later became principal of the famous Osan School in 1913.<sup>77</sup> The Japanese imprisoned him for about a year because of his participation in the March First Independence Movement in 1919. After his release, he continued to advocate resistance through "non-violence," and earned a nickname as the "Gandhi of Korea."

Since then, Cho worked with other cultural nationalists to promote education and native economic production. However, under Japanese pressure, Cho, like other conservative nationalists, had to make public statements to encourage students to volunteer for the Japanese war effort in late 1943. It did some damage to Cho's reputation as a nationalist.<sup>78</sup> Even so, Cho remained the most respected non-Communist leader in the north when the country was liberated by the Allies.<sup>79</sup> His fame in Korea was as strong as other nationalists in the south, such as Syngman Rhee, Yŏ Un-hyŏng, Kim Ku, and Kim Kyu-sik. From August to December 1945, Cho was the leader of a

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<sup>77</sup> Osan School was a famous institution established by An Ch'ang-ho.

<sup>78</sup> Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 55.

<sup>79</sup> Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes 1945-1947* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 402.

Nationalist-Communist Coalition. His popularity among both Christians and non-Christians made him an ideal leader for north Korea.

### *A Nationalist-Communist Coalition*

Without any prominent nationalist figure to compete with Cho Man-sik, the Soviet Union adopted a gradual and conciliatory approach in gaining political control in north Korea, and prevented open confrontation between the Communists and the conservatives. At that time, the domestic faction of the Korean Communists led by Hyŏn Chun-hyŏk and O Ki-sŏp supported Cho Man-sik, hoping to establish him as a national symbol and supreme leader.<sup>80</sup> Restraining orders were sent to all Soviet commanders to forbid the Russian soldiers from following the demands of the local Communist radicals so as to limit the chance of local unrest or armed uprisings.<sup>81</sup>

Meanwhile, the Russian occupation forces gradually reorganized all the CPKIs and made sure that Communists comprised at least half of the membership of these local organizations. The Soviet army went from city to city, taking over all enterprises, railroads, radio stations, banks, and other important economic installations; there was little opposition, since all of these facilities had been formerly owned by the Japanese. After securing the food supply, they next worked to take control of local security forces. The Russians placed Communist “red guards” in charge of all provincial police stations because they feared that pro-Americans and anti-Communists might have taken root in these vital units.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Chong-sik Lee, “Politics in North Korea: Pre-Korean War Stage,” *The China Quarterly* 4 (April-June 1963): 6.

<sup>81</sup> The Red Army was generally receptive to the local radicals’ demands to redistribute land. It caused a lot of grievances and social unrest among the rightists. See van Ree, *Socialism in One Zone*, 100-101.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 94-96.

Outwardly, the Russian leaders proclaimed that “the stage of the Korean revolution is the stage of bourgeois democratic revolution”<sup>83</sup> and sought to form a broad-based coalition. But secretly, they were working hard to weaken the power of the rightists and to gradually boost their own strength, all the while waiting for the right moment to strike. This time-honored Communist political ploy was very effective; the Soviets managed to tighten their military grip while successfully concealing their long range intentions under the guise of liberation.

There were four different factions among Korean Communists. In addition to the domestic faction, there were three more groups: the “Kapsan faction” led by Kim Il-sung, the Yan’an faction led by Kim Tu-bong, and the Soviet faction led by Soviet-born Ho Kai. The Russians had not quite decided whom they would support as rulers in Korea. Kim Il-sung and his group of sixty partisans returned in September 1945, while the “Yan’an faction” led by Kim Tu-bong, Mu Chǒng, and Ch’oe Ch’ang-ik, arrived a month later. Since the Soviet faction would probably receive the least direct support from the Korean people, the major political competition was therefore mostly among the domestic, Kapsan, and Yan’an factions. However, whoever could gain the support of the Soviet faction would substantially enhance their political position.

The most promising group seemed to be the Kapsan faction. Kim Il-sung’s guerrilla experience in Manchuria, his informal connection with both the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communist Party, and his Christian family background in P’yŏngyang gave him invaluable political assets, making him an ideal person to be a Communist

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<sup>83</sup> Quote in *Ibid.*, 99.

representative to prepare for a nationalist-Communist front, and the future replacement of Cho Man-sik.<sup>84</sup>

The first sign of Soviet intention to build up Kim Il-sung's reputation was the huge welcoming ceremony staged by the Russians. On October 3, General Terentii Shtykov brought Kim Il-sung to Cho Man-sik, asking Cho to introduce the young nationalist to the Korean people. On October 14, 1945, in a ceremony to welcome "General Kim Il Sung" back to Korea, Cho Man-sik introduced Kim Il-sung as a legendary anti-Japanese hero to a crowd of 70,000 people.<sup>85</sup> On that day, many people in the crowd had doubted Kim's true identity due to his youthful looks and his mysterious name as Kim Song-ju. Rumors about him as an imposter were spread throughout the north and the south. Kim still needed time to build up his support base in the north, while he competed with other Communist factions in gaining control of the Korean Labor Party.

A coalition between the leftists and rightists seemed to be possible at that time when the Russians still allowed a certain degree of political autonomy, letting the rightists organize their own parties and allowing religious activities to continue. During September and early October, members of the Soviet high command in P'yŏngang and various Communists leaders, including Kim Il-sung, urged the non-Communist members of the People's Committee to establish a political party to mobilize his supporters.<sup>86</sup>

#### *Main Political Ideas of Cho Man-sik*

When Cho Man-sik started his work to organize a rightist political party, he attracted a wide range of followers. He received solid support not only from Christians,

<sup>84</sup> Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 121.

<sup>85</sup> Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 401.

<sup>86</sup> "Weekly Information Bulletin#20," 4 September 1947, *美軍政期情報資料集: CIC (방첩대) 보고서 1945.9 - 1949.1*, 2:381.

but from non-Christians as well, especially among the well-educated elites and the propertied classes. Communists from the left and collaborators from the right were all willing to work with him in the South P'yŏngan Provincial People's Political Committee (SPPPC) and the Five-Provinces Administration Bureau (FPAB). Cho attracted a wide following and received Soviet support because of his national fame and his moderate political platform.

Since Cho considered that it was important to improve the welfare of the whole nation and maintain unity with the social elites, he did not want an immediate resignation of all Japanese collaborators, even though he personally believed that "national traitors" should be stripped of suffrage and other political, economic, and social privileges. He was more of a figure of reconciliation who attracted many ex-pro-Japanese followers. Here, Cho's idea did not differ greatly from Syngman Rhee's concern over the question of collaboration; Rhee also advocated a peaceful transition period.

Cho's idea of land reform was also rather moderate. He supported the improvement of the tenancy system, but not its outright abolition. He did not support a radical land reform that confiscated land without compensation to the land holders. He advocated social justice, but he did not neglect the needs and the rights of landlords. For example, the Communists proposed a "3-7" tax system, which meant that the tenants were allowed to keep up to 70 percent of their products and gave 30 percent to the land owners. Cho fought bitterly against this "3-7" system because he believed that it was too harsh to the landowners. He thus proposed a moderate "4-6" distribution instead, in which land owners could receive 40 percent of the output. In spite of Cho's position, the

South P'yŏngan People's Committee adopted the "3-7" system on September 27, 1945.<sup>87</sup> Since Cho frequently stood up to defend the interests of capitalists and landowners, it made him a very popular man among the rightists and the moderates.

Even so, the Soviet Union favored Cho Man-sik as the leader for a coalition because he was a less controversial figure. Thus, under Cho's leadership, a coalition government (similar to those in Eastern Europe) perhaps could solve the problem of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel division, and achieve the ultimate independence of Korea. After a "push" by Soviet officials, Cho Man-sik and Rev. Yi Yun-yong formed the Chosŏn Democratic Party (CDP) on November 4, 1945. The strength of CDP grew quickly to 300,000 and demonstrated its power in local People's Committee elections in November 1945.<sup>88</sup> By early 1946, its membership grew to 500,000. Kim Il-sung sent three agents, one of whom was Kim Ch'aek, to be installed as Democratic Party officials.<sup>89</sup>

The CDP was a party of cultural nationalists. It adopted their ideas of national unity, patriotism, and independence. It published three newspapers in the north: *P'yŏngbuk minbo* (People's News in North P'yŏng'an Province), *Hwanghae minbo* (People's News in Hwanghae Province), and *Kwangwŏn minbo* (People's News in Kangwŏn Province).<sup>90</sup> The party stood for the improvement of the welfare of the whole nation, not merely of the interests of the underprivileged. It paid special attention to the unity of all social elites and supported the idea of freedom of speech and universal suffrage for all except "national traitors." Like Cho, the party advocated an improvement of the tenancy system and labor reform. Education, the CDP believed, was the key to the

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<sup>87</sup> Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 121.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>89</sup> State Department, *North Korea: A Case Study in the Techniques of Take Over*, 14.

<sup>90</sup> Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 163.

enhancement of national culture. The political platform of the CDP was generally tolerated by the Communists, the socialists, and the Russians because they all believed that it was appropriate for the current stage of Korean development.<sup>91</sup>

Although Cho Man-sik seemed to be the leader of the north, he actually had very little real power; he was merely a figurehead. The Russians controlled not only the local People's Political Committees, but also the police forces as well. However, what the Russians had miscalculated in the formation of such a coalition was that Cho Man-sik was more loyal to the interests of the Korean people and the idea of independence than his own political fortune. The conflict between the CDP and the Russian occupation forces began to intensify a few weeks later, when Cho opposed the Red Army's policy of taking grain away from the Korean farmers in the name of food procurement.<sup>92</sup> The underlying tensions between the Christian community and the Communist authorities also fueled the breakup of the coalition.

### *A Major Clash between Christians and Communists*

The first major clash between Christians and the Red Army occurred in mid-November 1945, in the North P'yŏngan Province, a Christian-dominated area. In Sinŭiju, where Christians dominated the CPKI, two Presbyterian pastors, Rev. Yun Ha-Yŏng and Rev. Han Kyŏng-jik, organized the Christian Social Democratic Party in September 1945.<sup>93</sup> It was probably the first political party to be organized in the whole Korean peninsula after liberation, preceding the CDP by two months. The party platform was to

<sup>91</sup> Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 122.

<sup>92</sup> "Weekly Information Bulletin#20," 4 September 1947, *美軍政期情報資料集: CIC (방첩대) 보고서 1945.9 - 1949.1*, 2:381. See also Ree, *Socialism in One Zone*, 117. There was a serious food shortage during the first eighteen months of Soviet occupation. The economy was disrupted by the division of the country and the slaughter of livestock by the Soviet occupation forces in the fall of 1945.

<sup>93</sup> At that time, Syngman Rhee was still in Washington waiting for a passport to enter Korea. Kim Il-sung arrived at Wŏnsan on September 19, but he did not appear in public until October 14, 1945, when Cho Man-sik, under the arrangement of the Russian General Chistiakov, introduced him to the public.

promote democracy and reform the country in line with Christian ideals. Later, it was renamed the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in order to attract a wider following. This party was mainly organized through church channels. According to Korean church historian Allen Clark, “in each district, with the Church as a center, a district branch was organized and became so strong that the Soviets became much concerned.”<sup>94</sup> The SDP was similar to Cho’s CDP, but had stronger religious connotations. Rather than being a competitor, the SDP endorsed Cho Man-sik and worked closely with the CDP, whose political base was in South P’yŏngan Province.

The conflict between the SDP members and the Soviet occupation forces began as soon as the party was established in September because Soviet leaders were afraid of the growing influence of SDP. Since the Communists did not have enough loyalists in this province, the Red Army needed to bring in additional Communists from the remote Hamgyŏng Province to organize the local non-Christian residents, mostly uneducated farmers and laborers.<sup>95</sup>

When the SDP District Executive Committee in Yongamp’o Po, under Deacon Chang Wŏn-bong’s leadership, met on November 16, 1945, student representatives spoke up against the violent control of the Red Army.<sup>96</sup> The workers in a local factory, stirred up by the Communists, attacked the meeting. One church elder was beaten to death and many others injured. The mob destroyed the church building where the meeting was taking place and damaged the homes of most of the SDP executive committee

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<sup>94</sup> Allen D. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1971), 240.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Most of the local grievances in the north against the Soviet Army were over widespread rapes, requisitioning excessive amounts of the local food reserves, and looting the factories and banks. See van Ree, *Socialism in One Zone*, 118.

members.<sup>97</sup> Students from local high schools, mostly Christians, rose up to defend the executive members of the SDP when they saw the Communists' violent methods. As soon as they arrived at the scene, a fight broke out between the students and the Communists. Many were injured; yet it was just the beginning of a wider student uprising.

A few days later, on November 23, 1945, about five thousand Christian high school students in Sinūiju, organized by student leaders in three local, church-connected high schools, gathered to confront the Communist authorities through a mass demonstration, in the spirit of the March First Independence Movement. They divided themselves into three groups and marched peacefully toward three different locations: Communist headquarters in Sinūiju, the North P'yōngan People's Committee office, and Sinūiju Police office.<sup>98</sup> Alarmed by the potential spread of wider social unrest, the Russian Army immediately suppressed the demonstration, using machine guns. In the end, twenty-three students were killed, about seven hundred were wounded, and more than one thousand were arrested.<sup>99</sup> Among them, about two hundred students were sent as exiles to forced labor camps in Siberia.<sup>100</sup>

The Russian Army issued a warning against any student demonstration, and began to arrest all SDP Executive Committee members. Rev. Yun and Rev. Han, the organizers of SDP, escaped the purge because they had left for the south already. The confrontation

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<sup>97</sup> Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, 240. See also Clark, *History of the Korean Church*, 12-13.

<sup>98</sup> Seong-Jae Lee, “解放以後 北韓基督教會 共產政權과의 關係에 대한研究 *Haebangihu buk'hankidokkyohoe gongsanjeonggwongwau gwangyee tehanyeongu* Study on the Relation Between North Korea Government and North Korean Church since Liberation,” (M.A. Thesis, Yonsei University, 1992), 39-40.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 40. See also Ree, *Socialism in One Zone*, 117.

<sup>100</sup> The Sinūiju Student Uprising was the second most famous uprising in the 1940s. It demonstrated the influence of Christianity in the north and the political and social conflicts between Christianity and Communism in northern Korea. *Ibid.*, 40.

and the crackdown on the SDP marked the beginning of a Christian “exodus” to the south. The Russians then began tightening their control over churches, planting spies in each congregation to spot any potential anti-Communist activities, just as the Japanese had done during the colonial period. Christian family background was declared to be a condition of political “unreliability.”<sup>101</sup> Many more clashes between Communist forces and nationalist rebels occurred during that winter and spring.<sup>102</sup>

### *Cho Man-sik’s Objection to the Moscow Agreement*

A major breakthrough that could possibly have resolved the division of Korea was the Foreign Ministers’ Conference in Moscow in December 1945. It was a genuine effort by the great powers to save their wartime alliance and preserve the possibility of cooperation in post-war international affairs. The foreign ministers of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union met together in Moscow on December 16 to discuss various key issues of unresolved wartime programs. Korea was one of their main concerns.

During the conference, the United States proposed a plan calling for a four-power trusteeship of Korea, while the Soviet Union declared that it wanted quick Korean independence. Yet, what the Russians really desired was an “independent friendly” Korea, a Korean government that was controlled by pro-Soviet leaders. The United States, however, insisted on a trusteeship, hoping that by doing so, it could have a stronger influence over political development of Korea. In the end, both sides agreed to form a US-Soviet Joint Commission to assist the establishment of a provisional Korean government. The new government would then consult the Joint Commission and decide

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<sup>101</sup> State Department, *North Korea: A Case Study in the Techniques of Take Over*, 97.

<sup>102</sup> See Ree, *Socialism in One Zone*, 117.

on detailed arrangements for a four-power trusteeship of Korea for up to five years. The final version of the Moscow Agreement opened the possibility that a trusteeship might not be necessary if both the Joint Commission and the new provisional government agreed to drop the plan.<sup>103</sup> It also implied that the United States and the Soviet Union would cooperate to put an end to zonal occupation.<sup>104</sup>

The Koreans' response to the Moscow Agreement, however, was generally negative in both the north and the south. Most people, including the Communists, naturally resented the whole arrangement because the word "trusteeship" was often mistranslated as "protectorate" in the Korean language. It reminded them of the old memories of how Korea became a Japanese protectorate between 1905 and 1910 and eventually lost its independence. Therefore, in order to soften the resistance of the people in their occupation zone, the Russians carried out an extensive campaign to explain the idea of "trusteeship" to the Korean people. The word "trusteeship" was translated into Korean as "guardianship" to distance its connection with the unpalatable past. The Soviet officials also emphasized that the new Korean government would come first – before the trusteeship – and the Korean people should support the plan in order to secure their quick independence.

Cho Man-sik and the CDP stood firmly against any arrangement of trusteeship. On December 28, 1945, the trusteeship plan for Korea was officially announced in the two occupation zones. Cho Man-sik immediately voiced his opposition to the plan. During a meeting of the People's Committee (SPPPC), representatives were asked to cast their votes on the plan. While Communist members supported the plan, Cho and his

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<sup>103</sup> Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 217.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

supporters voted against it because they believed that any compromise on the idea of trusteeship, regardless of how the term was translated, would delay the possibility of immediate independence. In other words, their stern opposition to trusteeship had nothing to do with the plan itself, but with the idea of foreign intervention in Korean affairs. Cho and his supporters, who were mostly cultural nationalists, found it an insult for the foreign powers even to consider a trusteeship because they believed in their capacity for self-government, and they did not need the consent of any foreign powers. Therefore, in protest against trusteeship, Cho Man-sik and several other CDP members resigned their position in the SPPPC.

Cho Man-sik's protest against the Moscow Agreement caught the Russians by surprise. After Cho's resignation, Soviet officials tried to persuade Cho to change his mind, but Cho refused.<sup>105</sup> On January 5, 1946, exhausting all possible means to sway Cho from his anti-trusteeship position, the Soviet authorities finally decided to take him into "protective custody," which meant house arrest in the Koryŏ Hotel, a luxury hotel in P'yŏngyang.<sup>106</sup> There were many testimonies saying that the Soviet generals as well as other Communists and leftists, including Kim Il-sung and later Yŏ Un-hyŏng, gathered around Cho to persuade him to support the Moscow Agreement and promised to make him the head of state in northern Korea. Had Cho accepted the offer, the course of history might have been different.

The point here was not whether or not Cho Man-sik accepted the Soviet offer, but the offer itself. It showed the lack of confidence of the Soviet generals and Kim Il-sung in assuming full control of the northern zone without the collaboration of Cho. It was

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<sup>105</sup> Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 123.

<sup>106</sup> Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 217.

true that in the end the Communists did manage to control the whole zone, but it was not without loss. Open confrontation was the last thing the Soviet Union desired, especially when United States' public opinion might be sensitive towards the oppression of the Christian church in the north. They did not want to provoke a big uprising like that of March 1<sup>st</sup> 1919. Therefore, they wanted to push forward the plan of coalition as long as possible so that they could conduct their house cleaning quietly.

The way in which the Russians handled Cho's opposition supported this point. The Russian had shipped to Siberia almost everyone who stood up against the trusteeship, but not Cho Man-sik. He was only put under house arrest in the best hotel in P'yŏngyang. Clearly, because of Cho's strong influence in the north, it was too much of a risk to execute him. Perhaps the Russians might have believed that Cho would possibly change his mind later, and could therefore be useful to pacify the north as well as to gain support in the south. In fact, Cho Man-sik's reputation in the south increased rather than declined when he openly opposed trusteeship. Thus, Cho still had future political bargaining value.

Also, Cho Man-sik was different from other rightists because he was a true national figure. Similar to Syngman Rhee and Yŏ Un-hyŏng in the south, his name had symbolic influence among the people of the whole nation. Killing Cho or sending him to Siberia was too much of a political risk to take because the anti-Communist rightists might use this opportunity to incite a nationwide, anti-Soviet uprising that could jeopardize the Communist position while its hold on power in the north was still weak. It was better to keep Cho under "house arrest" so that the rightists had no excuse to mobilize a mass movement.

From 1946 to 1950, many people tried to persuade Cho Man-sik to give up his anti-trusteeship stand and support the Moscow Agreement. Nevertheless, Cho was not swayed because he was more a nationalist than a politician. His anti-trusteeship position was also in line with public opinion, so his resolve only increased his popularity, causing many people to come forward and plead for his life.<sup>107</sup> Beyond his personal appeal, Cho's story also suggested the overall strength of the Christians and their rightist allies in the north, as well as the fears that the Soviets and the Korean Communists had concerning them.

### *RELIGIOUS OPPOSITION TO A COMMUNIST REVOLUTION*

Cho Man-sik's downfall marked the end of any Soviet attempts at forging a coalition with the rightists. The Five Provinces Administrative Bureau (FPAB) was dissolved and replaced by a new political organization, the North Korean Provisional People's Committee (NKPPC), under Kim Il-sung's chairmanship.<sup>108</sup> It became the central government in P'yŏngyang that controlled the five provinces in northern Korea.

#### *A Communist Revolution in North Korea*

A systematic purge of rightists started first against the Chosŏn Democratic Party (CDP), and then against other groups. In February 1946, a General Meeting of delegates of the Chosŏn Democratic Party was called in P'yŏngyang.<sup>109</sup> The party was forced to

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<sup>107</sup> Syngman Rhee's government attempted to exchange Cho for two convicted Communist spies, but the effort was cut short due to the outbreak of the Korean War. According to Pak Kiryong, a North Korean Communist official who fled to the Soviet Union in 1959, when UN troops were marching toward P'yŏngyang in October 1950, Cho and all his family were executed before the Communists fled north. See Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 123.

<sup>108</sup> The North Korean Provisional People's Committee (NKPPC) was later renamed the North Korean People's Committee (NKPC) in February 1947.

<sup>109</sup> "Weekly Information Bulletin#20," 4 September 1947, *美軍政期情報資料集: CIC (방첩대) 보고서 1945.9 - 1949.1*, 2:382.

elect a new party chairman, Ch'ŏ Yong-gŏn, who had been in Soviet Russia and was a close associate of Kim Il-sung. When the purge began, many Christians and rightists in the CDP joined the "exodus" of refugees fleeing south, including one of Cho's sons and the vice-chairman, Yi Yun-yong.<sup>110</sup>

The NKPPC began a series of reform programs including land reform, new regulations on labor, legalized equality between the sexes, and the nationalization of major industries. The Communist authorities also passed legislation to improve working conditions, provide social insurance, and expand educational, cultural, and health facilities.<sup>111</sup> To expand the influence of the Communist Party, the NKPPC mobilized the poor peasants, workers, women, and youth, who were the traditionally underprivileged elements of Korean society.

The land reform program in March 1946 was the main effort to buy the support of landless farmers. The NKPPC issued an order that land was to be confiscated from former Japanese holdings, known collaborators, landlords with over 5 *chŏngbo* (about 2.45 acres), absentee landlords, and religious organizations, and then distributed to agricultural laborers, landless tenants, and peasants with less than 5 *chŏngbo*. In the end, about 1 million *chŏngbo* were confiscated and re-distributed to 700,000 families.<sup>112</sup> About seventy percent of the farming population benefited from the reform. A state-operated Farmers' Bank offered loans for farmers to buy seed, fertilizer, and equipment.

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<sup>110</sup> Rev. Yi Yoon-yong remained politically active in the south. At the request of Syngman Rhee, Rev. Yi gave a representative prayer at the opening session of the first National Assembly on May 31, 1948. See Nak Heong Yang, *Reformed Social Ethics and the Korean Church* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1997), 136.

<sup>111</sup> State Department, *North Korea: A Case Study in the Techniques of Take Over*, 16.

<sup>112</sup> Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 76.

The Land Reform was, in fact, not as bloodless as the Communists claimed. The rightists in South P'yŏngan region resisted the land redistribution. Riots broke out in many places. Russian soldiers were called in by the NKPPC to suppress these local rebellions.<sup>113</sup> The majority of landlords left the north for the south even though their decisions would leave them permanently landless.<sup>114</sup> When the land redistribution was completed on March 31, 1946, the popularity of Communism among the landless peasants and urban workers began to rise, and the political and social power of the rightists continued to decline.

In many leftists' eyes, the northern revolution was a successful model because it met relatively little resistance and enjoyed strong public appeal. The success, however, was not truly realistic because the Communists' popularity was the simple consequence of arresting the most disgruntled, or pushing them south. The Communists were untroubled by the loss of about two million people who migrated south; removing this surplus population lessened northern food demands and increased the political, economic, and social turmoil below the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel (See Table 2.8). It was a wise political strategy that allowed the Communists to kill two birds with one stone.

In reality, the land reform actually gave more economic power to the state than to individual farmers because the Communist authorities actually taxed about 50 percent of the farmers' crops.<sup>115</sup> Later, on some occasions when farmers failed to meet their predicted goals, they had to surrender 75 percent of their crops to the state. The land reform neither solved the food shortage problem, nor improved the livelihood of the

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<sup>113</sup> See Ree, *Socialism in One Zone*, 153.

<sup>114</sup> Mun Woong Lee, *Rural North Korea under Communism: A Study of Sociocultural Change* (Houston, TX: Rice University, 1976), 20.

<sup>115</sup> Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 143.

northern farmers. Communist authorities adopted food rationing to solve the shortage problem. Without a free market, food distribution enabled the Communist authority to exert greater political control over city dwellers, because the government could withhold food from their political opponents and supply good quality food to their loyal supporters.<sup>116</sup>

### *Christian Opposition To Communist Political Control*

The arrest of Cho Man-sik and the loss of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) upset many church leaders in the north who knew that the Soviet Union had no desire to grant them political freedom. As the March First celebration was approaching in a few weeks, church leaders seized the opportunity to mobilize their congregations to voice their discontent. Before the fall of Cho, the Soviet authorities had shown no objection to the churches' participation in the celebration of March First. In February, however, the North Korean Provisional People's Committee suddenly issued an order prohibiting any church from celebrating the independence movement and commanded all people to attend the People's Assembly organized by the Communists.<sup>117</sup>

Such an order did not, however, deter clergymen from organizing their own religious memorial services for the loss of their members during the March First uprising. The P'yŏngyang Pastor's Association met on February 21, at the Sŏmun (West Gate) Church,<sup>118</sup> and they decided to hold their own March First memorial service. Communist authorities immediately demanded that the clergymen change their minds. When the pastors refused, police arrested about sixty P'yŏngyang city church leaders. A few who

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>117</sup> Lee, "Study on the Relation Between North Korea Government and North Korean Church Since Liberation," 43-44.

<sup>118</sup> The West Gate Church was the oldest Presbyterian Church established by an American missionary, Rev. Samuel A. Moffett around 1895.

managed to escape arrest went on with the original plans for the memorial service in various locations.<sup>119</sup> On March 1, 1946, at ten o'clock in the morning, about ten thousand people gathered at the Changdaehyŏn Presbyterian Church, the original site of the March First Movement in P'yŏngyang city, to attend the memorial service. The Communist authorities surrounded the church with armed men, but because of the presence of several thousand Christian young people, they did not disturb the service and waited until Rev. Hwang Ŭn-gyun finished his sermon. As soon as he was done and the people bowed their heads in prayer for the independence of Korea, the police came in and took the pastor away in front of the whole congregation.<sup>120</sup>

Rev. Hwang's arrest did not prevent Christians from continuing with their planned programs. About five thousand Christians rushed out, waving Christian and Korean flags and shouting the famous slogan, "*Tongnip Mansei!*" (which means "Hurrah for Independence"), then singing the hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers," as they marched towards the Soviet Army headquarters. When they saw the Communist police and Red guards, they waved their Christian flags and shouted, "Freedom of religion. Government control of religion [is] absolutely opposed."<sup>121</sup>

The parade attracted the attention of many sympathetic P'yŏngyang citizens who voluntarily joined the demonstration. When they finally reached the P'yŏngyang Railway Station, where Kim Il-sung held the Communist March First celebration, the two groups confronted each other, and Kim's celebration came to an abrupt end. Similar clashes between Christians and Communists occurred everywhere in the northern cities. For example, in Yongch'ŏn and Ŭiju in North P'yŏngan Province near the Korea-

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<sup>119</sup> Clark, *History of the Korean Church*, 12-13.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

Manchurian border, not far from Sinŭiju, where there was a huge concentration of Protestants and Catholics (see Table 2.6), the confrontation between the Communist authorities and the Christian community was particularly intense, resulting in the destruction of many churches and mass arrests.<sup>122</sup>

What disturbed Kim Il-sung even more was that several assassins had tried to kill him with hand grenades while he was giving his speech during the March First Memorial celebration.<sup>123</sup> Kim Il-sung put the two events together and concluded that Christian churches were conspiring with the southern rightists in order to eliminate him and destroy the Communist revolution in the north. As a result, Kim became even more determined to take full control of the churches and exterminate all anti-Communist and reactionary elements from northern society.

Shortly after the March First event, the Ŭiju Presbytery moderator, Rev. Kim Kwŏn-jo, called a meeting of Christians on March 17, 1946. He suggested that Christians in the north send a joint statement to the south, informing southerners of the Communist atrocities in the Russian occupation zone. As soon as Kim Il-sung discovered the plan, the police immediately arrested Rev. Kim and his associates.<sup>124</sup>

### *Communist Control over Christian Churches*

This chain of events triggered Kim Il-sung's wrath against the churches. As a result, Communist authorities organized a systematic dissolution of the influence of the Christian churches. First of all, they intentionally scheduled all important affairs on

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> This event is also written by one of the assassins. See In-ho Kim, *Across the Line of Death* (Seoul: Thinking People Press, 1999). See also Lee, "解放以後 北韓基督教會 共產政權과의 關係에 대한研究 Study on the Relation between North Korea Government and North Korean Church since Liberation," 45-46.

<sup>124</sup> Clark, *History of the Korean Church*, 13.

Sunday, conducted political lectures in church buildings, and demanded that all Christians attend. The most serious dispute was the election on Sunday, November 3, 1946. The authorities demanded that all people come out and vote. Christians, who did not want to vote, perceived this as a direct threat to their religious freedom. Church leaders finally became disgusted with the Communists' unreasonable demands, and united together to voice their discontent. The North Korean Joint Presbytery declared:

Our 2,000 churches and 300,000 Christians, for the preservation of the faith and the progress of the Church, having approved the following five principles for the government of the Church and as rulers for Christian living, wish to inform the People's Committee of these Principles, hoping for their kind cooperation: 1) Keeping the Sabbath holy is of the life of the Church, so there should be no attendance at things other than worship on the Lord's Day. 2) Government and religion should be kept separate. 3) Respect for the Deity in the church building is the proper duty of the church, so that the use of this church building for other purpose than worship is forbidden. 4) In the event that an acting church worker enters the field of politics, he must resign his office in the church. 5) The Church stands for freedom of religion and assembly.<sup>125</sup>

Their opposition to the Sunday election and their refusal to comply with Communist orders revealed their desire to distance themselves from the new Communist regime.

In order to weaken the unity of the Christian community, Communists applied a divide-and-conquer strategy. Under the direction of Kim Il-sung, a separate pro-regime Christian organization, known as the Christian League (*Kidokkyo Kyodoyŏnmaeng*), was formed and headed by Kim's relative, Kang Yang-uk, a former pastor in P'yŏngyang. It was designed to take members away from the influential Presbyterian Church and other denominations. Initially, their effort was not successful, but when a famous Korean missionary to China, Pak Sang-sun, and a retired minister-evangelist, Kim Ik-du, joined the league, some Christians followed in fear of Communist persecution.

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 14.

Probably the last major organized resistance by the Christian community against Communist control was on election day, November 3, 1946.<sup>126</sup> Most churches in both North and South P'yŏngan Provinces refused to participate in the election despite Kim Il-sung's order.<sup>127</sup> Christians crowded their churches and did not leave for the entire day. In other provinces, Communists went to Christians' home, asking them to vote in the morning. When they did not listen, the police waited for the end of the worship services, and forced the church members to vote. In some areas, the election was extended to Monday morning so that Christians had no excuse not to vote.<sup>128</sup>

The election was an effective means of creating the illusion of mass support, while at the same time rooting out opposition members. The people could either vote for the communist candidate, or they could vote against him by placing their ballots in an ominously colored "black box." There was no way to conceal an anti-Communist vote because all of the ballots were serially numbered and the Communist guards were watching carefully.<sup>129</sup> Despite these dangers, of the 4,516,120 legitimate voters, around 25,000 refused to vote, and 131,757 chose to vote against the Communists (see Table 2.8).<sup>130</sup> The number of anti-Communist voters was actually as high as 156,692, or about

<sup>126</sup> Following the consolidation of Communist power in the north, little is known for certain about the fate of those Christians who remained. According to the reports of the refugees and the testimonies of individual northern Christians during the Korean War, most of the remaining clergymen were either arrested or converted by the Communists.

<sup>127</sup> Clark, *History of the Korean Church*, 14.

<sup>128</sup> Lee, "解放以後 北韓基督教會 共產政權과의 關係에 대한研究 Study on the Relation between North Korea Government and North Korean Church since Liberation," 49.

<sup>129</sup> Buk Lee, "Report on North Korea," *美軍政期情報資料集: 질레트 (F. E. Gillette) 보고서. 전범대 재판기록 1946-1948* (Seoul: Hallym University, Institute of Asian Culture Studies, 1996), 1:23-24. See also Van Ree, *Socialism in One Zone*, 158. Two ex-north Koreans, Chung Hwak-sil and Jeong Chun-seop, whom the author interviewed in June 2004, also testified to a similar situation.

<sup>130</sup> The Communist authorities used the "two-box system" for the election. Each voter received a card with the name of a candidate and threw it either into the white box ('yes') or into the black box ('no'). This election was hardly democratic because there were basically no options. The names of the candidates were mostly Communists or pro-Communists. Those who rejected the Communist candidates had to put their ballots into the "Black Box" before the eyes of the Communist guards, a very daring move.

3.5 percent of the total legitimate voters (see Table 2.7). To cast a ballot into the black box or to refuse to show up at the election center was to put one's life at risk. A report by an anti-Communist publisher in the south, Yi Puk, claimed that prior to the re-election the following year in March 1947, "members of the Democratic Young Men's Alliance and Laborer's Union carried out a widespread massacre of the black box voters."<sup>131</sup>

In addition, since the November election, any attempt to organize a rival political party would immediately attract the police. The most well known case was the Christian Liberal Party (CLP) under the direction of Rev. Kim Hwa-sik. Like the SDP, the CLP began its organization around September 1945, but the formation of the Chosŏn Democratic Party under Cho Man-sik's leadership attracted most of the attention. Rev. Kim and his supporters gave up their effort. Nevertheless, new international developments motivated Rev. Kim to mobilize again. In September 1947, after the collapse of the US-Soviet Joint Commission to resolve the division of Korea, the United States referred the Korean situation to the General Assembly of the United Nations. The US plan was to call for separate elections in two zones in Korea. After two months of debate and discussion, the General Assembly adopted the US-sponsored plan to establish the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) to investigate the situation in Korea and oversee the upcoming election in the American zone.<sup>132</sup>

Fearing that the nation was going to be divided permanently, the remnants of the northern Christian nationalists tried to rise up again to reverse this trend. When news of the UN resolution reached the ears of Rev. Kim and his supporters in November, they

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<sup>131</sup> Lee, "Report on North Korea," *美軍政期情報資料集: 질레트 (F. E. Gillette) 보고서. 전범대 재판기록 1946-1948*, 1:24.

<sup>132</sup> Jon Halliday, "The United Nations and Korea," in *Without Parallel: The American-Korean Relationship Since 1945*, ed. Frank Baldwin (Toronto: Random House, Inc., 1973, 1974), 112-117.

hoped that the situation might turn to their favor, and thus hurried to form a new political party to support a general election throughout the country. Nevertheless, the day before the formal ceremony of the CLP's establishment, the Communist police arrested Rev. Kim and some forty leaders of the party. Most of these men either died in prison or permanently disappeared.<sup>133</sup>

The resistance of the northern Christian leaders against Communist domination cost the Christian community heavily. Kim Il-sung intensified his pressure on the clergymen and laymen through the Christian League. From 1948 onwards, all Christian workers were "required" to join the league. Most of the well-known pastors and elders who refused to join the league either were arrested one-by-one or went missing or escaped to the south before the police found them.<sup>134</sup> In the end, a total of 212 pastors, not including elders and laymen, lost their lives before the outbreak of the Korean War.<sup>135</sup> By forcing two Protestant seminaries to combine and limit their enrollment to only 120 students, the Communist authorities sought to starve the Christian community of any potential leadership so that it would never be able to rise again to resist the government.<sup>136</sup>

Because of the Communists' harsh policies against the Christian community, a large number of Christians became uprooted refugees in the south. Although the actual number of Christians that fled south is unknown, the figure likely exceeded one hundred thousand. The majority of these refugees were pastors, laymen, church workers,

<sup>133</sup> Lee, "Study on the Relation Between North Korea Government and North Korean Church Since Liberation," 41.

<sup>134</sup> Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, 243-244.

<sup>135</sup> There were about 109 pastors in the five presbyteries of the south in 1940. By 1947, there were about 179. About seventy Presbyterian pastors had left the north. With a total of 212 northern pastors' deaths by 1950, we can guess the majority of the clergymen in the north were either exterminated or fled.

<sup>136</sup> Lee, "解放以後 北韓基督教會 共產政權과의 關係에 대한研究 Study on the Relation between North Korea Government and North Korean Church since Liberation," 58-60.

educators, landowners, students, or businessmen. Their presence in the south would provide new political, social, and religious force to the anti-Communist cause.

*The Last Stand of Ch'öndogyo*

The Young Friends' Party (YFP) organized by Ch'öndogyo's followers was a serious rival opposing Communist domination in the countryside. When the Christians clashed with the Communists in the cities during the first eighteen months of Russian occupation, the YFP remained quiet in the countryside since the YFP's approach to social issues such as land reform was quite similar to the Communists. Their differences began to emerge later in 1947 when the Communists tried to weaken the influence of the YFP, and also when the failure of a real rural transformation and Communist control became obvious to some Ch'öndogyo followers.

When Ch'öndogyo continued to grow and attract followers among peasants, the Communist authorities were alarmed. In mid-1947, Ch'öndogyo claimed 1,690,000 adherents in north Korea.<sup>137</sup> In March 1948, the YFP conducted a "Second March First movement" to advocate national unity and independence, supporting the idea of a nationwide election. Since the YFP believed that the peasants' rights should be above the state, and that the public should be free from the extractive hand of the state and government control, the movement aroused the suspicions of the Communist authorities. Many Ch'öndogyo believers were arrested by the police. Kim Il-sung denounced "reactionaries" among the peasants in the YFP in his speech before the Korean Workers Party Congress in March 1948.<sup>138</sup> The YFP leaders became fearful of their political future, and would never again make any statement or take any action that would provoke

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<sup>137</sup> Armstrong, *The Korean Revolution*, 128.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

the Communists. Under Kim Tal-hyŏn's leadership, the YFP reversed its position, denounced the UNTCOK, and accused the United States and "reactionaries" in the south of perpetuating the division of Korea. After that, the YFP submitted fully to the political leadership of the Communist government in North Korea.<sup>139</sup>

### *CONCLUSION*

Religion was an important political factor in post-liberation North Korea. Both Ch'ŏndogyo and Christianity were popular. While Ch'ŏndogyo received its support mainly from farmers, Christianity was popular in the cities and among educated elites. An immediate Communist dictatorship was not possible right after liberation because of the influence of these religious groups. A nationalist-Communist coalition was, therefore, desirable, yet not necessarily attainable. The rise and fall of Cho Man-sik signified both the attempt and the failure of such a coalition in north Korea. The division of the Korean peninsula, the clash between Christians and Communist authorities, and the exodus of refugees from the north would have equally significant impacts on the south. The refugee problem was an added burden on an already troubled and inflamed southern society, further complicating the political, economic, social, ideological, and religious conditions in the south.

Koreans, in general, had a very limited understanding of American democracy. Nevertheless, through either the church or its public outreach services, many Koreans had formed a favorable view of America, through a "special relationship" dating back sixty years. And among all Koreans, Korean Christians had the strongest ties to America, and were the most ardent admirers of America's freedoms and way of life. Preserving their

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

religious freedom became part of their struggle to achieve an American style of democracy. Among the two million refugees, there might not be many common traits – they came south from all socioeconomic backgrounds, and left the north for a variety of reasons, not all of them religious. However, they shared one common idea – a hatred, if not a fear, of Communism.

The influx of two million refugees into the southern Korean zone (enough to swell the overall southern population by about 10 percent) would, of course, come to have a dramatic effect on the polarization of the south. These northern refugees, including prominent Christian clergymen, elders, and educated laymen, would emerge as a significant political, religious, and social force in the southern zone. As a result, whichever southern leader could capture the refugees' support would likely gain enough political strength to rise above his political rivals.

## CHAPTER 3

### Religious Factors in South Korea

#### INTRODUCTION

When the northern refugees arrived in the south, they discovered a very different world. Lacking the troop numbers,<sup>1</sup> the political savvy,<sup>2</sup> and the ruthlessness of the Soviet Army,<sup>3</sup> the U.S. occupation zone was rocked by other kinds of problems such as terrorist activities, political assassinations, strikes, guerrilla attacks, political uprisings, and anti-government demonstrations. In addition, an influx of migrants from Manchuria, China, Japan, and North Korea caused serious shortages. Refugees suffered from squalid living conditions as a massive relief effort was needed just to provide basic necessities.

Nevertheless, for many refugees from the north, the southern wind was a breath of fresh air. The southern climate was especially welcome to the Christians, educators, land owners, and the pro-Japanese collaborators, who had generally been the most persecuted in the north. Under the U.S. occupation, Christians and collaborators were two of the major groups dominating the American Military Government (AMG). Christians were free to preach, foreign missionaries were coming back and working for the AMG, and

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<sup>1</sup> According to General John Hodge's report to General Douglas MacArthur in Tokyo on September 13, 1945, the strength of US Army stationed in south Korea was very limited, far less than the number the Soviet Union had sent to north Korea. See "Conditions in Korea," 13 September 1945

*美軍政期情報資料集: 하지 (John R. Hodge) 문서집 1945.6-1948.8* (Seoul: Hallym University, Institute of Asian Culture Studies, 1995), 3:6.

<sup>2</sup> It is generally agreed by most historians that United States forces were unprepared and uninformed for their occupation task in south Korea.

<sup>3</sup> The ruthlessness of the Soviet Army during the initial stage of the occupation is presented by Erik van Ree, *Socialism in One Zone: Stalin's Policy in Korea, 1945-1947* (Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1989).

Christian leaders could be found all along the political spectrum from the right to the left (though not the extreme left). Why did the AMG favor Christians and hire collaborators?

To cover every aspect of the American occupation is far beyond the scope of this chapter, and has already been the subject of various books.<sup>4</sup> Instead, this chapter will focus only on finding the missing pieces in the puzzle of how Christians rose to power under the AMG and of how Christianity became an important factor in the rise of radical anti-Communism in southern Korea.<sup>5</sup>

#### *THE ROLE OF GEORGE Z. WILLIAMS IN THE FORMATION OF THE AMG*

As soon as the demarcation line was drawn on August 16, 1945, Washington informed General Douglas MacArthur about the American occupation of Korea. But, who should General MacArthur send to be in charge of Korea? There were several logical choices. The most suitable one was General Joseph W. Stilwell, the Commander of the Tenth Army, because he had wide experience in the Far East. He had worked with both the Chinese Communists and the Nationalists during World War II, but Chiang Kai-shek disliked him intensely because of Stilwell's harsh criticism of Chiang's government while working with Chiang in the China-India-Burma theater in 1942-1944. General

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<sup>4</sup> The most comprehensive work is Bruce Cumings' two volumes on the origins of the Korean War. Bonnie B.C. Oh's collection of articles, *Korea Under the American Military Government 1945-1948*, provides interesting analyses of specific aspects of the American Military Government (AMG). Jongsuk Chay's *Unequal Partners in Peace and War* gives a solid overview of the bilateral relations between Korea and America before and during the Korean War. Robert T. Oliver's *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea 1942-1960* is an in-depth pro-Rhee study of the relationship between Rhee and the American government.

<sup>5</sup> Chung-shin Park's study, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, is an important overview, but he does not study the connection between Korean Christians, American missionaries, and the AMG in depth. Donald N. Clark's account of missionaries in Korea, *Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience 1900-1950*, gives some important details, but still, he provides no elaboration on the connections between these three major groups.

MacArthur did not send Stilwell due to Chiang's strong opposition.<sup>6</sup> Another possible choice was Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer, who was in command of all American forces in China at that time. Since he had trained the Korean "Restoration Army" in Xi'an, China, he was well-known among Korean nationalists.<sup>7</sup> Had he been in charge of the occupation, he would have wide support from Korean nationalists in China, in particular, the Korean Provincial Government (KPG) in Chongqing (Chungking). Nevertheless, perhaps Wedemeyer was too involved in China affairs, and too far away to come. The assignment fell on the shoulders of General John R. Hodge for one simple reason: he was geographically the closest to Korea at the time.

#### *General Hodge and Commander Williams*

General Hodge was in Okinawa when General MacArthur's order arrived. He needed to move his troops from there to Inch'ŏn Harbor as quickly as possible. Although Hodge was a good soldier and a courageous commander, he had very limited knowledge of Asia. Neither Washington nor General MacArthur offered him much help. He received little guidance on how to set up a military government in the southern zone, and had few troops and no interpreters. Hodge's first political adviser was H. Merrell Benninghoff, a low ranking State Department officer who could not speak with authority

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<sup>6</sup> Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes 1945-1947* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 123.

<sup>7</sup> Henry Chung, *Korea and the United States Through War and Peace: 1943-1960* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2000), 99-100.

and had very little knowledge of Korea.<sup>8</sup> Hodge's ignorance of Korean affairs paved the way for Commander George Z. Williams, the son of Rev. Frank Williams, who was a Methodist missionary to Korea, to become Hodge's trusted personal adviser during the first three months of US occupation in Korea.

George Z. Williams was born in Inch'ŏn and had spent the first fifteen years of his life in Korea, but he was *not* originally assigned to the Korean occupation force on the eve of General Hodge's landing. During World War II, Williams had served as the head of the Department of Laboratories at a large hospital on the U.S. naval base in Brisbane, Australia. In 1945, he took up a new assignment as an Assistant Fleet Surgeon, where he was in charge of the medical landing operations for US forces. He applied for a transfer as soon as he heard of the plan of American forces to occupy southern Korea. His application, however, was rejected twice because Vice Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, the Commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet, wanted to keep him on his ship.

Nevertheless, through a mere coincidence that would have far-reaching effects on the AMG, Williams' ship came in on September 8, 1945 because the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet was assigned to the convoy escorting General Hodge and his troops to Inch'ŏn. Speaking fluent Korean, Williams was the only American at that time able to communicate with the three Korean representatives who were waiting for General Hodge at Inch'ŏn

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<sup>8</sup> Neither did Washington have any bright ideas about domestic politics in Korea. Most of the reports the State Department officials received were basically unreliable or tainted by political leanings. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 129. See also James I. Matray, "Hodge Podge: American Occupation Policy in Korea, 1945-1948," *Korean Studies* 19 (1995): 20. To make it worse, Benninghoff was a low ranking State Department officer who could not speak with authority. Thus, General Hodge requested to have "Washington officials empowered to speak of the future be added to [his] staff." See "Conditions in Korea" 13 September 1945, 美軍政期情報資料集: 하지 (John R. Hodge) 문서집 1945.6-1948.8, 3:8.

Harbor.<sup>9</sup> Williams seized this opportunity to plead his case directly to General Hodge. Hodge immediately took him to be his personal political adviser. It was initially a temporary assignment, but Williams would ultimately serve in this capacity for about three months. Since Hodge had already been given Benninghoff as his political adviser from the State Department, why did he choose to put Williams in the same role? It was not just because Williams could communicate freely in Korean, but also because he could mingle with the Korean people due to his religious connections.<sup>10</sup>

### *Commander Williams' Responsibilities*

General Hodge asked Williams to advise him on the political conditions in Korea, to hire Koreans for the American Military Government (AMG), and to speak on behalf of the AMG to Korean leaders.<sup>11</sup> Each of these assignments would prove critical to the initial formation of AMG. By combining three crucial responsibilities into one position, and then entrusting that position to a hastily chosen individual, Hodge unintentionally

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<sup>9</sup> These three Koreans were delegates of the Committee for Preparation of Korean Independence. See Jongsuk Chay, *Unequal Partners In Peace and War: The Republic of Korea and the United States, 1948-1953* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publisher, 2002), 40.

<sup>10</sup> On September 8, 1945, right after Williams had met with the three representatives and brought the General's words back to them, they took Williams around town and fed him dinner. When he returned to the ship, he reported his "investigation" back to the General. That night, the Admiral sent word to Williams, asking him to work for General Hodge. "Notes on address by Commander George Tsur Williams to Korea secretaries and missionaries in the Methodist Chapel, 30 January 1946," Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 29: 1, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. (This document is the most interesting document I found in the church archives. Although it was a message to the Methodist leaders, I found the document instead in the Presbyterian archives. At the top of the document, it was marked as "very confidential – not to be quoted." It was a private statement by Commander George Z. Williams to the church groups and secretly circulated among church leaders who had a deep interest in the missionary work in Korea. Since this document was buried in the church archives and not generally available to diplomatic historians, I think it is important to take a deeper look at it because of the influential role Williams played during the early months of US occupation. The document reveals Williams' inner thoughts, frustrations, and even his "prophesy" on the future development of a divided Korea.)

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

made Williams the most powerful and influential person in the AMG – at least for the all-important first month, if not longer.<sup>12</sup>

Williams, however, was a medical specialist, not a trained interpreter, and not a well-informed political advisor. Thus, his views were not necessarily in accordance with the position of Washington, and he was vulnerable to the manipulations of skillful Korean politicians. Also, his religious background and church connections tended to make him more receptive to the opinions and the needs of Christian groups, educated elites, and missionary communities. His extensive contact with the Korean elites and his free access to General Hodge were probably the keys to understanding how the rightists, especially the Christian elites, came to dominate the AMG.<sup>13</sup>

Williams' first mission was to learn as much as he could about Korean public opinion and political leanings, and then to report it to General Hodge. What kind of information did he submit to Hodge? First of all, he showed particular favoritism towards conservatives and Christian elites, such as Song Chin-u, Kim Ku, and Syngman Rhee. His favorite Korean leader was Song Chin-u, who was a famous cultural nationalist during the colonial period, and was also the leader of the Korean Democratic Party (KDP). Williams saw Song as a stern anti-Communist and pro-democracy conservative. He regarded the people in the KDP as prominent and trustworthy Korean

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<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that Washington did not send any specific or detailed guidelines for the occupation. It made Williams' role in the first three months of occupation more critical. A lack of preparation and an absence of qualified personnel haunted the initial stage of Hodge's military occupation in Korea. See Matray, "Hodge Podge: American Occupation Policy in Korea, 1945-1948," 21.

<sup>13</sup> It is hard to evaluate George Z. Williams' work because there is not much information available. Since he was a last minute kind of adviser of whom the State Department had no foreknowledge and over whom it exercised no direct control, State Department files contain only a few written materials concerning him. Neither did he have a formal responsibility to report on his duties to the Army Headquarters in Tokyo. Nor is much available in the military file. Nevertheless, from September 1945 to January 1946, Williams was very close to Hodge, receiving full attention from the General. He was everywhere in the field and very active in the AMG, but unfortunately remained basically invisible if we only seek information on him in the government archives.

leaders. This probably explained why the AMG appointed many KDP members to its administration. Since the arrival of the US occupation forces, the KDP had advocated the return of Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku to Korea, and lobbied for the recognition of the exiled Korean Provisional Government (KPG), then based in Chongqing (Chungking), China. Song and his associates worked hard to convince Williams that Rhee and Kim would receive “ninety percent support” from the Korean people if the United Nations were willing to recognize them.<sup>14</sup> Soon afterward, General Hodge, probably acting on Williams’ advice, urged General Douglas MacArthur to bring Rhee back from the United States and to recognize the KPG “as a provisional government under Allied sponsorship to act as figure-heads during the occupation,” if possible.<sup>15</sup>

The problem, however, was that Williams actually knew very little about any of these individuals. The names of Song, Rhee and Kim were indeed famous among Koreans,<sup>16</sup> but this did not necessarily mean that they would be the best choices for the benefit of an American occupation. History would show that Rhee and Kim caused more problems and headaches for the AMG than anyone else. The anti-trusteeship campaign devised by Rhee and Kim was a great burden on the AMG.<sup>17</sup> Kim’s attempt to overthrow the AMG in early 1946 also weakened the legitimacy of the AMG. These rightists

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<sup>14</sup> “Notes on address by Commander George Tsur Williams to Korea secretaries and missionaries in the Methodist Chapel, January 30, 1946,” 2-5. According to Cumings, the KDP constantly demanded the return of the Korean Provisional Government (KPG) to offset the influence of the People’s Republic. These two self-proclaimed governments thus competed vigorously for public support as well as political legitimacy in the first year of American occupation.

<sup>15</sup> Hodge himself knew that not all Koreans favored the KPG due to “a wide diversity of opinion.” Thus, he allowed the KPG members to return only as private individuals and did not recognize the KPG without the approval of Washington. See “Conditions in Korea” 13 September 1945, *美軍政期情報資料集: 하지 (John R. Hodge) 문서집 1945.6-1948.8*, 3:6-8.

<sup>16</sup> All their names appeared on the list of the cabinet members of the People’s Republic even without their consents. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 87.

<sup>17</sup> For details of the trusteehip debate, see Choi Sang-Yong, “Trusteeship Debate and the Korean Cold War,” in *Korea Under the American Military Government 1945-1948*, ed. Bonnie B.C. Oh (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 13-39.

probably caused as much trouble as the leftists, making the American occupation even more difficult. In fact, the State Department trusted neither of them and even blocked Rhee's return by denying him a passport. Nevertheless, because of the insistence of Hodge and MacArthur, the War Department bypassed the State Department and brought Rhee back to Korea on its own airplanes. This action sparked the beginning of an ongoing conflict between Hodge and the State Department throughout the occupation period.

Second, Williams did not trust the leftists, particularly the Communists. Despite Yŏ Un-hyŏng's general popularity among the Korean people, Williams feared that his People's Party was actually controlled by the Communists.<sup>18</sup> According to Williams' own political surveys, probably conducted during the first two months of the American occupation, the Korean Communist Party (KCP) only had 300 members when the Americans landed, and the overall support for the Communists was a meager five percent of the southern population. He also asserted that the Communist leader, Pak Hŏn-yŏng, was politically insignificant because no one in Korea knew who he was. But, since Pak was the only Korean delegate that Williams could identify as ever visiting Moscow, Williams suspected that Pak was a puppet, and that the Russians had real control over the People's Party.<sup>19</sup> Williams' major concern was that Pak actually ran the People's Party<sup>20</sup> instead of Yŏ. Thus, since Williams believed that the leftists were politically marginal, and at the same time wide open to Soviet subrogation, he was unwilling to depend on

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<sup>18</sup> "Notes on address by Commander George Tsur Williams to Korea secretaries and missionaries in the Methodist Chapel, January 30, 1946," 4-6.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 5. Actually, Yŏ Un-hyŏng had also visited Moscow in his early life. Yŏ became a devoted Socialist after his tour to Russia. See Lee Wha Rang, "Who Was Yo Un-hyung?" <http://www.kimsoft.com/2002/mongyang.htm>.

<sup>20</sup> Because of General Hodge's command, the People's Republic was forced to change its name to "People's Party," in order to avoid suppression by the AMG.

them for advice or public services. His survey probably explains why the General initially refused to work closely with the People's Party.<sup>21</sup>

Since Williams was responsible for hiring Korean elites to fill high positions in the AMG, he naturally loaded the government with more conservatives, in addition to the already empowered pro-Japanese collaborators. According to historian Bruce Cumings, the AMG hired or retained about 75,000 Koreans from September to December 1945, and most of these men were affiliated with the KDP.<sup>22</sup> Seeing that the United States had made a great mistake by hiring pro-Japanese "traitors," Yim Yōng-sin,<sup>23</sup> a well-known female nationalist, hurried to confront the AMG officials about the problem. However, an official told her that since there was only one person who spoke Korean in the whole US occupation force, there was no way for the Americans to distinguish who were collaborators and who were not.<sup>24</sup>

Williams was actually quite sympathetic to those Koreans who had worked and lived under the Japanese reign of terror. When some accused collaborators showed him how they had tricked the Japanese and "sabotaged the Japanese war effort," Williams was very impressed and hoped that someone might write a book about it.<sup>25</sup> His positive view of these collaborators perhaps had encouraged him to keep them in the military government. According to his primary investigation, he discovered that "the Koreans had

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<sup>21</sup> General Hodge agreed to cooperate with the leftists and worked with Yō Un-hyōng when Washington pressured him in 1947 to bring forth a coalition between the leftists and the rightists, but the effort came too late.

<sup>22</sup> Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 156.

<sup>23</sup> Louise Yim was a graduate from Ewha Women University and received her Master Degree at the University of Southern California, with her thesis, "Korean Buddhists Are Turning to the Christian Faith." She turned to Korea in 1932 and began to build a new Women University in Seoul. She was well-known among the anti-Japanese underground circle, and a loyal supporter of Dr. Syngman Rhee.

<sup>24</sup> Louise Yim, *My Forty Year Fight for Korea* (Seoul: Chungang University Press, 1951), 242.

<sup>25</sup> "Notes on address by Commander George Tsur Williams to Korea secretaries and missionaries in the Methodist Chapel, January 30, 1946," 3.

been forced to cooperate in all the war efforts,” and believed that it would be unfair to exclude them simply because they had worked for the Japanese.<sup>26</sup> If so, no one would be qualified to serve in the AMG.

Most American missionaries agreed with him. For example, Horace G. Underwood, who had lived in Korea during the colonial era, knew the difficulty of the issue and explained the situation well. According to his experience in the education field, most of the collaborators in Korean schools were actually “good people,” but they had no choice if they wanted to survive the thirty-five years of Japanese occupation. From top to bottom, collaborating with the Japanese was basically unavoidable.<sup>27</sup>

### *Growing Christian Influence in the South*

Liberation of South Korea by US troops offered Korean Christians an opportunity to gain power. Since Americans were looking for educated and English-speaking workers, it was relatively easy for Christians, who were educated in mission schools and had worked closely with missionaries, to enter the AMG. Thirty-five out of fifty Koreans in high positions were Choson Christian College (Yonsei) professors, graduates, clergymen, and church laymen.<sup>28</sup> In addition, six Korean doctors, who were all personally trained by American medical missionaries during the Japanese colonial period, were appointed by AMG as vice-governors.<sup>29</sup> Compared to these two sets of figures with the Korean Interim Legislative Assembly (KILA) and the directly-elected Korean

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Horace G. Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace: The Recollections of Horace G. Underwood* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2001), 106.

<sup>28</sup> Edward Adams, “Report on Korea,” 15 January 1946, p.3, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 29 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia. See also Arthur J. Moore, *The Church Cradled in Conflict: A Report of an Episcopal Visit to Korea in 1946* (New York: The Methodist Church, 1946), 8.

<sup>29</sup> R. Manton Wilson, “Dear Friends” letter, 23 January 1946, Presbyterian Church (U.S.), Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

Legislative Assembly (KLA), the proportion of Christians was high in all three, but by far the highest in the AMG administration appointments (see Table 3.1).

In fact, when General Hodge ordered Williams to set up a National Advisory Council for the military government, he also showed his favoritism toward Christians. The general wanted the council to consist of “two non-pro-Japanese lawyers, two bankers, some agricultural men, two highly successful business men, a doctor, and two representatives of the Protestant Churches, one of the Catholics, one of Confucianism, one of Buddhism, and one from each of the main political parties – the People’s Republic and the Democratic Party.”<sup>30</sup> Given that Christians were less than three percent of the overall Korean population, a request for three out of five religious representatives taken from the Christian circle was exceptionally high. Following Hodge’s direction, Williams was able to find people to fill the council except for the two representatives from the Protestant churches because he could not immediately locate any non-pro-Japanese pastors. For the rest of the group, the majority of them were Christian laymen. Williams called it a “Christian National Advisory Council.”<sup>31</sup>

In another case, General Hodge asked Williams to find a head for the Korean National Police, one of the most crucial positions in the AMG. Williams turned to Song Chin-u for help and instructed him to find someone to run the police who would be anti-Communist and have the courage to put anti-Communism into practice.<sup>32</sup> When Song came back to Williams the next day, he brought with him Cho Pyŏng-ok, a well-known

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<sup>30</sup> “Notes on address by Commander George Tsur Williams to Korea secretaries and missionaries in the Methodist Chapel, January 30, 1946,” 6.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. Eventually, Kim Song-su, Kim Yong-mu, Song Chin-u, Yi Yong-sol, Kim Yong-sun, O Yong-su, Kang Pyong-sun, and Yun Ki-ik participated in the council, but Yŏ Un-hyŏng quit and Cho Man-sik was not able to attend because he was in the north. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 147.

<sup>32</sup> Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 158.

Christian nationalist and an active KDP member.<sup>33</sup> Cho's anti-Japanese record and his American-educated background satisfied the criteria, and so Williams persuaded the General to immediately appoint Cho as the head of the national police in October 1945.<sup>34</sup> Since whoever controlled the police force would eventually control the future political and social development of the American zone, the rightists and Christians were gaining more power and obtaining a stronger position in the south with a Christian KDP man in charge.

Because more Christian clergymen and laymen were entering into positions of influence, there was an immediate impact, boosting the political and social standing of the Christian community. Rather than being persecuted, as they were during the colonial period, Christians became a new ruling class in the liberated southern zone. This was not accidental, but was a natural result of a synergistic match between a successful American mission field for the previous four decades and the rise of an American hegemony.

### *AMERICAN MISSIONARIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE IN THE AMG*

The establishment of a military government in the south hastened the return of American missionaries and provided an unprecedented opportunity to re-establish their influence in Korea. Although the American Military Government (AMG) and the missionaries had completely different goals, each side needed the other to achieve them. The AMG was desperate for trained workers and the missionaries were desperate for visas. Though having no direct power in politics or policy-making, the missionaries

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<sup>33</sup> Cho Pyong-ok was a student in *Paejae* School. He graduated from Columbia University and claimed to have received a Ph.D. there also. He later returned to Korea and became a YMCA Activist. Cho was arrested during the colonial period because of his anti-Japanese activities. See *ibid.*, 501.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

would come to wield a remarkably strong influence upon both American military generals on one side and Korean leaders on the other.

*Preparation for their Return to Korea*

After being forced out of Korea by the Japanese in 1942, missionaries looked forward to their return to the peninsula as ambassadors of peace. At the inter-denominational Korea Area Conference held in 1943 in New York, the attendants expressed their desire for Korean independence.<sup>35</sup> At first, they were optimistic about the growing power and influence of Russia and China in Asia, hoping that “the eclipse of Japan” would produce greater freedom for evangelization in China and other Asian countries. With such hope, they supported religious freedom so that missionaries might advance the Christian cause without hindrance.<sup>36</sup>

Around this same time, some religious political action committees, such as the Christian Friends of Korea, began to advocate that missionaries become involved in Korean politics. Their representatives urged churches in the United States and Canada to “unite in an effort to prevail on the Allied Nations, especially America, to immediately recognize the independence of Korea, deal with the [Korean] Provisional Government in Chungking China, through its accredited representative in Washington just as they continue to recognize the provisional governments of several European countries and deal with them through their accredited representatives.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> “Letter by the Board to members of the Sub-Committee on Korea,” 26 April 1943, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 19 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>36</sup> J. L. Hooper, “Basic Issues Confronting Postwar Missions,” Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 30: Korean Consultative Conference, 1944 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>37</sup> O. R. Allison, “Note on objections some missionaries and some Board Secretaries make to joining in a movement to urge the United States of America to declare the immediate independence of Korea,” 18 November 1943, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 29 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

Planning the future of a not-yet-liberated Korea, some church activists envisioned a land of confusion and many competing ideologies – democracy and communism being just two. Having a history of monarchy but now without a king, and having had no self-government for forty years, post-war Korea would be a power vacuum. Since Korea had a large number of well-trained Christian leaders, missionaries expected the Christian elites to be the ones to maneuver this new nation toward America and toward the American ideals of democracy and the free practice of religion. The missionaries' role would therefore center on assisting native-Christian leaders and on extending the Church's influence.<sup>38</sup> To be sure, not all missionaries thought in such political terms or would become involved in politics; yet, no missionary (or church member for that matter) could remain entirely aloof from the religious implications of a Communist Korea. Such political planning reveals that the seeds of future alliances between individual missionaries and the Korean rightists had already been planted before the war's end.

### *The Return of Missionaries*

When World War II finally came to a close, the US occupation of southern Korea encouraged American missionaries, who expected that their government would be favorable to their cause, opening the way for their prompt return, and working with them to develop Korea. Korean Christians had similar expectations. As soon as the war ended, Korean Churches sent a deluge of requests for missionaries to the Foreign Missions desks of their parent denominations in America. For example, representing the general opinion

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

of the Korean Christians, Rev. Yun Ha-yŏng<sup>39</sup> and Rev. Han Kyŏng-jik also wrote to the Presbyterian Board in early 1946 that they were “waiting for the missionaries” and wanted to establish new Korea “on the sure foundation of Christ.”<sup>40</sup>

Similar requests from individual Korean clergymen and laymen arrived frequently. American church leaders were excited and moved to act quickly. As early as November 1945, the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions (USA) had already expressed the hope that the United States would enter into a short-term trusteeship with Korea so that the United States could offer political support and economic assistance to Korea through both government and private channels.<sup>41</sup> The board adopted a strategy of inter-denominational collaboration to lobby the U.S. government to help Korea attain political and economic stability and independence and the full religious liberty of the Korean people.<sup>42</sup> To maximize the religious influence, the Presbyterian Church (USA) encouraged missionaries to enlist in “the Red Cross, OFRRO, or other government agencies” involved in relief work.<sup>43</sup>

In spite of pressure from religious groups, the State Department hesitated to send back missionaries due to security concerns. The missionaries turned their efforts to the U.S. Army. Here, they met with greater success, because the army recognized that, to

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<sup>39</sup> Rev. Yun Ha-yŏng, a formerly pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Sinŭiju, was the co-founder of the (Christian) Social Democratic Party in North Korea. After he escaped to South Korea, the American Military government appointed him to be the governor of North Ch’ungch’ŏng Province. Harry A. Rhodes and Archibald Campbell, *History of the Korean Mission Presbyterian Church in the USA Vol.2 1935-1959* (New York: Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1964), 88.

<sup>40</sup> Edward Adams, “Report on Korea,” 15 January 1946, p.5, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 29 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>41</sup> J.L.H. “Reports From Korea,” 6 November 1945, Presbyterian Church Archives, RG 140, Box 16, Folder 29 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Charles W. Iglehart, “Some Notes on Post-war Relief and Reconstruction,” 28 September 1943, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 19 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

effectively occupy Korea, it would need as many people as possible with expertise in Korean society. The War Department expressed a willingness to sponsor missionaries “if they would cooperate during the first period of their arrival with the relief program of the army.”<sup>44</sup> Even though the missionaries were connected to the army, “they would be free to give time outside the regular hours to making contacts with the Christian groups.”<sup>45</sup> General Hodge also gave his personal assurance to Bishop Arthur J. Moore of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who visited Korea in early 1946, that he welcomed missionaries to come and work for the AMG.<sup>46</sup> Blocked by the State Department, the missionaries therefore saw the AMG as the only way to get their feet back on Korean soil. In the final analysis, the stonewalling of the State Department surely increased the political impact of the missionaries, because they became entrenched in many government posts as a result.

The first missionaries to return were those already enlisted in the military. Like Williams, they requested transfers to Korea. Among this first wave of returnees were Dr. Horace H. Underwood, Lieut. Horace G. Underwood, Lieut. Richard Underwood, Gordon Avison, Jr., Park L. Gerdine, and Charles K. Bernheisel.<sup>47</sup> These men were all

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<sup>44</sup> John Hooper, “Letter from the Board to the Korea Mission,” 22 October 1945, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 2, Folder 28 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> The following is a quotation from a radiogram sent by General Hodge to the Department of State. ‘Policy on missionaries this headquarters revised as follows. Each religious denomination formerly represented in Korea may send former missionaries not to exceed number formerly maintained in Korea by each organization. Government transportation to Korea is desired until commercial transportation becomes available. Local transportation and living accommodations exceedingly limited. Military Government can assist in making food available and in finding limited housing. But it must be understood by individuals that living conditions will be rugged and for that reason selection should be limited to male missionaries. No facilities for families at present time. This headquarters desires opportunity to approve individual cases prior to departure from United States.’ See Moore, *The Church Cradled in Conflict*, 20-21.

<sup>47</sup> The author of this dissertation cannot find the rank of the rest of them.

Korean-born children of missionaries.<sup>48</sup> Their army status, their local connections, and their language skills made them very useful to the occupation forces.

Lieut. Richard Underwood, for example, was an 18 year-old army officer who was receiving training for future intelligence work in Korea by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) shortly before the war ended. Outrunning his oldest brother and his father, Richard Underwood was the first member of the prestigious Underwood family to return to Seoul.<sup>49</sup> Upon landing in Seoul, he was immediately put to work in the Property Custody Section because he spoke fluent Korean. Then in the spring of 1946, he was sent to the American Liaison team in P'yŏngyang. Purportedly assigned as the chauffeur for the Head of the Liaison Office, his real mission was collecting intelligence information. But where could he find a network of pro-American informants? Naturally, he used his church connections. Making contact with a local Presbyterian Church in P'yŏngyang, he earned their trust through his missionary credentials as a third-generation Underwood in Korea. Church members provided him with valuable intelligence information about Russian soldiers and the communist government in the north.<sup>50</sup>

Richard Underwood's father, Dr. Horace H. Underwood, the only son of Rev. Horace G. Underwood, the first ordained Presbyterian missionary to Korea, returned to Seoul as a 54-year-old civilian officer under the AMG. He also had conducted

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<sup>48</sup> Edward Adams, "Report on Korea," 15 January 1946, p.3, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 29 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>49</sup> According to his Memoirs, Dr. Syngman Rhee allowed Richard Underwood to fly with him from Guam to Tokyo in the private plane that was prepared by General MacArthur. Richard F. Underwood, "Memories and Thoughts," (unpublished manuscript, 2002), 42.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-58. It is hard to verify exactly what information the church members provided for Richard Underwood, but judging by the time of his residence in P'yŏngyang, it was the period shortly after the implementation of land reform. Anti-Communist sentiment among the rightists, especially among church leaders, certainly ran high because all the church farmland was confiscated by the Communists and redistributed to landless peasants.

intelligence work during the war for the US government in Asia and had been reassigned to similar murky duties in Seoul, arriving soon after his son Richard, in October 1945.<sup>51</sup>

Meanwhile, Lt. Horace G. Underwood was serving in the US Navy and participating in the occupation of Japan because he was fluent in both Japanese and Korean. Later, in early 1946, he was transferred to Seoul and placed in charge of reorganizing Seoul National University.<sup>52</sup> He “was the only bilingual person working between the university’s newly appointed president, Dr. Harry B. Ansted, and the Military Government on the one hand, and the Korean faculty and students on the other.”<sup>53</sup> Lt. Underwood remained in the AMG through August 1947.

In addition to these missionary “kids,” other civilian missionaries also found their way to Korea through the AMG. Since General MacArthur thought that there was a link between Christianity and democracy, he gave permission for another twenty American male missionaries (10 Protestants and 10 Catholics) to return and serve in AMG’s Department of Public Health and Welfare.<sup>54</sup> In addition, Mr. Dexter N. Lutz and Rev. Frank Williams (George Williams’ father) became agricultural advisers of the AMG; Dr. John D. Bigger and Dr. Roy K. Smith worked as medical advisors; Dr. R. Manton Wilson was put in charge of medical services for lepers, and Miss Ella Sharrocks and Miss Edith Myers served as nurses. The AMG depended heavily on these “Old Korea hands” to understand Korean affairs. For instance, every Friday morning at ten o’clock, General Archer Lerch, the Military Governor, would meet with these missionaries and listen to

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<sup>51</sup> I cannot locate the details of their return. Since Richard Underwood mentioned his father’s position, we know that Dr. Horace H. Underwood was attached to the U.S. Army: “Even my 54 year old father was signed up to go to China as a Department of the Army Civilian (DAC) to be involved in Korea-American affairs in some unspoken manner.” See Underwood, “Memories and Thoughts,” 37.

<sup>52</sup> The exact date of his transfer is not available. Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 103.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>54</sup> Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 294.

their advice.<sup>55</sup> Seeing the potential benefit of missionary-AMG cooperation, Mr. Lutz urged the Presbyterian Foreign Mission Board to send more missionaries to work for the military government because they could obtain more power and resources to carry out their Christian reform programs in Korea.<sup>56</sup>

By joining forces with the military government, American missionaries wielded a stronger influence over the modernization and development of Korea in terms of education, social work, agriculture, and of course, religious freedom and the promotion of Christianity than other foreign missionaries, who returned later than the Americans.<sup>57</sup> American Catholic missionaries, for instance, replaced the French in leading the Korean Catholic Church. For example, Bishop Patrick Byrne, one of the early American Maryknoll missionaries who had begun work in P'yŏngyang in the 1920s, was appointed by the Vatican as its apostolic delegate to Korea in 1948.<sup>58</sup>

American missionary works had always included aspects of modernization and democratization, as well as spreading the gospel. For the missionaries who had struggled in vain to advance their reform programs through the long years of tight Japanese colonial control, US occupation of Korea was the breaking of a logjam. Their positions in the AMG and the support they received from the army were like a dream come true. They were excited and hopeful about working to build a Korean government for the future based on American and Christian ideals.

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<sup>55</sup> Rhodes and Campbell, *History of the Korean Mission*, 379-380.

<sup>56</sup> Dexter N. Lutz, letter written from Seoul to Dr. Hooper, 7 May 1946, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 29 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>57</sup> The earliest group of civilian missionaries (non-American) returned in June 1946, about six months to a year later than the Americans. See Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 295.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 349.

### *Missionaries and the Influx of Northern Refugees*

By early 1946, a massive influx of refugees was causing serious problems for the military government in the south. More than a million Koreans had been repatriated from Japan and 401,685 more were recorded as migrants from above the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. But there were about 1,450,000 more who arrived without any records (see Table 3.2). Christians and clergymen from North Korea were among them.<sup>59</sup> Most of these refugees settled in the big cities; the majority of those from the north stayed in Seoul, unless they had relatives in other parts of Korea (see Tables 3.2 and 3.3). Caring for these refugees became a major headache for the AMG. Food, housing, clothing, and job opportunities were all in short supply, and the potential for epidemics was high.

Out of compassion for the needs of these destitute people, and recognizing an opportunity for mass evangelism, missionaries and Christian churches took up the daunting burden of caring for these millions. Missionary homes, especially the big house belonging to the Underwood family, served as informal relief centers and storage areas. Mission schools and local churches were also focal points of private relief work. Ethel Underwood (the wife of Dr. Horace H. Underwood), for example, recruited volunteer women from various churches for assistance. The Underwood family alone supplied 60,000 people with clothes in a year.<sup>60</sup> These extensive religious relief networks also presented a significant opportunity for increasing the visibility and public image of Christianity among the new refugees. The church network and Christian connections

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<sup>59</sup> William A. Linton, "Dear Friends" letter, 4 October 1947, Presbyterian Church (U.S.), Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

<sup>60</sup> Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 110-111.

also gave some Christian refugees a better chance of survival and higher upward mobility by securing jobs in the AMG.<sup>61</sup>

According to a survey conducted by the Presbyterian Korea Mission in 1947, church attendance in the south increased markedly from 1946 to 1947. People seemed very eager to hear the Christian message.<sup>62</sup> The numbers of pastors reported living in the south grew rapidly because of the south-bound migration of many northerners. The Presbyterians had 109 pastors living in the south in 1941. However, in 1947, there were 179, a sixty-four percent increase, a direct result of an influx of Christian clergymen from the north.<sup>63</sup> New refugee churches began springing up in many southern cities. Formerly Japanese churches in the once Japanese settlements were now occupied by Koreans. In some cases, even Shinto temples were turned into churches.

### *The Rise of Radical Anti-Communism among Christians*

The north had always been the heart of Korean Christianity, both in terms of the proportion of the overall population and evangelical zeal. Since Christians had been persecuted by Communist authorities in the north, they longed for the religious freedoms of the south. When these refugees began to concentrate in the south, it infused the southern church with new radical anti-Communist vigor.

Maie B. Knox, an American missionary in Kwangju, wrote to her friends across the Pacific about the rise of anti-Communist sentiment among Korean Christians:

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<sup>61</sup> Since American missionaries constantly hosted and befriended American officials, it was easier for Christians, with references both from Church leaders and missionaries, to secure clearance to work for the AMG. See Anna McQueen, "Dear Friends" letter, 26 November 1948, Presbyterian Church (U.S.), Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

<sup>62</sup> "Survey 1947, Korea Mission, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.," p.4, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 34 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>63</sup> "Survey 1947, Korea Mission, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.," pp.2-3, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 34 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

The refugees continue to pour into South Korea from the Communist North, and of course are destitute, having to leave everything to the Communists and begin again from scratch. Leaving is a very precarious business and babies and old people sometimes die on the way. But they say they cannot exist under Communist rule. So many fine Presbyterians have flocked to Seoul, and sixty new churches have been organized recently, and now Seoul has eighty three Presbyterian churches.<sup>64</sup>

Churches with a strong anti-communist message gained members at the fastest pace, particularly among the refugees. The most famous example was the still-widely renowned Yŏngnak Church in Seoul, led by Rev. Han Kyŏng-jik, the former leader of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) of the north. By 1949, the membership of this church exceeded three thousand – most of them refugees from Sinuiju, in North P’yŏngan Province.<sup>65</sup>

Working in close contact with refugees, missionaries were well informed on conditions in the north. For instance, Knox reveals how the story of one such refugee influenced her own attitudes. Her friend Rev. Kim Hyŏn-jung, whom she had supported in his education, told her that he was imprisoned and tortured by the Russian occupation forces simply “because he [was] a minister of the Gospel.” He described the Russians as pigs, and was convinced that they spread lies in order to “win the Koreans to Communism.”<sup>66</sup> Repeatedly hearing the same types of horror stories from the victims' own mouths alarmed the relief workers. Anti-Russian and anti-Communist sentiments were strong among Christians and missionaries. Many regarded the Soviet Union and the Communist regime above the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel as the “two most anti-Christian powers” in

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<sup>64</sup> Maie Borden Knox, “Dear Friends across the Pacific” letter, 7 March 1949, Presbyterian Church (U.S.), Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

<sup>65</sup> Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 303.

<sup>66</sup> Maie Borden Knox, “Dear Friends” letter, 14 January 1948, Presbyterian Church (U.S.), Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

their time.<sup>67</sup> They did not want Korea to fall into the control of Communists because in their eyes, the salvation of Korea was the symbol of the salvation of the whole Orient.<sup>68</sup>

Interactions with refugees had a critical impact on the Christian opinion of Communism, causing many missionaries and church leaders to shift to the right and become more politically conscious. It was true that they supported Korean independence and wanted Korea to be united, but they desired more to see the establishment of a free and democratic government based on the American model.<sup>69</sup> By 1947, the competition between the leftists and rightists in the south had escalated into a vicious power struggle in which both missionaries and the Christian community would become entangled and play significant roles in the establishment of a separate regime in the south.

#### *THE CONDITIONS OF THE SOUTHERN CHURCHES*

By the end of World War II, the Korean Church was disorganized. Partly due to the more liberal view of missionaries in Seoul that encouraged cooperation with Japanese demands, and partly due to the tighter control of the Japanese police over the citizens in Seoul, anyone who remained in leadership positions in the church community in the capital had had to yield to the colonial government's pressure.<sup>70</sup> When liberation came, collaborating clergymen were all in disgrace. Clergymen who had suffered imprisonment and survived stood up against the current leaders in the church community. They refused to participate in the existing general assemblies, and instead, set up their own

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<sup>67</sup> Marion E. Hartness, letter to Dr. J. L. Hooper, 2 February 1946, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 29 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> "Churches Demand Immediate Freedom for Korea: Separate Government Idea Oppose," *The Voice of Korea* 6 (15 February 1947): 1. This publication was found in the Vertical File: Truman Subject File – Religion in the Truman Library.

<sup>70</sup> Helen Kim, *Grace Sufficient: The Story of Helen Kim by Herself*, ed. J. Manning Potts (Nashville, TN: The Upper Room, 1964):103-105.

organizations. Because of the collaboration controversy, the Christian community was deeply divided during the early months of liberation. Four major factions emerged among Korean Christians.

### *Non-compromisers*

The first and the most influential group was led by those anti-Japanese clergymen and their followers who had refused to yield to Japanese demands and as a result, suffered persecution, exile, or imprisonment. These survivors instantly became popular in the post-liberation period. They were respected by both Christians and non-Christians because of their courage and patriotism. The most famous clergymen in this group were Rev. Han Kyŏng-jik, the SDP leader who had fled from the north, and Rev. Son Yang-wŏn from the “leper colony” in Sunch’ŏn, near Kwangju. In the years of the AMG, these non-compromisers were more outspoken critics of pro-Japanese collaborators, both within the church and across the nation. They demanded open repentance and the spiritual regeneration of the ex-compromisers.

The ranks of non-compromisers would swell drastically from 1945 to 1950, forever altering the composition and ideology of the southern church. Their numbers increased mostly because of the influx of northern refugees. Not only had non-compromisers been more numerous in the north, but they were also more likely to be persecuted and flee south.<sup>71</sup> Because they had already refused to bend under forty years of Japanese pressure, non-compromisers were in no mood to suddenly kowtow to Soviet

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<sup>71</sup> Those pro-Japanese compromisers (clergymen) in the north were less likely to flee south because the charge of their crime was purely religious and the Communists did not go after them. Instead, they were encouraged to participate in the government sponsored church and enjoyed new religious authority under the Communist reign. Actually, many ex-compromisers did join the official church in the north and fade away in the religious scene.

demands. As a result, all of Korea's conservative church elements became concentrated in just the bottom half of the country.

Once in the south, these clergymen became hardcore anti-Communist activists. By 1948, they grew to be a powerful political, social, and religious force commanding about a hundred thousand Christian refugees living in the south, with about seventy thousand of them concentrated in Seoul and its vicinity.<sup>72</sup> Seoul had long been the most crucial city in Korea. Whoever controlled Seoul could command the political direction of the rest of the country. The influx of northern Christians, together with other rightist elements, rapidly transformed the political, social, and religious landscape of Seoul, favoring the cause of the rightists. The Christians' platform of religious freedom, strong nationalist integrity, and charismatic leadership boosted the popularity of the rightist camp and gave it a more humane and appealing face.

According to data gathered by the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC), northern refugees, including many Christians, were the main supporters of rightist youth groups, such as *Söbuk ch'öngnyöndan* (Northwest Young Men's Association or Northwest Youth Corps).<sup>73</sup> Having just fled from the north in search of religious freedom, these Christians, though eager for unification and the chance to return home, dreaded the prospect of unification under communism. These northerners would not support politicians who sought compromise with either the Communists to the north or leftists in the south. Nor would they tolerate such views within their churches.

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<sup>72</sup> Petition from the Association of Christians from North Korea, 14 September 1948, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 29 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>73</sup> 美軍政期情報資料集: CIC (방첩대) 보고서 1945.9 - 1949.1, 1 (Seoul: Hallym University, Institute of Asian Culture Studies, 1995), 1:469-494.

As their numbers and power grew (not only through Christians fleeing south, but also through revival meetings and evangelical work among the non-Christian refugees), they criticized and even physically attacked leftist elements within the Church. Their fervor and their harrowing tales of persecution swayed many southern Christians to join their crusade, so that even native southern Christians became decidedly anti-Communist. Moreover, those few church leaders who did not repudiate their liberal stances would be gradually purged from power within each denomination. Political and religious pressures from these northerners had a profound effect on the southern church, causing it to take a tremendous lurch to the right from 1945 to 1950, even while the global church outside Korea remained captivated by the social gospel.<sup>74</sup>

### *Compromisers and Collaborationists*

The second major group of clergymen consisted of compromisers and collaborationists. Compromisers and collaborationists were similar, but not exactly alike. Some clergymen compromised with the Japanese demands because of the fear of death and/or because of a personal desire to save the established church. They pointed to the Biblical principle of “submission to authority” as their justification and personal defense.<sup>75</sup> Compromisers might have not gained any personal power or wealth during the colonial period. Their livelihood could have been as hard as others. They felt that they were being misunderstood and hoped to reconcile with the non-compromisers and be accepted. This group probably represented the majority of Christian clergymen.

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<sup>74</sup> See Chung-shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2003), 169-170.

<sup>75</sup> The missionary community was also divided by the Shinto issue. Not all missionaries agreed to bow down to the Shinto Shrine. In fact, most of them, such as Dr. George McCune, Rev. Otto DeCamp and Dr. DeWitt Lowe, did not and were arrested by the Japanese immediately, but Dr. Horace H. Underwood thought that to comply was the right course when the church faced a harsh ruler. Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 65.

Nevertheless, there were a few Christian clergymen who not only compromised, but also actively collaborated with the Japanese and even propagated the Japanese Shinto religion in order to gain personal wealth and power. Both kinds were charged by their contemporaries as “collaborators,” but since the nature of their crimes or sins were very different, their ends were also very different.

After Japan was defeated, both groups were called to account. Famous collaborators, such as Rev. Chŏng In-gwa (Chung In-kwa),<sup>76</sup> Dr. Sŏng Ch’ang-gŭn,<sup>77</sup> and Rev. Pak Hyŏng-chul<sup>78</sup> were stripped of their religious positions after they were convicted of crimes by a Korean court.<sup>79</sup> Church conservatives were particularly troubled by the compromisers' willingness to sacrifice the gospel message by allowing Shinto shrines to be put in their churches. Facing severe criticisms, these compromisers, such as Rev. Kim Kwan-sik<sup>80</sup> and Rev. Chŏng In-gwa, who had not betrayed their country but simply had organized and supported the United Christian Church under Japanese direction, struggled to survive and keep their positions of influence in the Christian community.

Due to constant debates and power struggles between the northern non-compromisers and the southern compromisers, the Christian community was initially

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<sup>76</sup> Rev. Chŏng In-gwa was pastor of the Korean Church in Yunchi Dong. He was a key leader of the Korean Presbyterian Church during World War II. See Rhodes and Campbell, *History of the Korea Mission*, 259.

<sup>77</sup> Dr. Sŏng Ch’ang-gŭn was the President of the Chosŏn Seminary. See Chapter 2.

<sup>78</sup> Pastor Pak Hyŏng-chul was connected to the Sung Duk Hostel. They were all strongly pro-Japanese ministers who constantly gave their loyal support for the Japanese militarist policy. See Francis Kinsler, “Dear John,” 19 March 1949, Presbyterian Church Archives, RG 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>79</sup> Letter from Fran to John Smith, 19 March 1949, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>80</sup> See Chapter 2.

rather unstable.<sup>81</sup> For all of its new-found conservatism, however, the non-compromisers were far more ready to forgive their collaborationist brethren than were nationalists outside of the church – forgiveness being, after all, a core teaching of Christianity. The missionaries, in particular, labored to bring reconciliation among church leaders, hoping that the Koreans could put their past behind them and focus on the future. The situation began to improve when sincere repentance and spiritual revival meetings swept through the south like wildfire. Ex-compromisers were allowed to keep their positions, and ex-collaborationists were generally accepted back into the church unless they had been convicted of their crimes.

There is an old diplomatic notion that says, “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.” As the south faced the threat of being overrun by Communist subversion, anti-Communism grew to be a crucial element in hastening reconciliation and bringing the northerners and the southern ex-compromisers to form a temporary alliance with other rightists. Christian collaborators, like others tainted by Japanese ties, tended to be solid supporters of the Korean Democratic Party (KDP), which labored to protect collaborators, landowners, and capitalists. Thus, the KDP was strongly anti-communist for economic reasons, and this second category of Christians would be as anti-Communist as the first group, although perhaps from a different motivation. This alliance of Christians and non-Christians within the KDP would also lead to the formation of several rightist youth organizations, such as *Taehan yŏnmin doklip ch’ŏngnyŏndan* (the Great Korean

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<sup>81</sup> Missionaries constantly reported the miserable situation of the church during the first two years of occupation.

Independence Young Men's Corps), a group that would not support any candidate who proposed compromise with the leftists for the sake of their ultimate survival.<sup>82</sup>

### *Educated Elites and Church Laymen*

Like the clergymen, educated elites and church laymen had to make hard choices during the colonial period. Many, though anti-Japanese at heart, were forced to cooperate, at least passively, in order to maintain their schools, hospitals, churches or other institutions. Most southern church laymen belonged to this category. These elites and intellectuals held positions as principals, university presidents, lawyers, and judges.<sup>83</sup> Many were gradualists who felt that they had worked toward eventual Korean independence, although compromise had been necessary if they were to work within the Japanese system. Therefore, these elites protested the label of "collaborator," arguing for a clear definition of the term, and even seeking approval of their work from the Christian community as well as the general public. For example, at the farewell party for General Hodge in August 1948, Dr. Kim Hwal-lan "asked the Assembly to be considerate of the [pro-Japanese], because [they] all had had to cooperate."<sup>84</sup>

Many of these intellectuals worked for the AMG as advisors or administrators, maintaining close relationships with missionaries inside and outside the government. Their political and social ideals traced back to the cultural nationalists of the early 1900s, who believed in the gradual transformation of the country and rejected radical reforms. Under the support of the AMG, these Christian reformers devised reform programs on

<sup>82</sup> See 美軍政期情報資料集: CIC (방첩대) 보고서 1945.9 - 1949.1, 1:469-494.

<sup>83</sup> The most famous examples were Dr. Helen Kim, President of Ewha University; Louise Yim, President of Central Women's College; and Dr. George Paik, President of Chosen Christian University (which is today's Yonsei University). They did not believe that they had done anything wrong. Instead, they believed that they had made significant contributions to the educational and economic development of Korea during the colonial era.

<sup>84</sup> Quote in Robert T. Oliver, *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea, 1942-1960: A Personal Narrative* (Seoul: Panmun Book Company Ltd., 1978), 192.

improving education, implementing voluntary land reform programs, and re-establishing international trade. In his letter to the American Board, Dr. George L. Paik (Paek Nak-chun) expressed the Korean Christian elites' political leaning:

The Japanese enslavement of the Korean people has gone forever. *The Korean minds are receptive of things American. The religious revival is bound to come as the general order of things is established.* The liberated Korea needs her strong physical body of the Statehood, but making the soul of the nation is the paramount task. [A] wide door of opportunity is open for all sorts of constructive work in *making a Christian nation in the heart of the Orient.* Christianization of Korea will be the best investment for the evangelization of the whole Orient.<sup>85</sup> (Italics added)

The new Korea that they envisioned would be Christian, pro-American, and democratic – a vision almost identical to the one Syngman Rhee had put forth in his book, *The Spirit of Independence*.<sup>86</sup>

Communism, the antithesis of everything these Christian gradualists had worked for, sought to establish an atheistic and undemocratic state through radical reform. For the Christian gradualists, it was a huge dilemma. On the one hand, they feared Communism, but on the other hand, they desired peace instead of war. Therefore, they favored unification through peaceful and democratic means, or barring that possibility, at least maintaining of the status quo. Nevertheless, if the Communists threatened the country with violence and war, the gradualists would stand up against the disruption of peace. Having political astuteness and influential positions, the elites would be an important ally for the politicians who could garner their support.

### *General Churchgoers*

The majority of the Christian population was general churchgoers. This catch-all grouping included people of diverse political leanings, yet certain generalizations about

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<sup>85</sup> Edward Adams, "Report on Korea," 15 January 1946, Presbyterian Church Archives, RG 140, Box 16, Folder 29 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>86</sup> See Chapter 1: Christianity and Korean Nationalism.

them are possible. In 1945, the southern church members tended to be politically moderate or even somewhat to the left of center. They supported peaceful unification, democracy, religious freedom, and land reform. However, within a few short years, they would move farther and farther to the right. One major reason was the influence of northern refugees and their reports of persecutions in the north.

There was also another equally significant cause for the southern churchgoers' change of opinion: the events that they, themselves, experienced while living in the south. As violence against the rightists began to intensify in early 1948, Christian believers and villages were specifically targeted by terrorist attacks and Communist guerilla uprisings, because of their religious faith. Such unprovoked assaults pushed these unorganized individual Christian families more and more firmly into the hawkishly anti-Communist camp.

For example, during the first week of May 1948 (the election month), a total of 162 people were killed in civil conflicts (see Table 3.4). In this wave of violence, two churches were destroyed in Kaesŏng and in Kanggyŏng, and one Catholic missionary's home was burned in Ch'unch'ŏn. A few months later, during the Yŏsu Rebellion of October 1948, rebels burned at least twenty-five Christian homes in one community.<sup>87</sup> Another widely publicized case was the murder of Pastor Son Yang-wŏn's two teenage sons, who were well-known Christian leaders in a local high school in Sunch'ŏn, during the rebellion.<sup>88</sup> When the rebellion was finally put down by the South Korean government, more than one thousand civilians had lost their lives including both the

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<sup>87</sup> Florence E. Root, "Dear Friends" letter, 14 October - 26 November 1948, Presbyterian Church (U.S.), Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

leftists and rightists.<sup>89</sup> Christians had suffered greatly too. In the cities of Sunch'ŏn and Yŏsu alone, more than 82 Christian families were left destitute and homeless from a single devastating fire that was set by rebels as they retreated.<sup>90</sup>

Shortly after the Yŏsu Rebellion, Maie and Robert Knox, a missionary couple in Kwangju, reported to their American friends that:

Kwangju is the capital of the Province and has been heavily guarded. Korean troops are constantly on the alert, and many volunteers are being trained for guard duty. We have no trouble so far. *But the Communists are active in the country, living in the mountains and darting out for quick raids on the villages.* They shot a Korean Christian the other day, a valued assistant in one of Rob's churches, because he was a Christian. *They threaten to kill all Christians and missionaries,* but so far they have been restrained and have killed only a few Christians and no missionaries... *Our new governor is a Presbyterian minister and he seems to be trying to do all in his power to put down the menace of Communism. He has organized the men of the city into volunteer bands for protection.* Meanwhile, the seven of us missionaries in Kwangju go on about our work almost as though nothing were going on, except that we are keeping out of the Communist infested mountain regions at night....<sup>91</sup> (Italics added)

The Knoxs' observation showed that what was happening in Yŏsu was also flaring up all across the country. Regardless of their class background, Christians in the countryside were undeniably singled-out by the rebels. The main reason was that, compared to other country folk, Christian peasants were less willing to support the guerrillas, so the Communists considered them to be traitors to the Korean nation and enemies of revolution. Although unrest within the cities received more attention, it was in the countryside that the Communists had their bases and left their deepest mark.

As the power of the guerillas grew in late 1948 in South Chŏlla Province, the death rate and material deprivation became higher in the countryside than in the big cities. These losses were caused not only by rebel attacks but also by police countermeasures.

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<sup>89</sup> The actual number of civilian casualties was hard to determine. Richard Underwood claimed that there were about 1000. Bruce Cumings says that at least 500 civilians died in Sunchon alone. See Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War* Vol.2 (Seoul: Yuksabipyungsa, 2002), 266.

<sup>90</sup> Louise B. Miller, "Dear Friends" letters, 5 December 1948, Presbyterian Church (U.S.) Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

<sup>91</sup> Maie and Robert Knox, "Dear Friends of Ours" letter, 26 November 1948, Presbyterian Church (U.S.) Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

Many people had to move into fortified villages or cities and leave most of their possessions behind. In Tongbok County near Kwangju, Miss Florence E. Root, a Southern Presbyterian missionary, reported that twelve of fifteen villages were ordered to be destroyed, allowing nothing to fall into the hands of the raiders.<sup>92</sup>

Kwangju, the capital of the South Chōlla Province, was overcrowded with refugees from the countryside. These people had experienced the same suffering at Communist hands as the northern refugees had. They were also just as destitute and angry. Crowded together in the cities, these two groups would become a strong anti-Communist force, supporting the government's hard-line measures to wipe out Communist bases hidden in the hills.<sup>93</sup>

### *Common Ground Among Christian Refugees*

Not all Christians were of one background or opinion; there were refugees, ex-collaborators, elites, and general churchgoers. Nevertheless, almost all Korean Christians shared three common characteristics. First, they were generally pro-American. They had had favorable experiences with American missionaries and recognized that without the work of these missionaries, Christianity would not have grown in Korea. Second, they were politically active, despite the fact that they might not always act in unity. Third, they wanted to keep Communism out of the south, for the sake of their own survival – a very compelling motivation.

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<sup>92</sup> Florence E. Root, "Dear Friends" letter, 13 October 1949, Presbyterian Church (U.S.), Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

<sup>93</sup> The new effort to wipe out Communist guerrillas was led by the new Governor, Rev. Lee Nam-gyu, at Kwangju, of South Chulla Province, which was heavy infested with guerrilla activities. See Anna McQueen, "Dear Friends" letter, 26 November 1948, Presbyterian Church (U.S.) Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

Like all Koreans, Christians wanted unification, and especially so that they could reclaim the northern church. But for many, unification took a backseat to preserving the religious freedoms that they enjoyed in the south. On the whole, one point was clear: despite their various denominational differences and internal divisions, they shared a common enemy to the north, which served as a unifying force, and thus brought the Christian community together under the banner of anti-Communism.

Therefore, it was hardly surprising that the Christian community as a whole would actually welcome a leader with a heavy hand, given their fears of Communism and their desire to restore peace and order. According to Rev. William A. Linton, a senior missionary in Chunju of the North Chölla Province, the Christian churches in Korea were “willing to take a stand against Communism and face whatever hardships the future may bring.”<sup>94</sup> By 1947, the Christian community firmly backed several well-known Christian politicians: Syngman Rhee, Kim Koo, and Kim Kyu-sik and they wanted the south to form a separate government under the sponsorship of the United Nations.<sup>95</sup> From late 1947 to May 1948, Christians were looking for a leader who would reverse the Communist tide. Nonetheless, their moral principles would prevent them supporting an outright dictator. The leader who wished to win over the Christian votes, would have to be a man shrewd enough to tacitly make use of the militant right-wing groups, who were carrying out violent attacks, while he himself remained aloof from charges of thuggery.

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<sup>94</sup> William A. Linton, “Dear Friends” letter, 4 October 1947, Presbyterian Church (U.S.) Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

## *SYNGMAN RHEE AND THE FORMATION OF A SEPARATE GOVERNMENT*

The religious factor soon emerged as a crucial element in southern politics. Not only did Christianity become an important anti-Communist ideological force, but the Christian community, as a whole, became the backbone of the rightists. By the end of 1945, four high-profile Christian leaders competing for political domination had emerged in the southern zone: Yō Un-hyōng, Kim Kyu-sik, Kim Ku, and Syngman Rhee. However, only Rhee emerged as the victor. Why?

### *The Weakening of Yō Un-hyōng's Popularity*

Yō Un-hyōng was the most popular leader in Korea when the peninsula was liberated by the Allied Powers. Having been a Christian evangelist earlier in his career and enjoying nationwide fame as an underground nationalist, he was an influential Christian socialist during the 1930s, who sacrificially gave away all his land inheritance to his poor tenants.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, he was very popular among Korean leftists. Yō originally received solid support from the southern clergymen when they crowded into their local CPKIs in September 1945. When the Korea People's Republic was formed on September 6, moderate and leftist church leaders, such as Rev. Kim Ch'ang-je, Rev. Pak Song-sa, Rev. Kal Hong-gi, and Rev. Sin Hūng-u stood firmly behind Yō.

Yō Un-hyōng's political position was weakening in 1946, however, under attacks from both the right and the left. When General Hodge refused to recognize the People's Republic and forced Yō to change its name, Yō's popularity began to shrink. The extreme rightists attacked Yō's Christian supporters when they gathered to organize *Kidokkyo minju yōnmaeng* (the Democratic League of Christians) in 1946. Three hundred men from the Northwest Young Men's Association stormed the YMCA building

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<sup>96</sup> See Lee, "Who Was Yo Un-hyung?"

in Seoul and disrupted their ceremony. No one died, but most of the leaders were seriously beaten.<sup>97</sup> Christians from the north, in particular, disliked Yō's willingness of compromise with the Communists. When more tales of Communist persecution against Christians reached the south, the Christian community was less willing to compromise. Therefore, the influence of leftist clergymen weakened as more rightists flooded the southern cities.

Yō Un-hyōng's moderate attitude toward the Communists in the end cost him dearly. In late 1946, the Communists, under Pak Hōn-yōng's leadership, succeeded in infiltrating all levels of the People's Party and eventually tore the party apart. Yō's party ceased to exist. His earnest attempt to work with the Communists bore no fruit. By 1947, Yō told the AMG officials that his life was in danger because both extreme leftists and extreme rightists wanted to kill him. Nevertheless, General Hodge did not give him any protection. On July 19, 1947, Yō was gunned down in his car by right-wing extremists: Yu Yōng-ho, Kim Hōng-sung, Kim Hūn, Kim Yōng-sung, and Han Ji-gun. Most of them were refugees from the north. Yu Yōng-ho said that he wanted to kill Yō because he was the main instigator of a left-right coalition that would split the nation. Kim Hōng-sung said that he wanted to kill Yō because Yō had made many trips to north Korea. There was no proof who actually gave the order, but the closest guess was Chang T'aek-sang. General Hodge pointed his finger at Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku, but there was no hard evidence for such a charge.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 169.

<sup>98</sup> Lee, "Who Killed Yo Wun Hyung?" <http://www.kimsoft.com/2002/mongyang.htm>.

*A Christian Moderate Kim Kyu-sik*

Compared to Yŏ Un-hyŏng, Kim Kyu-sik seemed to be in a better position to secure the support of the Christian community in 1947. Kim was an orphan raised by Rev. Horace G. Underwood. He received a degree from Roanoke College in Virginia. As an American-educated Christian intellectual who enjoyed the complete confidence and support of General Hodge, Kim was a rising political star in the south under the sponsorship of the AMG. American leaders found comfort in Kim's willingness to cooperate and his status as a selfless statesman. Hodge appointed Kim as the chairman of the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly (SKILA) in October 1946. The SKILA was a half-elected and half-appointed legislative body with a total of ninety representatives. The election of the SKILA, however, was not open to every citizen. Only the taxpayers and landlords were allowed to vote to "assure a conservative delegation."<sup>99</sup> As a result, most of the forty elected representatives were rightists from the KDP. To balance the SKILA, Hodge appointed 45 moderates and leftists, such as Yŏ Un-hyŏng and Kim Kyu-sik, to the body.

So, why did Kim fail to become the new president of South Korea? As historian Bonnie B. C. Oh points out, Kim Kyu-sik was not a self-serving politician and was faithful to the cause of forming a coalition for peaceful reunification.<sup>100</sup> But his naive stand towards the Communists,<sup>101</sup> and his lack of political skills made him unfit to lead a deeply divided country.<sup>102</sup> Since he strongly opposed the establishment of a separate

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<sup>99</sup> Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 260-261.

<sup>100</sup> Bonnie B. C. Oh, "Kim Kyu-sik and the Coalition Effort," in *Korea Under the American Military Government 1945-1948*, ed. Bonnie B. C. Oh (Westport, CT: Praeger Publisher, 2002), 106-109.

<sup>101</sup> Kim Kyu-sik was actually sympathetic toward socialism. He represented the liberal wing of the Christian intellectuals.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

government, he failed to understand the mentality of most southern Christians, who, though desiring unification, wanted absolutely nothing to do with the Communists. His political fate was sealed in May 1948, when Kim chose to attend a conference in the north, where he met with Kim Il-sung instead of preparing for the May election. The political backlash from this meeting led him to completely withdraw from politics shortly thereafter.

*The Master of Korean Assassins was Assassinated*

Kim Ku, another well-known Korean nationalist, was also tainted by this very same conference in the north when he attended it together with Kim Kyu-sik. Prior to that, Kim Ku had earned his fame through political assassinations and terrorist plots during the colonial era. His leadership position in the Korean Provisional Government (KPG) came after his several attempts to assassinate the Japanese Emperor in Tokyo and Japanese officials in China. Because of his fame, Kim Ku was the only nationalist leader who could challenge Syngman Rhee's leadership among the rightists. Although he was a Methodist, Kim was not as influential as Kim Kyu-sik and Rhee among the Protestant elites. Nevertheless, Kim Ku enjoyed the support of a group of loyal followers in the KPG, and benefited from his reputation for political assassinations.

Being the Chairman of the KPG, Kim initially gained the full backing of the KDP.<sup>103</sup> He was also in command of most of the extreme rightist terrorist groups. Nevertheless, Kim's relations with the KDP leaders began to turn sour due to his critical view of the pro-Japanese collaborators.<sup>104</sup> He was less a skillful politician and more a

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<sup>103</sup> Individual wealthy KDP members supported both Kim Ku and Syngman Rhee and helped meet their financial needs after their return from exile.

<sup>104</sup> Patrick D. Gardner, "Prerequisites of Power in Liberated Korea: The Political Relationship between Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku," (M.A. Thesis, Yonsei University, 2000): 36-37.

fervent nationalist. There was an allegation that he had ordered the assassination of Song Chin-u, when Song expressed his support for the Moscow Agreement. His action haunted his relationship with the KDP and lost him some support from the rightists. Since there was a rumor that he had also directed a failed attempt to assassinate Kim Il-sung, the Communists had no love for him as well.

Neither was Kim Ku active in cultivating Christian support. These policies weakened Kim's position in the ideological battle against Syngman Rhee. Kim lacked the political skills and the mind to understand the game of politics in post-war Korea and grasp the picture of international relations during the initial stages of the Cold War.<sup>105</sup> His anti-American views and activities over the trusteeship issue forestalled his chances for growth under the AMG. His inability to master English or to cultivate friendships with foreign residents limited his international reputation. Kim's narrow-mindedness blocked his political ascent.

Even though Kim Ku had great potential to lead the fight against the Communists, he did not fully commit to the anti-Communist cause. Being an idealist longing above all else for Korean independence, Kim Ku sincerely wanted to unite the country even though it might require collaborating with leftists.<sup>106</sup> Since Kim Ku's opposition to the formation of a separate southern government was shared by Kim Kyu-sik, both these men refused to participate in the 1948 election, instead meeting with Kim Il-sung in the northern zone.

Nevertheless, an American political observer in the State Department, Joseph Jacob, saw a different political motivation for their boycott:

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 106-107

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

While on the surface, hue and cry of both Kims is 'unification of Korea,' in reality basic cause of their proposal for north-south conference and acceptance of P'yŏngyang invitation is realization that they had no real following (insufficient at least to ensure their election or appointment to high office) and they 'don't want to play ball.' They prefer to seek better prospects elsewhere.<sup>107</sup>

Jacob's comment showed that both Kims were actually losing their influence in Korean politics even prior to the 1948 election. Neither of them had succeeded in consolidating their power in spite of each having a number of political advantages at the beginning, such as the rightists' support of Kim Ku, and General Hodge's support of Kim Kyu-sik. The two Kims had been deceived by the Communists who used their visit to the north for propaganda purposes. Their visit and their similar decisions not to support the election disappointed many Christian leaders and even non-Christian voters.<sup>108</sup> While Kim Kyu-sik eventually retired from Korean politics, Kim Ku's influence in the south shrank tremendously when the Republic of Korea was established in Seoul under Syngman Rhee's leadership.

### *Syngman Rhee's Experience in the United States*

In contrast to these men, Syngman Rhee was less an idealist and more a pragmatist in his political outlook. His biographers, his supporters in both Korea and the United States, and historians all had very different opinions on Rhee, but most of them agreed that he understood politics and diplomacy due to his long years of experience in the Western world. His views on Christianity and his relationship with Christians were the backbone of his political career. Apart from his education in Paejae and his close relationship with missionaries in his early life, Rhee's academic and political lives in the United States and in Korea were built through the Christian network. In the 1920s, he

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<sup>107</sup> U.S. State Department, *Foreign Relation of the United States (1948)* Vol 6, *The Far East and Australasia* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974): 1177-1178.

<sup>108</sup> See Oliver, *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea, 1942-1960*, 155.

had worked for religious organizations, such as the YMCA in Korea and the American Methodist Church in Hawaii. He had even organized his own church and school in Hawaii when his views on the education of women clashed with conservatives in the Methodist Board. Although Rhee faced opposition from various Korean radical independence groups in the United States, his most loyal supporters and followers were among Korean Christians and their children in the United States. They included Im Pyŏng-jik (also known as Ben C. Limb), who later became the first minister of foreign affairs in Rhee's administration, Chŏng Han-gyŏng (Henry Chung), and Yi Wŏn-sun (Won-soon Lee). Their loyalty did not fade even after Rhee's political demise in 1960.<sup>109</sup>

Rhee bore not only the image of a cultural nationalist, who advocated the importance of education and gradual transformation, but also the image of a pro-Western Korean diplomat, who persisted in seeking a political, economic, and military alliance with the United States. Prior to World War II, Rhee acted as a political prophet, who constantly warned against Japanese aggression in Asia, but his warnings went unheeded in Washington. During the war, under Rhee's leadership, the Korea Commission, which was a diplomatic agency representing the KPG in Washington, lobbied for the immediate recognition of the Korean Provisional Government in Exile. He argued that recognizing the KPG, it would help to stabilize postwar Korea and prevent the Korean peninsula from falling into the hands of the Communists.<sup>110</sup> His effort, nevertheless, had very limited success because the United States refused to recognize the KPG due to the lack of

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<sup>109</sup> Rhee's Christian supporters in Hawaii housed, clothed, and fed him when he was almost penniless in the last few years of his exile life in the United States.

<sup>110</sup> Jungmin Kuk, "Helping Syngman Rhee and the Republic of Korea: Robert T. Oliver's Publicity and Lobbying Efforts in the United States, 1942-1960," (M.A. Thesis, Yonsei University, 2000), 24.

political representation of the KPG among Korean natives and the division within the KPG leadership.

During these decades in the United States, Rhee's anti-Japanese and later anti-Communist positions alienated him from most Asian experts and liberals, such as Alger Hiss, in the State Department. The State Department advised Rhee and the KPG to form a coalition with other Korean leaders such as Han Kil-su (Kilsoo Han), whom Rhee condemned as a Japanese spy and a Communist. Rhee rejected the idea because he believed that a coalition with the Communists would invite the Russians into the Korean peninsula and eventually jeopardize the ultimate goal of Korean independence.<sup>111</sup> Rhee's refusal to cooperate with Korean leftists further distanced him from the officials in Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration.<sup>112</sup> In 1945, during a United Nations conference in San Francisco, the Russian journalist, Emile Gourvereau, misinformed Rhee that the United States had handed Korea over to the Soviet Union at the Yalta conference. Angered by what he was told, he distributed a leaflet condemning the policy of the United States without further investigation. His action seriously jeopardized his relationship with the State Department, leaving him with very few friends inside the US government.<sup>113</sup>

Nonetheless, Rhee's bitter experiences in Washington and his deep understanding of international diplomacy molded him to be the most successful statesman in Korean politics. His relationship with Washington began to improve when the US-Soviet relationship began to get worse and the power of anti-Communism took root in the US government. Despite his lack of progress in getting diplomatic

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 29.

recognition, his effort in Washington made him a legendary hero in the struggle for Korean independence. His name was so well-known in Korea that both the leftists and the rightists wanted to acquire his support and endorsement, but Rhee had his own plan for political domination by building up a political network in the United States as well as in Korea.

### *Rhee's Publicity Work in Washington*

Knowing that unlike China and Japan, Korea attracted very little attention among American officials and that he was not popular in the State Department, Rhee needed every single drop of support he could possibly acquire if he wanted to achieve political victory over his opponents and competitors and establish a new modern Korea of his own dream. The very first step that Rhee took prior to and after his return to Korea was to maintain a close correspondence with church leaders in the United States, such as Rev. Edward Junkin, a former missionary to Korea,<sup>114</sup> and Rev. Frederick Brown Harris, the Chaplain to the U.S. Senate. Rhee attended Rev. Frederick Brown Harris' church in Washington when he was doing his lobbying work on behalf of the KPG.<sup>115</sup> Later, Rev. Harris, who subsequently became the Chaplain of the Senate, emerged as one of the major defenders of Rhee throughout Rhee's presidency in South Korea. Rhee also maintained close contact with Bishop Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York. Prior to

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<sup>114</sup> See David Brickey Bloomer, "Syngman Rhee's Spokesman in the United States: Dr. Robert T. Oliver's Korean Lobby and Public Relations Efforts 1942-1948," (M.A. thesis, Yonsei University, 1996), 43.

<sup>115</sup> Historian Bruce Cumings thought that Rhee did so because Rev. Harris was the chaplain of the Senate, but the fact was that Rev. Harris was chosen to be the chaplain in 1949, three years after Rhee had moved back to Korea. See Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 62, 64. See Joungwon Kim, *Divided Korea: The Politics of Development, 1945-1972* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 36. See also *Ibid.*, 89.

Rhee's return to Korea, Bishop Spellman praised Rhee as the American Catholic Church's choice for leadership in Korea against the forces of godless communism.<sup>116</sup>

Since Rhee understood the importance of public opinion on American policy makers, he recruited as many sympathizers in the United States as possible to expand his publicity work in the United States in order to arouse American interest in Korea and improve his image in Washington. Through Rev. Junkin's introduction, Rhee met Dr. Robert T. Oliver in 1942, a full-time professor of communications at Bucknell University in Pennsylvania, and invited him to assist in his publicity work in Washington. Dr. Oliver was not only a good writer, but he also had very strong experience in publicity. During the war, he took a wartime leave of absence to work as an Assistant Chief of the Office of Civilian Defense in Washington. His job was to write speeches to direct American citizens' attention to support war efforts.<sup>117</sup> Oliver frequently submitted articles to the *Washington Post* and other well-known newspapers and journals. Rhee was fortunate to have Dr. Oliver as his adviser and publicity director because from 1942 on Oliver became the most effective and loyal lobbyist for the Korean cause. In addition to Oliver, Rhee also acquired help from Jay Jerome Williams, who served as Rhee's advisor and fundraiser, and Preston M. Goodfellow, a US colonel in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), who later assisted Rhee in getting military aid and equipment.

At first, Dr. Oliver only helped Rhee on a part-time basis, but after Rhee left for Korea, Oliver began fulltime publicity work on behalf of Korea. Rhee regarded Oliver's publicity work as "the only thing that will help get the Russians out of Korea."<sup>118</sup> The

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<sup>116</sup> Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 349.

<sup>117</sup> Jungmin Kuk, "Helping Syngman Rhee and the Republic of Korea: Robert T. Oliver's Publicity and Lobbying Efforts in the United States, 1942-1960," (M.A. Thesis, Yonsei University, 2000), 15.

<sup>118</sup> Quote in *Ibid.*, 34.

goal of Oliver's work was to reverse the negative image the American people had of Korea. In Oliver's first book on Korea, *Korea: Forgotten Nation*, published in 1944, he argued that Korean fighters could have contributed greatly to the war effort in the Pacific greatly if the United States had trained and allowed them to participate in the war earlier.<sup>119</sup> In order to arouse public sympathy, Oliver devoted one-third of the book to describing Japanese persecution of Korean Christians and Western missionaries during the colonial period. His book was well-received in the United States. As soon as it was published, both the hardcover and paperback editions were sold out within a very short period of time.<sup>120</sup> In addition, since Oliver's articles on Korea were well-written and carefully researched, his works surpassed most of the Korean and American writers of those days.<sup>121</sup> Oliver reported to Rhee that his publicity works were enthusiastically received, particularly by church people.<sup>122</sup> In late 1946, he worked closely with Rev. Harris to lobby the US government to understand the needs of Korea.

### *Rhee's Political Support in Korea*

As soon as Rhee arrived in Korea in October 1945, both the Korean Democratic Party and the People's Republic offered Rhee leadership positions in their organizations. Rhee wrote to Oliver, boasting that all parties were solidly behind him.<sup>123</sup> Surprisingly, Rhee accepted neither of them. Nor did he join Kim Ku's group in the formation of the Korean Independence Party in spite of his connection with the KPG. Rhee kept his distance from these existing political parties because he did not want to lend his

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<sup>119</sup> Robert T. Oliver, *Korea: Forgotten Nation* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1944), 102.

<sup>120</sup> Kuk, "Helping Syngman Rhee and the Republic of Korea: Robert T. Oliver's Publicity and Lobbying Efforts in the United States, 1942-1960," 23.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>122</sup> See Oliver, *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea*, 101-102.

<sup>123</sup> Rhee's letter to Oliver, 21 October 1945. See Kuk, "Helping Syngman Rhee and the Republic of Korea: Robert T. Oliver's Publicity and Lobbying Efforts in the United States, 1942-1960," 36.

prestigious name as a mere symbolic figure-head, lacking actual political power and loyal following.

Instead, Rhee started to organize his own political organization, the National Society for the Rapid Realization of Korean Independence (NSRRKI). He began building his political organization through the Korean church network, met with Korean Christians, and “preached” his idea of national independence, supporting his case with Biblical passages much like a zealous preacher. He cultivated friendships among Korean Christian elites, especially important educators like Dr. Kim Hwal-lan (Helen Kim), Dr. Paek Nak-chun (George L Paik), and Yim Yŏng-sin (Louise Yim).<sup>124</sup> These leaders would become his most loyal supporters throughout his presidency. He also sought out Christians such as Hŏ Chŏng, Yim Yŏng-sin, Cho-Pyŏng-ok, Yi Ki-bung, and Hwang Sŏng-su to be his closest advisers.<sup>125</sup> In the end, Rhee’s NSRRKI enjoyed some success in forming local groups all over the south as a counterforce to the *Chosŏn Minjujuŭi Minjok Chŏnsŏn* (Democratic People’s Front) organized by Yŏ Un-hyŏng.<sup>126</sup>

### *Rhee’s Popularity in South Korea*

The extent of Rhee’s popularity in Korea has always been a matter of serious dispute. American officials in the State Department thought that Rhee did not have a strong base of support in Korea. Those on the ground in Korea, however, almost universally disagreed with the State Department’s assessment. During the early days of US occupation, Commander George Z. Williams believed that Rhee was popular, though he might not be as popular as Kim Ku among ordinary Koreans. Rhee was certainly

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<sup>124</sup> See Kim, *Grace Sufficient* and Yim, *My Forty Year Fight for Korea*.

<sup>125</sup> Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 170.

<sup>126</sup> Allen R. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1954: A House Burning* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 82.

popular among educated elites. But Rhee's fame and his seniority over Kim Ku and Kim Kyu-sik gave him a relative advantage in their political competition. The general population tended to regard Rhee as their "grandfather," someone to be treated with great respect. During his visit to Korea in mid-1946, Dr. Oliver talked with Major Wayne Geissinger and Colonel Anderson, the Military Governor of Kyōnggi Province. They both told him that among all Korean politicians, only Rhee could draw a huge crowd whenever he appeared in public, and that Rhee was "the strong man of Korea" even if General Hodge believed that he could ignore Rhee.<sup>127</sup>

On July 8, Oliver met with a Colonel Green, chief public relations officer for the American Military Government in Seoul. The colonel told him that public opinion polls taken by the military showed that seventy percent of the Korean people below the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel supported Rhee. Nevertheless, the AMG suppressed the finding. Instead, General Archer Lerch, the military governor of Korea, forced Colonel Green to falsify the findings to show less than a majority for Rhee because of Rhee's strong stance against trusteeship. Dr. Oliver observed during his two-month stay in Korea that Rhee was the most respected and popular representative of the Korean people.<sup>128</sup>

In addition to Oliver's observation, reports both from the CIC and from various missionaries also showed that Rhee had widespread popularity. For instance, an American information officer responsible for gathering political information on Korea, though himself unimpressed by Syngman Rhee, reported that Rhee was "the most revered and respected name among the Korean villagers." In the mind of the Korean people, the officer observed in 1947, Syngman Rhee "occupied a place somewhat akin to that of a

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<sup>127</sup> Oliver, *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea 1942-1960*, 35.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 38. Oliver's note was also quoted by Bloomer, "Syngman Rhee's Spokesman in the United States: Dr. Robert T. Oliver's Korean lobby and public relations efforts, 1942-1948," 84-85.

legendary hero.”<sup>129</sup> No one in the AMG doubted the power or stature of Rhee, and some even credited his shrewd leadership as being the reason why Communists were restrained from taking over the entire peninsula.<sup>130</sup>

### *Rhee Gains Loyal Followers from the Christian Community*

Rhee’s religious and political outlook made him particularly popular among Christians, for three reasons. First, he understood the importance of Christianity in the reconstruction of Korean society. As early as 1942, he wrote to his friend that Korea had “more than one million Christians” and that Korea was “Christianity’s greatest bastion in the Orient.”<sup>131</sup> He was exceptionally optimistic about the role of Korea “as the future aerial gateway to Asia” and “the crucible for the tenets of Confucius and teachings of Christ.”<sup>132</sup> His desire to gain the support of Korean Christians was not merely shrewd politics, but a genuine personal conviction. He had never wavered in his belief that a modern Korea should be built upon the Christian model – an idea he had articulated while imprisoned by the Choson government in his book, *The Spirit of Independence*.<sup>133</sup> In fact, he was determined to implement his ideas as soon as he gained political power.

Second, despite being classified by many political observers as an extreme rightist, Rhee’s policy outlook was rather moderate and even leaned toward the left. He understood the importance of seeking social justice, but favored a gradual approach

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<sup>129</sup> Richard D. Robinson, “Korea – Betrayal of a Nation” Unpublished manuscript (1947), 121. See Jounghwon Kim, *Divided Korea*, 37.

<sup>130</sup> Bloomer, “Syngman Rhee’s Spokesmen in the United States: Dr. Robert T. Oliver’s Korean Lobby and Public Relations Efforts, 1942-1948,” 84.

<sup>131</sup> “Letter from Syngman Rhee to Dr. Hoo,” 5 December 1942, Political Affairs: Korean Independence Movement, 1941-1944, RG 59, Records of the US Dept of State relating to internal affairs of Korea, 1940-1944, File 895, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Syngman Rhee, *The Spirit of Independence: A Primer of Korean Modernization and Reform*, translated by Han-kyo Kim (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 282-283. See also Chapter One: Christianity and Korean Nationalism.

rather than a radical one. While serving as an elected member in the Korean Interim Assembly (KIA), he had advocated a fair and just review of all the collaboration cases following the establishment of the new Korean government because he believed that tolerating an irrational hatred for collaborators would bring more harm than good to Korean society.<sup>134</sup> Rhee gained support from the rightists because he supported a gradual land reform policy rather than a radical one by first selling Japanese-owned areas to landless farmers, and then by encouraging landlords to sell their holdings through incentives and credits for conducting industrial investments.<sup>135</sup> Therefore, KDP members supported Rhee even though they were never his trusted lieutenants.

Third, Rhee was being hailed as the “chief bulwark against the communization of Korea” and the man who could hold the reins of a free and independent Korea if it were so created.<sup>136</sup> Rhee’s anti-Communist and anti-trusteeship political positions were clear and consistent. While the Christian non-compromisers took confidence from his clear stand, the ex-collaborators needed him to shield them from potential losses, both political and material, due to his moderate views on collaboration. Rhee received loyal support from both South Korean rightists and North Korean refugees among the militant youth groups such as the National Salvation Young Men’s Federation, the Northwest Young Men’s Association, and the Korean National Youth Corps.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Syngman Rhee was also seeking a middle-of-the-road method to settle the collaboration problem because he knew that American public opinion favored forgiveness rather than revenge, whereas the Korean public opinion favored justice and punishment. See Oliver, *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea*, 153.

<sup>135</sup> Rhee tried to delay selling the ex-Japanese owned land by the AMG. He desired to have a new Korean government to implement the land reform programs. The land reform policy, however, was never successfully carried out due to the resistance of the KDP. It was the Korean War several years later that brought the final implementation of land reform. Nevertheless, Rhee’s moderate attitude in 1947 did earn him support from most of the landlords. See *Ibid.*, 153-154.

<sup>136</sup> “Report on Korea,” *The New York Times*, 10 November 1946, editorial section.

<sup>137</sup> 美軍政期情報資料集: CIC (방첩대) 보고서 1945.9 - 1949.1, 1:469-494.

In the end, Rhee's pro-American attitude, his Christian faith, his emphasis on education, and his tough anti-Communist position made him the top candidate of Christian non-compromisers, elites, and ex-collaborators alike. In this way, Rhee was able to rally a strong Christian coalition behind him, as well as gain strong popular support among the public. In the end, most Christian groups came out to support Rhee and his organization, NSRRKI, in the 1948 election in the name of Christian unity and early independence.<sup>138</sup>

### *The May 10, 1948 Election*

When the Soviet-US Joint Commission came to a deadlock in mid-1947 due to dispute over the issue of proper representation of different political groups, the United States submitted the problem of Korean unification to the United Nations. The United Nations agreed to carry out a separate election in South Korea, and appointed a United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK). The responsibility of the UNTCOK was to oversee the election of a Korean National Assembly in May 1948. The responsibility of this assembly was to write a Korean constitution and establish an executive branch of government for South Korea.

In a country where less than four percent of population was Christian, the election of 1948 marked the beginning of strong Christian influence in South Korean politics for decades to come. The date of the election was itself an important indicator of things to come. Originally scheduled for a Sunday, May 9, 1948, both the Korean churches and

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<sup>138</sup> Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 170.

the missionaries petitioned to change the date.<sup>139</sup> General Hodge granted their demand, and moved the election to Monday, May 10, 1948. The election was a general success. Ninety-four percent of all of South Korea's eligible voters were registered and among them ninety-one percent came to the polls.<sup>140</sup> A total of one hundred ninety representatives were elected to serve a two-year term in the National Assembly. Christian candidates, in particular, received votes from both believers and non-believers. Out of the one hundred and ninety elected representatives, thirty-eight were Christians – twenty percent of the total of elected representatives (see Table 3.1).

Syngman Rhee was elected by the National Assembly as first president of Korea, and the Republic of Korea was formed in August 1948. Rhee's regime was known as the First Korean Republic. Under Rhee's leadership, a Christian-style ceremony replaced the Confucius-Buddhist traditions and Shintoism in all government gatherings. In Rhee's inauguration ceremony, the President took the oath of office with his hand on the Bible, an event unprecedented in Korean history. No one raised any objection when Rhee suggested that the opening ceremony of the National Assembly begin with a prayer of thanks by Assemblyman Yi Yun-yŏng, a Christian minister.<sup>141</sup> Clearly, Christianity was widely respected or, at the least, tolerated by the majority of the non-Christian population. The First Korean Republic in South Korea marked the dawn of a new Christian influence in Korean history. Such an era began not because of the numeric strength of Christianity in Korea, but due to the political power of this foreign religion. Christianity became a

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<sup>139</sup> Bruce F. Hunt, a missionary of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, wrote to General William F. Dean on April 2, 1948, asking the general to change the date of election because of the symbolic Christian meaning of keeping the Sabbath Day holy. Letter from Bruce F. Hunt to General Wm F. Dean, 2 April 1948, *美軍政期情報資料集: 질레트 (F. E. Gillette) 보고서. 전범대 재판기록 1946-1948* (Seoul: Hallym University, Institute of Asian Culture Studies, 1995), 2:189-191.

<sup>140</sup> Oliver, *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea*, 165.

<sup>141</sup> Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 173-174.

religion of the Korean elites, and Christians emerged to dominate the new ruling class in South Korea. This trend was further strengthened by the outbreak of the Korean War.

### *CONCLUSION*

The return of American missionaries and their children as liberators to the southern half of Korea marked a new phase of Korean political, economic, social, and cultural development along a course completely different from the one in the north. Nevertheless, the seeds of division were also being sown at this point, because the political, economic, social, and religious well-being of the Christian community became so closely tied to American missionaries and the military government that it began to realize what it stood to lose if Korea were united under Communism.

In both the south and the north, the early days prior to the arrival of foreign forces had already witnessed the forming of a broad coalition between leftists and rightists, all sharing a common dream of an independent and unified Korea. Cho Man-sik in the north, and Yŏ Un-hyŏng in the south, seemed to provide the best formula for transforming the former colony into a liberal democratic nation. But then the intervention of two superpowers changed everything. Cho Man-sik and Yŏ Un-hyŏng's moderate visions were replaced by the realities of Kim Il-sung and Syngman Rhee. Rhee's victory and his unwillingness to compromise with the leftists made peaceful unification almost impossible. The establishment of two separate regimes on the Korean peninsula not only consolidated the division of the country but also set ticking the time-bomb of a bigger conflict to come.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Religious Anti-Communism and American Foreign Policy**

#### *INTRODUCTION*

The previous three chapters have explored the influence of Christianity in Korean nationalism and post-war politics. The discussion in this chapter turns to the other side of the globe, and the influence of Christianity within the United States during the early post-war years, examining how religious factors became a powerful force in American politics and a useful propaganda instrument, and how South Korea grew to be a symbol of the struggle for religious freedom and a focal point of America's anti-Communist strategy in East Asia.

Religious influence on foreign policy had both individualistic and institutional elements that were difficult to quantify. From 1945 to 1950, the US government developed a close partnership with religious actors in the conduct of foreign affairs. It enlisted the support of religious leaders and religious institutions to propagate its political agenda. Meanwhile, church leaders also tried to lobby politicians to protect their interests and expand their influence in their mission fields.

To illustrate the complexity of religion in the conduct of US foreign affairs, the first two layers of discussion focus on President Harry S. Truman and his major foreign policies during the interwar years. While it is true that US foreign policy has never been a direct product of the will and actions of a single individual, it is also true that whoever occupied the White House – his personality, religious beliefs, and political philosophy –

substantially affected the decision-making process. Of course, the ultimate result is the product of complex interactions of the President's close advisors and other institutional actors, but as the head of the US government, the President has the responsibility to sell his policies to the American people. Being both a leader and a man of his time, President Truman and his public speeches provide the important clues to understanding the mainstream religious sentiments of the United States in the early Cold War era. The purpose of this chapter is not to determine whether Truman was, in his heart, a true believer or merely a skilled politician who had used religious rhetoric to cultivate public support. Instead, this chapter investigates the essential role of religion in the early formation of the Cold War.<sup>1</sup>

The third layer of discussion relates to the impact of the discovery and the use of the atomic bomb. The atomic issue not only caused serious debates and a moral dilemma among American political and religious leaders, but also generated enormous fear over the ultimate annihilation of human civilization. The destructive nature of the atomic bomb brought significant impact to the development of American Christianity. The possibility of an atomic confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union was a key concern for many US policy makers. It affected Christians' perception of themselves and the Soviet Union that hardened anti-Communist sentiment in the United States. It is essential to understand the origins of atomic fear in order to examine the later controversy over the idea of fighting a limited war in Korea.

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<sup>1</sup> If the President, as a skillful politician, needed to pretend to be religious in order to get elected and enjoy public support, this would clearly demonstrate the central role of religion in American politics. On the other hand, if he was a sincere believer who was unabashed about expressing his thoughts, then religion could have had an even stronger role on his policy decisions. Yet he would still not have won the election if his religious rhetoric had not resonated with the sentiment of his time. Therefore, regardless of his personal beliefs, Truman's comments reflect the public mood. Examining Truman's religious justifications serves to shed light on the essence of these values in US domestic and foreign policy.

The fourth layer of discussion focuses on the opinion of religious leaders and the official position of American churches on the US interests in Korea. The rise of religious anti-Communism, the expansion of missionary activities in Korea, and China's closing the door on Christian missionary activities altogether generated a keen interest in supporting South Korea among American church leaders. Christian publications and inter-denominational conferences voiced their support for religious and political freedom in Korea. They were the leading force urging American economic assistance to the struggling Syngman Rhee regime in Seoul. Deepening religious connections between the two countries was the main underlying cause of the continuous American involvement in Korea.

#### *AMERICA TRIUMPHANT 1945-1948*

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, Vice President Harry S. Truman became commander-in-chief of a nation at war. On that day Truman wrote in his diary, confessing his uncertainty about the future and about the many decisions he was about to make.<sup>2</sup> As Truman took office, the United States faced major problems about not only how to end the world war, but also how to set the course of peace. Many people, including Truman himself, had thought that the job was too big for the man from Missouri. Unlike Roosevelt, who personally dominated the formation of US foreign policy, Truman depended more on the advisors around him due to his lack of knowledge and experience in foreign affairs. As a result, it gave room for such officials as Dean G. Acheson, W. Averell Harriman, Robert A. Lovett, John J. McCloy, George F.

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<sup>2</sup> Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1980), 16.

Kennan, and Charles E. Bohlen to influence the President on the formation of the containment policy against Soviet political and military expansion. Throughout Truman's years in the White House, his foreign policy was a product of a team effort in the administration.<sup>3</sup> Even so, Truman was generally regarded by historians as a strong leader who not only led the Allies to military victory, but implemented practical plans to reconstruct a new world order. His courage and his style of leadership were connected with his religious background and beliefs.

### *The Religious Beliefs of Harry Truman*

Truman was a devoutly religious man although he was not a faithful churchgoer while he was in the White House. Throughout his life, Truman was deeply committed to his personal faith and "lived by a strict Baptist morality."<sup>4</sup> Growing up under the strong religious influence of his devoutly Baptist mother, Martha Ellen Truman, he had read the Bible twice by the age of twelve, and was impressed by the moral codes set out in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>5</sup> He had even considered becoming a minister when he was young, but it did not work out.<sup>6</sup> Instead, he found interests in politics and became a very successful senator. His fame in Congress eventually earned him a place on the Democratic ticket as President Roosevelt's running-mate in the 1944 presidential election. After he entered the White House, his busy schedule kept him from

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<sup>3</sup> Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 26-27.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew J. Dunar, *The Truman Scandals and the Politics of Morality* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1984), 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Dianne Kirby, "Harry Truman's Religious Legacy: The Holy Alliance, Containment and the Cold War," in *Religion and the Cold War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 86.

going to church every Sunday, but he continued to read the Bible and interpret it for himself.<sup>7</sup>

Many people underestimated the importance of religion in Truman's life and decision-making because he did not like to talk about his religious life, thinking that religion was "something to live by and not talk about."<sup>8</sup> While he was a senator living in Washington D.C., very few people were interested in his religious life and church attendance, but as soon as he became the President, he discovered that suddenly the whole world was watching him. When he attended church, Truman felt that his presence attracted too much gossip and national attention. He was particularly frustrated when he felt that some religious leaders were taking advantage of the publicity show.<sup>9</sup> Because of this, he attended church irregularly, gave no advance notice and usually "slipped into a rear pew of" a church quietly so that he could "beat the publicity boys."<sup>10</sup>

Despite his Baptist background, Truman's religious outlook leaned toward the ecumenical. His wife and daughter belonged to the Episcopalian denomination. As President in the White House, he supported all denominations and sought to have peace with other religions, showing no particular favoritism towards any religious affiliation in his political appointments.<sup>11</sup>

Since the President cherished the American tradition of religious tolerance, he emphasized the importance of religious life and the right of religious freedom for

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<sup>7</sup> Clark M. Clifford, "The Unique and Inspiring Leadership of President Truman," in *Harry S. Truman: The Man From Independence*, ed. William F. Levantrosser (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 385.

<sup>8</sup> Quote in *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Mr. Citizen* (New York: Popular Library, 1953), 97.

<sup>10</sup> See Truman's diary, 1 June 1945, *Off the Record*, 40-41.

<sup>11</sup> Merlin Gustafson, "Church, State, and the Cold War, 1945-1952," *Journal of Church and State* 8 (Winter 1966): 50.

American citizens.<sup>12</sup> Ecumenical religious organizations, such as the Federal Council of Churches of Christ (FCCC), enjoyed President Truman's respect. The FCCC was first organized in 1908 and expanded gradually. By 1949, it received the support of three Eastern Orthodox denominations and twenty-four Protestant denominations, except the Southern Baptists, in the United States. It claimed about twenty-eight million in associated memberships.<sup>13</sup> The work of the FCCC was carried on by more than twenty committees and departments that covered all phases of church affairs. Since the FCCC was one of the influential church lobbies in the nation's capital, the President took their views seriously and maintained a friendly relationship with them in order to mobilize their support for domestic and foreign affairs. He was the first President of the United States to speak at a FCCC conference in Columbus, Ohio, on March 6, 1946.

Truman's religious faith influenced his style of leadership and especially some crucial decisions that he made. Unlike his presidential predecessors who predominantly came from well-educated and privileged backgrounds, Truman was a self-made man of humble birth. Without even having a college degree, he had to mingle among Ivy League graduates and many highly decorated World War II generals, while at the same time asserting a leadership role in the top decision-making process in the highest office of the world. A prayer that Truman had recited frequently ever since his teenage years shed some light on his inner desire to please God by doing what was right:

Oh! Almighty and Everlasting God, Creator of Heaven, Earth, and the Universe: Help me to be, to think, to act what is right, because it is right; make me truthful, honest and honorable in all things; make me intellectually honest for the sake of right and honor and without thought of reward to me. Give me the ability to be charitable, forgiving and

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<sup>12</sup> Truman, *Mr. Citizen*, 98.

<sup>13</sup> Luke Eugene Ebersole, *Church Lobbying in the Nation's Capital* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951), 43.

patient with my fellowmen – help me to understand their motives and their shortcomings  
– even as Thou understandest mine! Amen, Amen, Amen.<sup>14</sup>

As Truman faced the daunting task of leading the nation, he may well have remembered this familiar prayer. It is at least known that when he spoke for the first time before Congress as the President of the United States, he quoted King Solomon's prayer for wisdom and the ability to govern the people as they should be governed.

It is hard to evaluate how deeply his religious beliefs affected his political behavior and leadership style, but according to historian Merlin Gustafson, who specializes in the study of religious influence in the American Presidencies, Truman's political philosophy was closely connected to his religious philosophy.<sup>15</sup> Truman testified again and again that while he was in the White House, he desired to think and act more as the President of the United States than as the individual, Harry S. Truman. He thought that it was right for him to care more about the benefit of the whole country than for his own personal interests.<sup>16</sup> However, sometimes to do right could jeopardize one's political career and popularity. As a matter of fact, Truman was hardly very popular compared to Roosevelt while he was in the White House and his approval rating dropped every year of his presidency.<sup>17</sup> Despite this, Truman was able to mobilize bi-partisan political support for some of his policies with his administration setting the course for the American response to the Soviets in the first decade of the Cold War.

### ***Moral Fallout from the Use of the Atomic Bomb***

As soon as he entered the White House, Truman was confronted with ending the prolonged war against Japan. In spite of facing their doom, the Japanese continued to

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<sup>14</sup> Ferrell, *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman*, 188.

<sup>15</sup> Merlin Gustafson, "The Religion of a President," *Journal of Church and State* 5 (Autumn 1968): 379.

<sup>16</sup> Truman, *Mr. Citizen*, 263.

<sup>17</sup> See Sheldon Appleton, "Public Perceptions of Truman," in *Harry S. Truman: The Man From Independence*, 169-184.

refuse to surrender to Allied forces unconditionally because they hoped to prevent an Allied occupation of Japan and to preserve *kokutai*, “a symbolic expression of both the political and the spiritual essence of the emperor system,” which in the end boiled down to the status of the imperial house.<sup>18</sup> From June to July, Truman’s administration was torn between whether or not to revise the Allies’ position of demanding an unconditional surrender. Truman’s advisers pointed out that an invasion of Kyushu and the Kanto Plain on Honshu, estimated to cost about 193,500 American casualties, would be needed to crush Japan’s fighting spirit and completely disarm the country.<sup>19</sup> On June 17, 1945, Truman’s diary records his dilemma, “I have to decide a Japanese strategy – shall we invade Japan proper or shall we bomb and blockade? That is my hardest decision to date. But I’ll make it when I have all the facts.”<sup>20</sup> About a month later, the successful testing of the atomic bomb was reported to Truman while he was meeting with Churchill and Stalin at Potsdam on July 16, 1945.<sup>21</sup>

As the President of the United States, Truman held the ultimate responsibility of ordering the use of the atomic bombs against Japan. Truman regarded the atomic bomb as “the most terrible bomb in the history of the world.” However, he did not hesitate to use it against Japan, because he believed that it was God’s favor for the United States to possess such a powerful weapon.<sup>22</sup> His only concern was that he wanted to use it against a “military objective and soldiers and sailors, not women and children.”<sup>23</sup> He wrote in

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<sup>18</sup> Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 4.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>20</sup> Ferrell, *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman*, 47.

<sup>21</sup> *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Year of Decisions* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1955), 415.

<sup>22</sup> Harry S. Truman, Statement announcing the use of the A-Bomb at Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, U.S. President, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1945* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1961), 197-199.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

his diary, "Even if the Japs are savages, ruthless, merciless and fanatic, we as the leader of the world for the common welfare cannot drop this terrible bomb on the old capital or the new."<sup>24</sup> On July 26, the day on which the Allies sent their ultimatum in the Potsdam Proclamation, demanding that Japan surrender unconditionally through a public declaration, Truman told the American people, "If they do not now accept our terms, they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth."<sup>25</sup> When Japan refused to comply, on August 6, 1945, the US dropped the first atomic bomb used in combat on the city of Hiroshima. Three days later, on August 9, it dropped another atomic bomb on the city of Nagasaki. Finally, Japan agreed to surrender unconditionally on August 15.

Truman, however, had over-estimated the usefulness of the atomic bomb to end the Pacific War because the leaders in Tokyo seemed more shaken by the hostile action of the Soviet Union, which declared war on Japan on August 8, than the destructive power of the atomic bombing at Hiroshima.<sup>26</sup> Nor did the bomb scare the Russians into complying with U.S. demands in dealing with post-war settlements. Instead, its immediate result was to hasten Stalin's steps toward joining the Pacific War and increase his distrust of the United States. Historians such as Martin J. Sherwin have questioned Truman's inflexibility toward Japan and suggested that Truman's hidden "atomic diplomacy" against the Soviet Union sowed the seeds of the Cold War.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ferrell, *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman*, 55-56.

<sup>25</sup> Statement announcing the use of the A-Bomb at Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, U.S. President, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1945*, 197-199.

<sup>26</sup> The latest interpretation is presented by Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan*, 183-202.

<sup>27</sup> Martin J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: Hiroshima and the Origins of the Arms Race* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987).

Initially, the American people were happy to win and proud of their accomplishment of inventing the atomic bomb. President Truman officially declared Sunday, August 19, 1945, a day of prayer and “[called] upon the people of the United States, of all faiths, to unite in offering their thanks to God.”<sup>28</sup> Most of the American people were firmly behind Truman’s decision to use the bomb, thinking that since God had denied the atomic bomb to America’s enemies, “we will use it in his name and for his purposes,” making possible a world in which “we will have war no more,” in the words of one elderly man from rural Florida.<sup>29</sup> According to a cultural historian, John Fousek, the bomb and the victory over Germany and Japan signified, to many people, a “national greatness, which in turn entailed responsibility for ensuring peace and freedom throughout the world.”<sup>30</sup> Borrowing the words of Henry R. Luce, the owner of *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* magazines, “the American Century” had arrived because of American leadership in the victory over the Axis Powers and the American monopoly of atomic weapons.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, the fever of victory began to subside when more detailed reports of the horror of destruction and radiation effects caused by the atomic explosions reached the American public. These cases of human suffering were beyond the imagination of any scientists and political leaders prior to the use of the weapon. People began to question whether the ends justified the means, and how much guilt they should feel for using an immoral weapon upon women and children, even when the purported goal was,

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<sup>28</sup> “Proclamation 2660: Victory in the East – Day of Prayer,” 16 August 1945, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1945*, 223.

<sup>29</sup> John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 24.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>31</sup> Michael H. Hunt, “East Asia in Henry Luce’s ‘American Century’,” *Diplomatic History* 23 (Spring 1999): 322.

ironically, “to defeat tyranny.” As the true extent of the devastation at Hiroshima and Nagasaki became known, many American moralists and pacifists condemned the President’s decision, arguing that it had damaged the moral supremacy of the United States as a Christian nation. It stirred up intense controversy and deep concern over any future use of atomic weapons.

Liberal Protestant publications were particularly critical of the decision of the President. In late August 1945, *Christian Century* reported that “something like a moral earthquake has followed the dropping of atomic bombs on the two Japanese cities.” The editorial, titled “America Atomic Atrocity,” condemned the use of the atomic bomb, which had placed the United States in an indefensible moral position.<sup>32</sup> It called on the churches of America “to dissociate themselves and their faith from this inhuman and reckless act of the American government.”<sup>33</sup> Those who were involved in the making and using of the bomb could also not escape a deep sense of guilt and responsibility. Albert Einstein, for example, stated that if he were to live his life over again, he should prefer to be a plumber or a peddler rather than a physicist.<sup>34</sup> Many within the U.S. government were troubled as well – although Truman himself never expressed any regrets about using the bomb on Japan.

American churches were divided on this issue. Some believers, such as Catholic clergymen and Protestant laymen, sided with the President, seeing God’s providence in giving America the bomb. Others, especially liberal theologians and intellectuals,

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<sup>32</sup> Leo Maley, III, “Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Memory (and Forgetting) in the Religious Press,” in *The Writing on the Cloud: America Culture Confronts the Atomic Bomb*, ed. Alison M. Scott and Christopher D. Geist (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1997), 183.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>34</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, “Einstein and the World Situation,” *The Messenger* 19 (December 14, 1954): 6. See also Robert E. Williams, “Christian Realism and ‘The Bomb’: Reinhold Niebuhr on the Dilemma of the Nuclear Age,” *Journal of Church and State* 28 (Spring 1986): 295.

condemned its use. Between them, these views perhaps affected the President in the following way: they encouraged him in believing that he had made the right decision, while at the same time discouraging him from using the bomb again, since it had cost so many innocent lives and caused such unprecedented suffering.<sup>35</sup>

Christian intellectuals were also deeply troubled by the discovery and the use of the bomb. For example, Reinhold Niebuhr, one of the most famous Christian theologians of the 1940s who later became an adviser in the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, initially tried to justify the use of the bomb against Japan as "the climax of the use of methods of warfare including obliteration and incendiary bombing."<sup>36</sup> However, just a few weeks later, he cautioned about the potential threat of the bomb against humanity because a scientific breakthrough might not necessarily bring good to mankind. Nor did the bomb, Niebuhr felt, mean a victory of good over evil.

The destructive power of the bomb, in fact, raised serious questions for those who looked to science for hope regarding the future. Man's quest for the mastery of nature had climaxed in fear and trembling. Biblical predictions of a fiery Armageddon now seemed to be real and certain. One *Life* editorial suggested that all the major postwar problems were symbolically embedded in the atomic bomb: "Food, Russia, strikes, UN, colonies and everything else on the public conscience are inseparably threaded on this bomb, swinging like pendulums in unison between idealism and blue funk."<sup>37</sup>

Fears of atomic annihilation were widely shared among American political and military leaders because many people could visualize that the next world war would

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<sup>35</sup> Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan*, 202.

<sup>36</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, "Our Relations to Japan," *Christianity and Crisis* 5 (September 17, 1945): 5. See also Williams, "Christian Realism and 'The Bomb': Reinhold Niebuhr on the Dilemma of the Nuclear Age," 294.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Fousek, *To Lead the Free World*, 114.

probably be an atomic war that destroyed the whole world. In response, American political, military, and religious leaders began to advocate a revitalization of spiritual values in American life as the only solution to the threat of eternal destruction. General Douglas MacArthur, who had a clearer view of the destructive power of the atomic bomb than most Americans because of his responsibility as Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP) in Japan, told his troops shortly after Japan surrendered, "We have had our last chance. If we do not devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door."<sup>38</sup> The only solution to the problem, according to the general, was spiritual. Men must first be saved in spirit in order to confront this difficult reality of saving lives in a hostile world.<sup>39</sup>

General MacArthur's idea was supported by John Foster Dulles, a religious layman active in the FCCC, who also called for a "spiritual revival" of the nation, urging the American people to rededicate their lives to the religious faith of their forefathers.<sup>40</sup> In June 1946, *Life* published a two-part series by Dulles on Soviet foreign policies and the steps needed to counter Communist encroachment. First, he called for a spiritual renewal, because traditional American "political and religious faith" could solve the nation's domestic problems. He also urged the United States to maintain military strength and to promote, in American-occupied regions, the Four Freedoms and the concepts of justice found within the Atlantic Charter, a vision for a post-World War II world established by President Roosevelt and Sir Winston Churchill in 1941.<sup>41</sup> The

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<sup>38</sup> Jerrold Lee Brooks, "In Search of Peace: Presbyterians in the Early Cold War Period, 1945-1953," *American Presbyterians* 70 (Winter 1992): 261.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>40</sup> Mark G. Toulouse, "The Development of a Cold Warrior: John Foster Dulles and the Soviet Union, 1945-1952," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 63 (Fall 1985): 312.

<sup>41</sup> Fousek, *To Lead the Free World*, 119.

American people, Dulles warned, should be ready to accept the necessary sacrifices in order to “help keep freedom alive in the world.”<sup>42</sup>

### *Speaking the Language of Faith*

One of the key roles of religion in American foreign policy was as a means of public persuasion. As the President of the United States, Truman, along with his cabinet members, was responsible for making US foreign policy known and acceptable to the American people. Religious rhetoric was generally an essential part of Truman’s public appeal for a new world order because it was an effective means of breaking down partisanship in politics by emphasizing the common beliefs and values that were generally shared by the American public.

At the same time, it was quite likely that the role of religion went far beyond that of a convenient toll of rhetoric. At least in the case of Truman, his appeals for morality in foreign policy probably derived from his own ideology and desire to “do what was right.” On some occasions, he went against the advice of his cabinet in making his own decisions.

Truman’s public speeches showed a consistent religious conviction – speeches that he approved even if he did not write.<sup>43</sup> Truman’s “references to Bible passages and the Christian mission of the United States in world affairs,” according to historian Gustafson, suited the spirit of the times.<sup>44</sup> Three major events – the establishment of the United Nations, the creation of the state of Israel, and the implementation of the Truman

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Richard S. Kirkendall, ed., *Harry’s Farewell: Interpreting and Teaching the Truman Presidency* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 9.

<sup>44</sup> Gustafson, “The Religion of a President,” 380.

Doctrine and the Marshall Plan – demonstrated how Truman used religion to build public support for his foreign policy and how religious ideas influenced his decisions.

### *The Formation of the United Nations*

The idea of establishing a United Nations (UN) had originated in three major successive political conferences (Moscow, Cairo, and Tehran) during the war in 1943. From August to October 1944, the details of such a world organization had been worked out by representatives from France, the Republic of China, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union. As President of the United States, Truman's role was to persuade the American public to support this new organization for international collective security and to accept the American responsibility in leading the postwar world.

In his speech before the United Nations Conference in San Francisco on April 25, 1945, Truman shared his belief that the United Nations was formed by "Divine guidance" for a new world order:

None of us doubt that with Divine guidance, friendly cooperation, and hard work, we shall find an adequate answer to the problem history has put before us.... We must build a new world – a far better world – one in which the eternal dignity of man is respected. As we are about to undertake our heavy duties, we beseech our Almighty God to guide us in the building of a permanent monument to those who gave their lives that this moment might come. May He lead our steps in His own righteous path of peace.<sup>45</sup>

Truman's expression was a sincere statement that revealed not only what was on his mind, but also what he believed Americans in general had wished for. "Our sole objective," the President explained, "at this decisive gathering, is to create the structure. We must provide the machinery, which will make future peace, not only possible, but

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<sup>45</sup> Address to the United Nations Conference in San Francisco, 25 April 1945, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1945*, 21-23.

certain....”<sup>46</sup> Instead of depending on the American military establishment, Truman envisioned the United Nations as God’s given machinery and structure for the preservation of world peace. When he pitched the UN to the American people, and particularly to religious groups, he stressed the religious principles within the UN Charter:

We have tried to write into the Charter of the United Nations the essence of religion. The end of aggression, the maintenance of peace, the promotion of social justice and individual rights and freedoms, the substitution of reason and justice for tyranny and war, the protection of the small and weak nations – by these principles the United Nations has laid the framework of the Charter on the sound rock of religious principles.<sup>47</sup>

He wanted Americans not to see the UN as just another worldly organization, but as one that was built on religious principles which they commonly shared and endorsed. In other words, Truman hoped to convince people that the formation of the UN was not merely the political design of a few heads of states, but also a general answer to the public sentiment of the world.<sup>48</sup>

### *The Recognition of Israel*

President Truman’s conviction of doing what was right motivated him to make crucial decisions that sometimes went against the advice of his cabinet members or against general popular opinion of the time. The establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine was the best example. After the end of World War II, there was an intense effort by the Zionist leaders of the American Zionist Emergency Council to lobby for a homeland for the Jewish refugees in the Middle East.<sup>49</sup> It was a highly controversial and

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Address in Columbus at a conference of the Federal Council of Churches on March 6, 1946. U.S. President, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1946* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1962), 141-144.

<sup>48</sup> Arthur H. Darken, “The National Council of Churches and Our Foreign Policy,” *Religion in Life* XXIV (Winter 1954-55): 121.

<sup>49</sup> *Memoirs By Harry S. Truman: Year of Decisions*, 72.

complicated issue. According to the Balfour Declaration (1917),<sup>50</sup> the British had committed to give the Jews a homeland in Palestine.<sup>51</sup> After the end of the war, the Allies established a protectorate, called Palestine, for Jewish refugees from Europe. The issue of recognition of the nation of Israel came up when the Jewish population proposed to announce their independence on May 14, 1948. It caused serious conflicts and controversy within the United States.

Under General George C. Marshall's leadership, the State Department strongly opposed extending US recognition because it was practically impossible for Jews in the new Palestine protectorate to defend themselves against thirty million Arabs in the Middle East unless the United States fully backed it up. To do so, in Marshall's view, would jeopardize American interests and its military position in the Arab world.<sup>52</sup> President Truman, however, wanted to recognize Israel, not for any political, economic, or military motive, but for religious reasons. He told Clark M. Clifford, his close adviser in the White House, that he was "determined to do all that was in his power" to help the formation of a Jewish nation because "there was a commitment in the Old Testament that the Jews would have a homeland."<sup>53</sup> Because of Truman's efforts, the United States government recognized the State of Israel just before the Soviet Union did.<sup>54</sup>

When the Jewish representative came to thank him for his support, Clifford said that the President's eyes were filled with tears because the President thought that he had done the right thing despite the opposition, and that God had been on his side to fulfill the

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<sup>50</sup> Letter from Arthur James Balfour to Lord Rothschild, 2 November 1917, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/balfour.htm>.

<sup>51</sup> *Memoirs By Harry S. Truman: Years of Decision*, 73.

<sup>52</sup> Clark M. Clifford, *Oral History Interview with Clark M. Clifford* by Jerry N. Hess, 3 April 1971 in Washington, D.C., 97-98, Truman Library, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/hstpaper/koreasub.htm>.

<sup>53</sup> Clifford, "The Unique and Inspiring Leadership of President Truman," in *Harry S. Truman: The Man From Independence*, 385.

<sup>54</sup> Clifford, *Oral History Interview with Clark M. Clifford*, 102.

prophecy.<sup>55</sup> Clifford had little doubt about Truman's sincere effort in supporting Israel, but some people believed that Truman helped the Jews because it would probably help him to gain more Jewish votes in the 1948 Presidential election. This latter argument was supported by C. Girard Davidson who was Truman's Assistant Secretary of Interior at that time.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, Truman's friendliness to the Jews perhaps also cost him many votes from anti-Semitic groups. In short, Truman's decision was both a political gain and loss that was hard to measure, but the importance of the religious factor remained clear.

### *The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan*

The political and economic stability of Europe was another big concern for the United States. As soon as the war ended, the Soviet Union expanded its military control over Eastern Europe. Communists were gaining public support and political influence in Western Europe as well. In addition, the weakening British Empire could not maintain its position in Greece and Turkey when Communist insurrections disturbed the stability of the Balkans. The British urgently asked the Americans for help. President Truman feared that all of Europe might turn to Communism if the United States did not act immediately. The stability and economic recovery of Europe was crucial for America's market economy because a Communist-controlled Europe would mean a closed door for US products and a threat to free trade. Truman's advisors suggested that he take a clear stand against Communist expansion and implement crucial measures that would save the European economy.<sup>57</sup> The President was convinced.

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<sup>55</sup> Clifford, "The Unique and Inspiring Leadership of President Truman," 385.

<sup>56</sup> C. Girard Davidson, *Oral History Interview with C. Girard Davidson* by Jerry N. Hess, 17 July 1972 in Washington, D.C.: 65-66, Truman Library, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/hstpape/koreasub.htm>.

<sup>57</sup> Isaacson and Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made*, 17-19.

However, it would not be easy for the American public to accept the rebuilding of Berlin just after they had finished bombing it. After four years of sacrifice, the American people wanted demobilization, a smaller government budget, and reduced overseas involvement. A complex economic argument on preventing the spread of Communism might not have been fully understood, so Truman instead appealed to the religious golden rule. In a nationally broadcast speech to the FCCC, Truman called on the American people to “save the world which is beset by so many threats of new conflicts, new terror, and new destruction.” He wanted the people to make more sacrifices. “As your President,” Truman told his audiences, “I appeal to you again – and to all Americans everywhere – to prove your faith and your belief in the teachings of God by doing your share to save the starving millions in Europe, in Asia, in Africa. Share your food by eating less, and prevent millions from dying of starvation. Reduce your abundance so that others may have a crust of bread.”<sup>58</sup> In his 1947 State of the Union address, he warned the United States about the difficulties of securing a peace settlement in Europe and Asia due to the obstruction of the Soviet Union and the need to maintain the strength and increase the security of the United States.

According to the Truman Doctrine presented two months later, the President openly defined the ideological struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union as the competition between two different ways of life.<sup>59</sup> To support Greece and Turkey, and to give economic aid to the recovery of war torn Europe, Truman argued, was an

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<sup>58</sup> Address in Columbus at a Conference of the Federal Council of Churches, 6 March 1946. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1945-1953*, Truman Library, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php>.

<sup>59</sup> Special message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine, 12 March 1947. U.S. President. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1947* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1963), 177-180.

effective way to promote the American way of life because political freedom allowed independent countries to choose their own way of life, rather than letting Communists impose political tyranny upon free people.<sup>60</sup> The foundation of the American way of life, however, was not merely built on its materialistic abundance and sound political system, but also on its spiritual strength. Truman argued that capitalism without the guidance of moral principles and religious freedom had very little value and thus was not much different from materialistic Communism.<sup>61</sup>

Truman's administration devised a comprehensive economic recovery program to revive the European economy. The plan was known as the Marshall Plan, which was named after the Secretary of State, General George C. Marshall. Prior to the implementation of the plan, the United States had already spent \$9 billion in the region, but the effort proved to be inadequate. General Marshall urged all European countries to join the integrated effort. West Germany, the defeated enemy, would also be included in the plan. The United States government would pump money into the reconstruction of Europe so that the Europeans would be fully integrated back into the American-dominated free market economy.

The Soviet Union and Eastern European countries were invited, but neither the Russians nor the Eastern Europeans participated because they feared the capitalist influence. According to the Marshall Plan, Eastern Europe would provide raw materials to industrial Western Europe, making the region dependent on the Western world. The Russians believed that it was a capitalist trap to nullify their domination over Eastern

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

Europe. The Soviet Union therefore organized its own recovery program, known as the Molotov Plan, to counter the US effort.

To get the American people and Congress to support the Marshall Plan, the Truman administration carried out a huge advertising campaign. The government stressed the humanitarian purposes of the recovery program, the Communist threat, and the importance of Europe in a free market economy to generate public support. Church leaders were also mobilized to endorse the effort, pointing out that the plan was consistent with the Christian doctrine of loving your enemies. After months of discussion and debate, Congress passed the Economic Cooperation Act in March 1948 to fund the project. In three years, the US government sent a total of 12.4 billion US dollars to Europe. The plan proved to be a mixed success. It caused inflation and did not solve the huge trade deficits between the United States and Europe, but it did generate industrial production and stimulate European economic growth. The United States also benefited economically and politically from the program when the Europeans were able to afford American exports and sided with the United States in its political competition against the Soviet Union.

#### *President Truman's Idea of Building a Western Christian Alliance*

The threat of Communist expansion in Europe and Asia dominated the conduct of US foreign policy from 1947 to 1950. To find a way to nullify the threat and secure a victory over Communism became a major concern of US foreign policy makers. Apart from building economic strength and political alliances with non-Communist countries to contain the spread of Communism, President Truman wanted to expand the anti-Communist coalition through religious means. His outlook on foreign policy was colored

by his religious convictions. Since he believed that a country with a strong Christian presence and a democratic political system to ensure individual freedom would fundamentally reject Communist philosophy,<sup>62</sup> he was not particularly afraid of Communist infiltration into the United States, so long as the American people held fast to their religious beliefs and democratic institutions. To this end, the President thought that he could use his position to encourage worship and to draw attention to the plight of Christians in Communist countries. For instance, in his 1948 State of the Union address, Truman defined the American objective in the pursuit of freedom:

Our first goal is to secure fully the essential human rights of our citizens. The United States has always had a deep concern for human rights. Religious freedom, free speech, and freedom of thought are cherished realities in our land. Any denial of human rights is a denial of the basic beliefs of democracy and of our regard for the worth of each individual.<sup>63</sup>

The President also wanted the American people to spend more time on religious activities and pay more attention to religion, putting their freedoms and rights into practice. Since the world was looking to the U.S. for leadership, Truman asserted that it was the responsibility of the United States to “rededicate ourselves to the faith in God that gives us confidence as we face the challenge of the years ahead.”<sup>64</sup> In a radio address a year later, he urged the American people to go to worship and to give thanks to God because God had blessed America while in other parts of the world there were many people who could “only pray in secret, fearing persecution if they profess their beliefs openly.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Truman, *Mr. Citizen*, 98.

<sup>63</sup> Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union, 7 January 1948, U.S. President, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1948* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1964), 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-10.

<sup>65</sup> Radio address as part of interdenominational program, “One Great Hour,” 26 March 1949, U.S. President, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1949* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1964), 187.

Truman's idea of the pursuit of freedom, however, had its own blind spot. The United States' own civil rights record did not look good. American blacks did not enjoy the same kind of freedom as white Americans in the 1940s due to deep-rooted ideas of racism and segregation. American racism was a glaring weakness that the Soviet anti-American propaganda machine attacked repeatedly. Nevertheless, it did not mean that the President had not made any effort on civil rights issues. Using his presidential authority, Truman first set up a committee on civil rights. Based on the report, *To Secure These Rights*, submitted by the committee, the President issued Executive Order #9980 to set up a Fair Employment Practices Commission in the federal government, putting an end to discrimination in the civil service system. After this, he also issued another executive order (#9981) to desegregate the US military forces. Had it not been for the presence of the Southern Bloc within Congress, who blocked any attempt to address civil rights problems through legislation, Truman might have implemented more laws to ensure the freedom of American blacks. Moving slightly ahead of his time, Truman was quite sincere in his objective to ensure freedom in both domestic and foreign affairs.

In terms of foreign affairs, Truman was especially sympathetic towards those who did not enjoy religious freedom. "Millions of people in our world," the President wrote in October 1949, "are living in slavery."<sup>66</sup> He was referring to the political and religious persecution in the Communist countries in Europe. A month later, he explained the same issue on another occasion. "Men and women in the Communist world are being systematically persecuted for their religious beliefs and campaigns are being waged to

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<sup>66</sup> Harry Truman's letter to John L. Sullivan Accepting the Honorary Chairmanship of National Brotherhood Week, 5 October 1949, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1949*, 499-500.

turn religion into a tool of the state.”<sup>67</sup> Truman argued that the American people should offer them not only economic aid, but also “the sense of brotherhood in a common cause.”<sup>68</sup> Seeing that it would not be hard for him to find allies and helpers in religious circles, Truman believed that he might “organize the moral forces of the world to meet this situation.”<sup>69</sup> He confided to his wife, Bess Truman, that if he could mobilize religious leaders to join hands “against the Bolshevik materialists,” then the United States could win the fight against Communism.<sup>70</sup>

Therefore, Truman sought to build an informal Western Christian alliance – “a common religious and moral front” – to counter the Communist ideological expansion in Europe and Asia.<sup>71</sup> In 1948, he began an effort “to bring about the active cooperation of the leaders and the followers of the great religious faiths of the world,” hoping that he could generate “a vital force for the advancement of peace.”<sup>72</sup> His first step was to set up informal diplomatic relations with the Pope by sending Myron C. Taylor as his personal representative to the Vatican. This drew criticism from Protestant groups, but Truman wanted to work with the staunchly anti-Communist Catholic Church. Using his own personal influence, the President then contacted Protestant leaders, such as Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam (Methodist) and Dr. Samuel McCrea Calvert (Baptist), to mobilize their support for the potential alliance across various denominations. In addition to these Christian leaders, he also reached out to Jewish leaders, spiritual authorities in the

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<sup>67</sup> Address at a Luncheon of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, 11 November 1949, *ibid.*, 561-563.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Kirby, “Harry Truman’s Religious Legacy: The Holy Alliance, Containment and the Cold War,” in *Religion and the Cold War*, 91-92.

<sup>71</sup> Truman, *Mr. Citizen*, 99.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

Moslem world, and anti-Communist Buddhist leaders, such as the Dalai Lama of Tibet.<sup>73</sup> Such a diverse group of religious representatives would usually not work together. But Truman sought to convince these religious leaders “that a foe common to them all was trying to destroy them all.”<sup>74</sup>

***Partnership with Religious Institutions in Spreading Pro-American Propaganda***

Propaganda was the primary benefit that Truman would reap from this religious alliance if he could mobilize religious forces behind him. Anti-American propaganda spread by the Soviet Union had long troubled the President. “Propaganda seems to be our greatest foreign relations enemy,” he wrote. “Russians distribute lies about us. Our papers lie about and misrepresent the motives of the Russians – and the British out-lie and out-propagandize us both.”<sup>75</sup> To his frustration, Truman felt that he was facing a three-front propaganda war and he needed help in order to offset its negative impact. It was nothing new that Truman had a rough relationship with the American press during his presidency. Because of their biased reports on his administration, he labeled the newspapers run by people such as William Randolph Hearst of the *Los Angeles Examiner*, Colonel Robert R. McCormick of the *Chicago Tribune*, Eleanor Patterson of the *Washington Times-Herald*, and Joseph Patterson of the *New York Daily News*, as the “sabotage press.”<sup>76</sup> His dislike of Soviet propaganda was hardly surprising, but what upset Truman most was when he heard that the British put up a show for the French, claiming credit for furnishing the French with the lend-lease materials that the United

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>74</sup> Kirby, “Harry Truman’s Religious Legacy: The Holy Alliance, Containment and the Cold War,” 77.

<sup>75</sup> Ferrell, *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman*, 45.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 47, 63, 192.

States had given them.<sup>77</sup> Truman believed that it was his job to fix this problem because people in the world (not just Americans) needed to know the facts in order to fully appreciate the supremacy of the American political system and way of life. If the truth was not told, it would eventually hurt US foreign policy. Truman's major goal in Cold War foreign policy was to therefore spread anti-Communist propaganda while countering anti-American messages.<sup>78</sup>

Addressing the members of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, who were resisting governmental propaganda efforts, Truman asked for understanding and support. The Cold War, he explained, was a struggle for the minds of men. Since the forces of "imperialistic communism" were winning the propaganda war through a systematic program of deceit and distortion, it would be crucial for the United States to get the real story across to the people. Otherwise, the United States would "lose the battle for men's minds by default."<sup>79</sup> Truman asserted that the United States must intensify its effort "to promote the cause of freedom against the propaganda of slavery," and to make American voices "heard around the world in a great campaign of truth."<sup>80</sup> In March 1949, the President approved an expanded propaganda and psychological warfare program to curb Communist activities in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, which was known collectively as the Campaign of Truth. The program divided the world into

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War 1945-1961* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1997), 14.

<sup>79</sup> Address on Foreign Policy at a Luncheon of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 20 April 1950, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1950* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1965), 261-264.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.; and see also Allan A. Needell, "'Truth Is Our Weapon': Project TROY, Political Warfare, and Government-Academic Relations in the National Security State," *Diplomatic History* 17 (Summer 1993): 404.

different regions and devised appropriate means for anti-Communist propaganda efforts in each region.

The Campaign of Truth centered on the theme of religious freedom. One way that a religious moral front aided America's propaganda warfare was by emphasizing around the world that the difference between America and the Soviet Union was freedom of worship versus state-enforced atheism. Freedom of religion was of course a much more appealing argument for the American way of life than an economic argument for capitalism would have been. Truman explicitly stated that a world with freedom of worship was an important US foreign-policy objective. He told the graduating class of 1950 at Gonzaga University:

It is the moral and religious beliefs of mankind which alone give our strength meaning and purpose. The struggle for peace is a struggle for moral and ethical principles. These principles unite us with religious people in every land, who are striving, as we are striving, for brotherhood among men. In everything we do, at home and abroad, we must demonstrate our clear purpose, and our firm will, to build a world order in which men everywhere can walk upright and unafraid, and do the work of God.<sup>81</sup>

The notion of religious freedom, in Truman's eyes, was not only a powerful force to unite the world, but also an essential principle for mankind to fulfill its eternal destiny. This was a classic example of how a political leader might harness the power of religion in the fight to win the Cold War.<sup>82</sup> It was an attempt to instill a moral conviction that the Americans were on the side of religious righteousness, while the Communists were evil.<sup>83</sup>

The radio broadcasts of the *Voice of America*, an official propaganda machine for reaching the people behind the Iron Curtain, "repeatedly attacked Soviet tyranny as hostile to religion, denounced Stalin as a pseudo-God and claimed that the Russian

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<sup>81</sup> Address in Spokane at Gonzaga University, 11 May 1950, U.S. President, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1950*, 375-377.

<sup>82</sup> Kirby, "Harry Truman's Religious Legacy: The Holy Alliance, Containment and the Cold War," 77.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

people still crowded into church despite all the persecution and peril.”<sup>84</sup> Religious freedom grew to be the main theme of anti-Communist broadcasting conducted by the *Voice* under the leadership of Edward Barrett, an assistant Secretary of State who headed the US Information Service (USIS) from 1950 to 1952.<sup>85</sup> The objectives of these broadcasts were to destabilize the Communist regimes inside the Iron Curtain and to encourage and exploit defections for the sake of obtaining a psychological victory.<sup>86</sup> Interestingly, the separation of church and state did not stop the *Voice of America* (VOA) from broadcasting explicitly religious programming, because it was clearly understood as one of the most effective destabilizing methods available. The US propaganda offensive in 1949 caused the Soviet Union to increase its efforts to jam Russian-language broadcasts by the *VOA*.

Another way that the religious moral front could help was to assist the US propaganda efforts by utilizing the church networks to spread a pro-American message around the world. The US government facilitated communication between religious groups and other private organizations because the President believed that these groups could “help the cause of the United States to bring peace to the world.”<sup>87</sup> Truman regarded missionary activities, in particular, as the most effective way to spread pro-American information since these gospel workers could bring a positive message by telling the people in other countries that the United States had no aggressive agenda.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Kirby, “Religion and the Cold War – An Introduction,” in *Religion and the Cold War*, 6.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. See also Harriet Rasooli-Sa’eed, “The Iron Curtain is Not Soundproof,” *Presbyterian Life*, 14 April 1951, 8-9.

<sup>86</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War 1945-1961*, 14-15.

<sup>87</sup> Ferrell, *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman*, 44-45.

<sup>88</sup> Remarks to a group of Baptist Missionaries, 3 February 1950, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1950*, 146.

To ensure the success of this anti-Communist propaganda campaign, the United States also needed to enlist supporters inside the hardcore regions, where neither American private nor public institutions could function effectively, to distribute printed materials to remote areas outside the area of radio broadcasts. A common religious cause would offer the United States valuable allies and helpers within the Communist-controlled regions. For instance, the Catholic churches in Eastern Europe became the major channel for the flow of pro-American leaflets and other reading materials.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, it was hardly a surprise that many clergymen in Europe, China, and North Korea were charged as US spies by Communist authorities. Truman's efforts further intensified the Communist distrust of the Christian churches, institutions, and population, seeing them as pro-American. The loyalty of Christians to their native lands and governments was constantly challenged by Communist authorities.

On the whole, Truman possessed what Reinhold Niebuhr had called the "deep layer of Messianic consciousness in the mind of America."<sup>90</sup> Such an ideal, according to historian Dianne Kirby, who has studied Truman's presidency, "held a special appeal for him as the leader of a nation which considered itself a special moral force in the world, with a unique mission, born of its righteousness."<sup>91</sup> Religion, in Truman's hands, became not only a way for obtaining personal spiritual nourishment, but also a means to guide the Western world as it fought Communist encroachment.<sup>92</sup> The nature of the Cold War was no longer solely the political, economic, and military competitions between two superpowers attempting to expand their spheres of influence. Religious beliefs not only

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>90</sup> Quote in Kirby, "Harry Truman's Religious Legacy: The Holy Alliance, Containment and the Cold War," in *Religion and the Cold War*, 86.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 91-92.

became important elements in American anti-Communist ideology, but also were used as an essential tool in the battle against Communist expansion.<sup>93</sup>

### *ATOMIC FEAR AND RELIGIOUS REVIVAL*

The competition between the United States and Soviet Union was further intensified by several major political developments in Europe and Asia. The first one was the Berlin Blockade in June 1948. The crisis started because the Soviet Union wanted to force a renegotiation of the four-power control of Germany by blocking all supplies to Western-held sectors in Berlin. Although the United States succeeded in breaking the blockade through the continuous airlifting of essential supplies to its controlled areas and forced the Soviet Union to end the ineffective blockade, the event planted real fear of future Soviet aggression in the hearts of many Americans and Europeans, fears that caused the American people to accept greater US responsibility in defending Western Europe. Western European nations huddled around the United States for military protection. Even though the United States had a long tradition of not entering into permanent military alliances with European countries, the blockade hastened the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance that guaranteed a collective response against an attack on any member state. Nevertheless, the confidence of the United States was soon challenged by two major events: the Soviet possession of atomic weapons and the victory of Chinese Communists over the Nationalists in the Chinese civil war.

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<sup>93</sup> Rasooli-Sa'eed, "The Iron Curtain is Not Soundproof," 8-9.

*The Fear of an Atomic War with the Soviet Union*

Most experts had predicted that the Soviets would not be able to make their own atomic bomb until around 1955, but instead the Soviets succeeded much earlier – in September 1949.<sup>94</sup> The United States had lost its nuclear monopoly. President Truman urged the American people to be prepared for any eventuality at any hour because America was vulnerable to an atomic attack from the Soviet Union. To maintain US military superiority, the President accepted the proposal to develop a hydrogen bomb. The possibility of an atomic war with the Soviet Union terrified many Americans as well as Europeans.<sup>95</sup> People were shocked by how quickly the Russians closed the nuclear weapons gap. Soviet spies who transferred atomic secrets to the Russians were arrested in Canada and England. The on-going perjury trial of Alger Hiss, a State Department official who had earlier attended the Yalta Conference with President Roosevelt, fueled fears of severe Communist infiltration in the US government. A deep sense of betrayal was the mood of the time. The hearts of many Americans were further darkened by the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist troops by Mao Zedong's Communist forces in China and Chiang's retreat to Taiwan. Following the reasoning of the domino theory, Americans worried which country would be next. An astute observer might well have put odds on South Korea.

In this unsettling time, religion offered an answer to the chain of unsettling events in world affairs, and, according to some scholars, it would grow to be “a potent political

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<sup>94</sup> Isaacson and Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World they Made*, 16.

<sup>95</sup> “Prepare to Meet Thy God!” in *Revival of Our Time: The Story of Billy Graham Evangelistic Campaigns* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1950), 126.

force.”<sup>96</sup> Distraught people went to church and attended revival meetings; especially, they looked to religious leaders for guidance and advice. In fact, the 1940s and 1950s were decades when religious leaders, theologians, pastors, and missionaries enjoyed a particularly high social reputation in the United States. According to cultural historian Stephen Whitfield’s research on the culture of the Cold War, “when pollsters asked which group was ‘doing the most good for the country,’ the answers lifted religious leaders from third place in 1942 (after government and business leaders) to first in 1947.”<sup>97</sup> The proportion of the public who regarded clergymen as “the most useful citizens” grew from 32.6 percent in 1947 to 46 percent by 1957.<sup>98</sup> “Churches,” Whitfield observed, “were by far the most trusted institution in American life – ahead of schools, radio, and newspapers, and the government itself.”<sup>99</sup> From 1947 onwards, the American people were generally more receptive to a religious interpretation of world events than at any other time in history. As the church base within the United States widened due to an ongoing revival, the potential influence of American missionaries in Korea on American popular opinion was reaching its zenith.

From the secular circle to the religious realm, a general consensus was developing as the nation faced the challenges of post-war reconstruction and peace preservation. As Soviet-American rivalry in Eastern Europe intensified, many looked to the Bible for answers in their insecure world. Christian leaders saw connections between current affairs and Biblical prophecies. Most mainstream religious groups took an ecumenical

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<sup>96</sup> Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert, “U.S. Culture and the Cold War,” in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, ed. Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 10.

<sup>97</sup> Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 83.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

approach to the crisis, and shared the general conviction that “the current threat to the United States must serve as an occasion for a deep religious and spiritual renewal.”<sup>100</sup>

To many preachers, the stories of persecution of Christians in Eastern Europe and in Asia fit the pre-millennialists’ view of the end times.<sup>101</sup> The Biblical term *Armageddon* was frequently used to describe the possible confrontation between the two atomic powers. “The common religious response to this situation,” historian Raymond F. Bulman observed, “was the spread of a certain doomsday revivalist mentality among the various denominational communities.”<sup>102</sup> Prophetic beliefs played a key role in the way many Americans understood current events. Books such as Wilbur Smith’s *This Atomic Age and the Word of God* were popular among both religious and secular readers. The Soviet Union became the main focus of doomsday prophecy among dispensationalist writers. For example, Rev. Harold J. Ockenga preached at a Rose Bowl Rally that “God should judge us and use the two hundred fifty divisions of the Soviet people to whip us and scourge us and drive us to our knees before Him in repentance.”<sup>103</sup>

### ***Billy Graham’s Religious Revival in 1949***

The most successful preacher in capturing the American anti-Communist sentiment of the times was Rev. Billy Graham. As early as the Charlotte Revival of November 1947, the thirty-two year-old evangelist alerted his audience that Communists were everywhere.<sup>104</sup> About forty-two thousand people attended this revival meeting (see

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<sup>100</sup> Raymond F. Bulman, “‘Myth of Origin’, Civil Religion and Presidential Politics,” *Journal of Church and State* 33 (Summer 1991): 532.

<sup>101</sup> Dean C. Curry, “Where Have All the Niebuhrs Gone? Evangelicals and the Marginalization of Religious Influence in American Public Life,” *Journal of Church and State* 36 (Winter 1994): 104.

<sup>102</sup> Bulman, “‘Myth of Origin’, Civil Religion and Presidential Politics,” 531.

<sup>103</sup> “The Christian Answer to Communism,” in *America’s Hour of Decision: Featuring a Life Story of Billy Graham*, ed. Harold J. Ockenga (Wheaton, IL: VanKamper, 1951), 153.

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in Andrew J. Rotter, “Christians, Muslims, and Hindus: Religion and U.S.-South Asian Relations, 1947-1954,” *Diplomatic History* 24 (Fall 2000): 596.

Table 4.1). Graham skillfully drew connections between God's judgment and the rise of Communism. The nation was vulnerable because the American people were not aware of the infringement of its enemies. According to Graham, Communism, like alcoholism, sexual immorality, and idolatry, could destroy the Christian world.

Just two days after the news that Russia had detonated a nuclear device, Graham warned his audience at a Los Angeles crusade that if the American people refused to repent of their sinful lifestyle, the city would soon be destroyed by the atomic bomb because God would not spare a sinful and unrepentant city.<sup>105</sup> In Graham's mind, part of Los Angeles' guilt was its strong pro-Communist atmosphere. "Do you know that Fifth Columnists, called Communists," Graham explained, "are more rampant in Los Angeles than any other city in America?"<sup>106</sup> Although Graham did not give any example in his sermon when he made this sweeping assertion, the American people responded to his call enthusiastically. The Los Angeles crusade marked the beginning of more than a half-century long religious crusade led by Billy Graham.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Marshall Frady, *Billy Graham: A Parable of American Righteousness* (Boston, MA: Little Brown and Company, 1979), 198. See also Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 77.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>107</sup> Since, in the end, neither Los Angeles nor any other US city was destroyed in during the Cold War, one might characterize Billy Graham as a false prophet whose predictions did not come to pass. Yet, to be fair, Graham did not predict what would happen, but only what would happen if people did not repent. As an evangelist, Graham saw a responsibility to warn about the coming judgment. There are Biblical precedents for the delaying or cancelling of an impending judgment when the people responded to the call to repentance. In Genesis 18:32, God promised Abraham that he would not destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah if he could find ten righteous people there. The city was destroyed because ten could not be found. Also, in the Book of Jonah, Jonah pronounced the destruction of to the Assyrian city of Nineveh. When the Ninevites heard Jonah's message, however, they repented. "When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened." (Jonah 3:10, *New International Version*) The city of Nineveh was destroyed fifty years later when, according to the Book of Nahum, the new generation went back to their wicked ways. In other words, a successful revival was measured by how many people responded to the call and made confessions, not by how accurate the prophecy turned out to be. This understanding helps to explain how Graham's revival started and flourished during the Cold War.

Graham defined the Cold War in completely religious and absolute terms as the struggle between good and evil, between the godly and godless. He urged Los Angeles residents to respond to God's call immediately because:

God is giving us a desperate choice, a choice of either revival or judgment. There is no alternative! ... The world is divided into two camps! On the one side we see Communism. On the other, we see so-called Western culture, and its fruit had its foundation in the Bible, the Word of God, and in the revivals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Communism, on the other hand, has declared war against God, against Christ, against the Bible, against all religion! ... Unless the Western world has an old-fashioned revival, we cannot last!<sup>108</sup>

Listeners were being urged to view their feelings of insecurity as a call to repentance, by choosing to make a clear stand on God's side, against Communism. Communism was, by nature, completely against Christianity. If the American people refused to turn back to Christ and repent, Graham warned, the American nation would not be spared.<sup>109</sup> Christianity was not only the antithesis of Communism, but also the means of salvation for the whole of the American nation and the world. Graham drew no clear line between religion and either ideology or American nationalism.

Billy Graham's vigorous anti-Communist evangelical preaching appealed to an anti-Communist publisher, William Randolph Hearst, whom President Truman regarded as "the top mind prostitute" and "the number one whoremonger."<sup>110</sup> According to Don Goodenow, photo editor of the old *Los Angeles Examiner* in 1949, Hearst asked him to send teletype messages to his managing editors, urging them to "give attention to Billy Graham's meetings."<sup>111</sup> Reporters and photographers from the *Examiner* and Hearst's other papers came to cover the crusade. Goodenow arranged a full page of photographs

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<sup>108</sup> Frady, *Billy Graham: A Parable of American Righteousness*, 198.

<sup>109</sup> Graham, "Will God Spare America?" in *America's Hour of Decision: Featuring a Life Story of Billy Graham*, 116-126.

<sup>110</sup> See Monte M. Poen, "'Rose, File It': What Harry Truman's Unmailed Letters Tell Us About the Thirty-Third President," in *Harry S. Truman: The Man From Independence*, 372.

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in Patricia Daniels Cornell, *A Time For Remembering: The Story of Ruth Bell Graham* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1983), 86.

of Graham preaching each Friday night throughout the crusade in Los Angeles. Favorable letters from readers poured into the *Examiner's* editorial department. Stories about Graham's crusades and success were reported all over the country. Newsmen praised Graham's "charisma," saying that he was eloquent and powerful in his preaching.<sup>112</sup> Because of Hearst's support, Graham's Los Angeles crusade attracted nationwide attention. By the end of the eight-week revival, about 350,000 had attended the meetings and around 3,000 had come forward to make a decision to believe in Jesus Christ or to rededicate their lives to having active Christian fellowship in local churches (see Table 4.1). *Indianapolis Star* reported on November 2, 1949 that Billy Graham, according to churchmen, started the greatest religious revival in the history of Southern California.<sup>113</sup> Graham's story of success in LA was not a one-time event as some people thought. Instead, it marked the beginning of a long-wave of national and international revivals.

About a month later, Graham's success in Boston attracted the attention of many political leaders. When Graham held another month of revivals in South Carolina (this time, attended by one hundred and ninety thousand people – see Table 4.1), Governor J. Strom Thurmond and former Secretary of State James M. Byrnes came to endorse the crusade. Henry Luce was also interested in this young preacher and flew out to meet Graham personally. After that meeting, Luce became a loyal supporter of Graham's evangelical movement.<sup>114</sup> From 1949 to 1955, Graham frequently made the front cover of Luce's *Time* and *Life* magazines. The media's positive support and coverage of Billy Graham's crusades made him into an influential religious figure throughout the 1950s.

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 78.

In about eight years, the Billy Graham Evangelical Association grew rapidly from one secretary in a one-room office in 1950 to being headquartered in a four-story office building in Minneapolis with two-hundred staff workers. Each week, the association received about ten thousand dollars from letters, and each year it collected and disbursed over two million dollars for national and international crusades. Moreover, from 1952 onward, Graham had his own weekly television program on top of his already-very-popular “Hour of Decision” radio program. And his newspaper column was published by 125 newspapers across the country.<sup>115</sup>

### *The Political Influence of Billy Graham*

Rev. Billy Graham was one of the most important religious figures in the 1950s because he emerged as the spokesperson of American Protestantism, receiving the endorsement of most mainline denominations. He was labeled as “the pope of protestant America.”<sup>116</sup> His anti-Communist message found resonance across the entire religious spectrum.<sup>117</sup> And because his theology so often merged religion with policy, he would also turn out to be one of the era’s key *political* figures. An out-spoken critic of President Truman’s foreign and domestic policies, he insisted on hardening the U.S. position against Communist infiltration and Soviet expansion in East Asia. His evangelical crusades and his anti-Communist preaching gave rise to a new nationalistic religious fervor and colored American public opinion toward the Soviet Union.

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>116</sup> Harold Bloom, “The Preacher Billy Graham,” *TIME* (6 July 1999), <http://www.time.com/time/time100/heroes/profile/graham01.html>.

<sup>117</sup> James German, “Economy,” in *Themes in Religion and American Culture*, ed. Philip Goff and Paul Harvey (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004): 287.

First, Graham's negative view of Communism reinforced anti-Communist hysteria in the United States. In his sermon, "Satan's Religion," he explained how he saw Satan working through the Communists:

The Devil is their god; Marx, their prophet; Lenin, their saint; and Malenkov their high priest. Denying their faith in all ideologies except their religion of revolution, these diabolically inspired men seek in devious ways to convert a peaceful world to their doctrine of death and destruction. So fanatical and ruthless are these disciples of Lucifer that in thirty years they have slaughtered millions of innocent persons and stand prepared with poised weapons to kill millions more in an all-out effort to spread their doctrines to the ends of the earth. The mysterious pull of this satanic religion is so strong that it has caused some citizens of America to become traitorous, betraying a benevolent land which had showered them with blessings innumerable.<sup>118</sup>

Communism, in Graham's eyes, was master-minded by Satan. Seeing that Communism was gaining unprecedented popularity in Asia and in Europe, Graham was convinced that it was impossible for Communism to spread so quickly without the supernatural power of demons giving wisdom and intelligence to the Communists.<sup>119</sup> Since he regarded Communist ideology as a new godless religion used by the devil to try to build a kingdom on earth without God, he encouraged American Christians to oppose Communism vigorously.<sup>120</sup> Graham's preaching boosted Senator Joseph McCarthy's credibility as he leveled charges against the Truman administration.

Second, Graham preached against any attempt at reconciliation with the Soviet Union. Since Communism was the "Antichrist," controlled by Satan, Graham argued that reconciliation and peaceful co-existence between Communism and Christianity were almost impossible. Communism, Graham believed, had political ambitions for world conquest and, blended with a godless ideology, it deeply threatened freedom

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<sup>118</sup> Quoted in David Lockard, *The Unheard Billy Graham* (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1971), 128.

<sup>119</sup> Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 81.

<sup>120</sup> Lockard, *The Unheard Billy Graham*, 143-144.

worldwide.<sup>121</sup> He twice preached on his radio program against tolerance, viewing broad-minded liberals as a danger to the nation's survival in the Cold War. In every single sermon he preached throughout the 1950s, he always mentioned the evil of Communism, and several times he devoted a whole sermon to describing "the death-duel between Christian America and atheistic Russia."<sup>122</sup>

As historian Andrew Rotter has put it, for many Americans the Soviet Union was not just an enemy but also the antichrist, the "devil we knew."<sup>123</sup> It is very important to understand the implications of such a view because it suggested a completely different *spiritual* approach to handling one's adversary. The Bible teaches Christians to love their enemies, but at the same time "to resist the devil"<sup>124</sup> and "not to give the devil a foothold."<sup>125</sup> The teachings of love supported the postwar rehabilitation of Germany and Japan. Nevertheless, such grace would not be extended to "the devil we knew," because according to Graham, Communism was Satan's newest version of religion.<sup>126</sup> Christian ideas helped to define the containment strategy against the Soviet Union, justifying the US attempt to roll back the communist expansion.

Graham's revivals also encouraged the use of religion as a political weapon against Communism. The only way to save the nation from the onslaught of demon-possessed Communism, Graham declared, was to have "millions of Americans turn to Jesus Christ at this hour and accept him as Savior."<sup>127</sup> "This religious revival," Billy

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<sup>121</sup> "Whither Bound?" in *America's Hour of Decision: Featuring a Life Story of Billy Graham*, 140. See also Lockard, *The Unheard Billy Graham*, 141.

<sup>122</sup> Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 79-80.

<sup>123</sup> Rotter, "Christian, Muslims, and Hindus: Religion and US-South Asian Relations, 1947-1954," 593-613. See also Kirby, "Religion and the Cold War – An Introduction," in *Religion and the Cold War*, 4-5.

<sup>124</sup> James 4:7 (New International Version).

<sup>125</sup> Ephesians 4:27 (New International Version).

<sup>126</sup> Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 81.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

Graham proclaimed, “can restore our historic heritage, create moral stamina and consciousness, bring back the sanctity of our homes, [and] strengthen the bulwarks of freedom.”<sup>128</sup> In other words, only Christianity could resist such a demonic force, and only revivalism could save America as a nation. Personal salvation and national salvation were closely linked in Graham’s theology. “If you would be a true patriot, then become a Christian,” he advised his listeners. “If you would be a loyal American, then become a loyal Christian.”<sup>129</sup> There was a general perception that being a good Christian made one less likely to be a Communist. According to a poll conducted in August 1949, 77 percent of the interviewees did not think that a good Christian could be a member of the Communist Party. Although Graham did not say that non-Christians were disloyal, his rhetoric implied that non-Christians were more vulnerable to Communist lies and deception.

Undoubtedly, Graham’s anti-Communist preaching defined the religious sentiment of the 1950s; but more importantly, according to a cultural historian, Robert S. Ellwood, “the religion of the fifties’ revival was largely nationalistic, a spiritual chaplaincy to the republic’s world mission.”<sup>130</sup> Graham and his preaching added a strong religious flavor to the new American nationalism during the formative years of the Cold War. From his viewpoint, being an American citizen or holding an American passport itself could not prove a person’s real national loyalty, but being a born-again Christian with a fundamentalist leaning would be proof of his/her loyalty to the United States of America.

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<sup>128</sup> Billy Graham, “Our Greatest Secret Weapon,” *American Magazine*, November 1954, 86-88.

<sup>129</sup> Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 81.

<sup>130</sup> Robert S. Ellwood, *Fifties Spiritual Marketplace* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 18.

In spite of his insistence on a religious solution, Graham also put pressure on the government to take a clear stand against Communist expansion. For example, in his historic crusade in front of the Capitol in early 1952, he once again defined the Cold War clearly as the battle between Communism and Christianity. In addition to urging the American people to “turn back to God and back to Christ and back to the Bible,” he also preached that the nation “must maintain a strong military for defense at all costs.”<sup>131</sup> Historian Lee Canipe explained that “for Americans fighting an ideological battle with purported ‘atheists,’ religious faith by itself contributed mightily to the defense of the nation and the preservation of democracy.”<sup>132</sup>

As a whole, Graham’s preaching was the rediscovery of the value of religion in American life, in American nationalism, and in American foreign policy. According to economic historian James German, the capitalist world of the West could not function without Christianity. “Material prosperity, in the minds of many Americans,” German explained, “was the natural product of political freedom and economic individualism, which in turn were rooted in essentially religious conceptions of the human person.”<sup>133</sup> If a capitalist country were atheistic and “unrestrained by divinely sanctioned morals,” it would breed dissent and fall into the hands of Communism, which would take away both the properties, the rights and the freedoms of its citizens.<sup>134</sup> In other words, religion was crucial in saving the American way of life and in unifying its citizens.

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<sup>131</sup> Transcript from “Graham’s Historic Meeting On the Steps of the Capitol” (Minneapolis, MN: Billy Graham Evangelical Association, Inc., 1952).

<sup>132</sup> Lee Canipe, “Under God and Anti-Communist: How the Pledge of Allegiance Got Religion in Cold War America,” *Journal of Church and State* 45 (March 2003): 312.

<sup>133</sup> German, “Economy,” *Themes in Religion and American Culture*, 287.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

Religious historian Lee Canipe explains the relation between religion and American anti-communism in this way: “For most Americans, it seemed religion and patriotism (which at the time was virtually synonymous with anti-Communism) simply represented two sides of the same coin. As the ‘Red Scare’ spread, church attendance soared. Religion suddenly became fashionable.”<sup>135</sup> Statistics show that church membership rose steadily as the Cold War intensified. In 1940, 49 percent of the population was officially enrolled in a church or synagogue, but in 1950, this number had risen to 57 percent (see Tables 4.2a, 4.2b, and 4.3a).<sup>136</sup>

Religious revivals led by Billy Graham and other evangelists paved the way for the influence of Christianity to grow in American domestic politics and foreign affairs. As more Americans were turning back to Christianity, their interests in foreign missions also intensified. Missionaries were delighted to see an enlarged pool of support.

Graham, in particular, had a special connection with Korea and China missions through his wife Ruth Graham, daughter of Dr. Nelson and Virginia Bell, missionaries to North Jiangsu (Kiangsu), China. When Ruth finished her middle school education in North Jiangsu, the Bells decided to enroll her in P’yöngyang Foreign School, where academics were rigorous and the Bible was acknowledged as the authoritative word of God.<sup>137</sup> Leaving her family in 1932, Ruth spent two years living in P’yöngyang, the “Christian Capital of Korea,” and befriended other missionaries’ children. Some of them

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<sup>135</sup> Canipe, “Under God and Anti-Communist: How the Pledge of Allegiance Got Religion in Cold War America,” 312.

<sup>136</sup> Leo P. Ribuffo, “God and Contemporary Politics,” *Journal of American History* 80 (March 1993): 1517-1518. Ribuffo gave the figure in 1950 as 55 percent, but the *Yearbook of American Churches* provided a higher percentage.

<sup>137</sup> Cornwell, *A Time for Remembering*, 28.

were children of Korean missionaries who would later return to Korea after World War II and fight side by side with American and South Korean soldiers during the Korean War.

After marrying Ruth, Graham became an active supporter of missionary works. His family kept close contact with the missionaries who returned from China and Korea. Thus, he was well aware of how the Communists had treated Christians in these two countries after they took power. Such knowledge would strengthen his conviction of a Satanic agenda to take control of the world. Even though he was registered as a Democrat, Graham was highly pro-Chiang Kai-shek and he urged the United States government to prevent the fall of Taiwan and the loss of South Korea.

#### *Anti-Communism Sentiment in the Catholic Church*

Anti-Communism among religious leaders was not limited only to Protestant groups in the United States. American Catholics were even more outspoken in their opposition to Communist expansion. Their stance was a result of Catholic theology, combined with the losses of the Catholic Church in Eastern Europe. “Communism,” Pope Pius XI warned, “strips man of his liberty, robs human personality of all its dignity.... There is no recognition of any right of the individual in his relations to the collectivity, no natural right is accorded to human personality, which is a mere cog-wheel in the communist system.”<sup>138</sup> The Catholic Church, on the other hand, was presented as a guarantor of human freedom because “in Catholic teaching, all human freedom, all individual rights are grounded in a transcendent order.”<sup>139</sup> The conflict between Catholicism and Communism, therefore, was inevitable.

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<sup>138</sup> Quoted in Robert L. Frank, “Prelude to Cold War: American Catholics and Communism,” *Journal of Church and State* 34 (Winter 1992): 47,

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

These arguments, as historian Robert L. Frank observed, became “a mainstay of Catholic Cold War rhetoric.”<sup>140</sup> The fear of Communist infiltration and conspiracies drew many nominal Catholics back to the Catholic Church and brought a re-emphasis on religious life among Catholic communities. Despite a general dislike of capitalism, they emerged as furious defenders of America’s democratic values and way of life. Their conversion to the American capitalist system marked the beginning of the amalgamation of patriotism and religious faith in American culture.

Father Edmund A. Walsh, the founder of the School of Foreign Service in Georgetown University, was the major anti-Communist spokesperson of the American Catholics. Throughout the Cold War, Walsh regarded the Soviet Union as a “new claimant for the hegemony of Europe” that replaced the role of Nazi Germany.<sup>141</sup> His book, *Total Empire*, which analyzed Soviet expansion in the early years of the Cold War from a geopolitical framework, was a 1951 bestseller.<sup>142</sup> Based on the case of Korea, he strongly urged the US government to adopt a stronger stand in building up its military strength so that an aggressor would “think more than twice before provoking another devastating conflict.”<sup>143</sup>

In addition to the idea of geopolitics, Walsh also injected a religious element into the debate over foreign policy, when American leaders sought to determine whether ideology or realistic political objectives motivated Soviet expansionism.<sup>144</sup> He pointed out that American policy-makers faced a conflict “between spirit and ideals on the one

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Patrick McNamara, *A Catholic Cold War: Edmund A. Walsh, S.J., and the Politics of American Anticommunism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 137.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>143</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 155.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 135.

hand, and armed materialism on the other.”<sup>145</sup> Rising secularism in the West, Walsh argued, contributed to the growth of Communism. Therefore, the real challenge for the United States was to find strength in the American heritage and rely on the “spiritual faith entrusted to Christendom,” which according to Walsh was “the anchor of stability for the West.”<sup>146</sup>

Walsh challenged George Kennan’s realist approach to foreign policy, arguing that a clear commitment to moral law was essential to the conduct of US foreign affairs.<sup>147</sup> Ironically, how to define moral law was a big problem. In fact, the question of applying moral law had very little to do with morality itself. For example, although Kennan was a realist, he stood against the production of nuclear bombs for moral reasons because he saw the bomb as an instrument of genocide and suicide.<sup>148</sup> Walsh, on the other hand, advocated not only the production of nuclear bombs, but also the “first strike” principle because the death of Russian civilians, he believed, would be a “regrettable effect, not intended as such.”<sup>149</sup> The major difference between Walsh and Kennan was that Walsh wanted to invite religious ideas into the making of foreign policy, while Kennan firmly opposed any commitment to religion and ideology. Although Walsh’s opinions on foreign policy did not represent the position of the Catholic Church, he did speak for many of his fellow Jesuit intellectuals and clergymen in America.

Even though the realists wanted to minimize the influence of ideology in making foreign policy, religion was too strong a force to ignore in the 1940s and 1950s. Religion

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<sup>145</sup> Edmund S. Walsh, “The Spiritual Aspect of Foreign Policy,” *Catholic Mind* 50 (June 1952): 641.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 642.

<sup>147</sup> McNamara, *A Catholic Cold War: Edmund A. Walsh, S.J., and the Politics of American Anticommunism*, 161.

<sup>148</sup> Isaacson and Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World they Made*, 488.

<sup>149</sup> McNamara, *A Catholic Cold War: Edmund A. Walsh, S.J., and the Politics of American Anticommunism*, 152-153.

left a clear mark on US politics. Joining with Protestant fundamentalists and evangelists, especially through effective religious rhetoric and powerfully networked political machines in major cities, Catholics gradually moved from the political periphery to the political center. (The process was eventually completed by the election of a Catholic President, John F. Kennedy.) Together, they became the backbone of support for the many conservative politicians in the decade of McCarthyism, a campaign started by Senator Joseph McCarthy (himself a Catholic) to root out Communists from public positions, and later from the entertainment industry and other areas of American life. Fueled by hysteria, McCarthyism would degenerate into the modern equivalent of a witch-hunt. Officers in the State Department such as John Carter Vincent, John Paton Davies, and John Stewart Service, who were well-known experts on East Asia, were some of the victims of McCarthyism.

#### *AMERICAN POLICY ON SOUTH KOREA*

As the Cold War continued to intensify, American people's concern over the division of Korea also increased. As early as August 31, 1946, a *Saturday Evening Post* feature article, "Our Most Dangerous Boundary" by Dr. Harold Noble, son of American missionaries to P'yŏngyang prior to World War II and a foreign correspondent in Seoul in 1946, labeled the 38th Parallel separating north and south Korea as the most dangerous line between the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>150</sup> Noble questioned the motives of the two powers that occupied Korea, but he also praised American benevolence in the south and criticized Soviet control in the north. Analyzing the tension along the 38<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War*, 117-118.

Parallel, he even predicted that there would be a war in Korea. Korea was a potential trouble spot for the United States in its ideological and political competition with the Soviet Union.

### *An Ambiguous Stand on Korea*

What should the United States do concerning the deteriorating conditions in Korea? South Korea had been identified as part of the “crucial periphery” in the Campaign of Truth, a propaganda program set up by the US government against Communism behind the Iron Curtain.<sup>151</sup> Korea was regarded by US propaganda experts as a valuable spot for spreading anti-Communist and pro-US propaganda or, if possible, for rolling back Communist power. From 1947 to 1949, there were internal battles between the State Department and the Defense Department, as they searched for the right way to deal with the Korea question. John C. Vincent of the State Department observed that Korea had become a symbol of the Cold War. If the US army left Korea, Japan might question America's commitment to its security and therefore seek an agreement with the Soviets for its own protection. Vincent similarly argued that a continued American presence might help Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the Chinese Nationalist regime in Nanjing, in his struggle with the Communists in Manchuria and other areas of China.<sup>152</sup> Realizing the need for initiative on the Korea problem, the State Department created a special 5-member, inter-departmental committee on Korea in early 1947. The committee suggested that the US government should stay in Korea for an important psychological reason: “to demonstrate to the communists and Koreans, that (the U.S.)

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<sup>151</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War 1945-1961*, 14-15.

<sup>152</sup> Charles M. Dobbs, *The Unwanted Symbol: American Foreign Policy, the Cold War, and Korea, 1945-1950* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1981), 92.

meant to stay in business in Korea and, practically, to create a viable economy in South Korea capable of withstanding subversion.”<sup>153</sup>

Meanwhile, there were also warning voices expressing their concern over the situation in Korea. Senator Arthur Vandenberg, a Republican from Michigan and chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, for example, argued that the United States had an inescapable obligation in Korea even though Korea was strategically difficult to defend.<sup>154</sup> He believed that the principle of the Truman Doctrine and economic programs similar to those in the Marshall Plan should also be extended to South Korea.<sup>155</sup> If there was strong political pressure to keep Korea free from Communist expansion and a determination to make it a symbol of democracy in East Asia, why did the Truman administration not make a clear commitment to Korea and build up the defense of the Republic of Korea (ROK) fully?

There were basically two reasons for the ambiguity of the US position. The first reason was that the United States government did not trust the South Korean President, Syngman Rhee. During the period of American occupation, Rhee had been very outspoken against the policies of the American Military Government in Korea. Although his administration was highly pro-American, Rhee had no desire to bow to American hegemony. Instead, Rhee hoped that the United States would support his plan to unify Korea by all means and keep Korea free from Communist domination. If the United States had had a military alliance with him at that time, many American policy makers feared that his unpredictable behavior would have dragged the United States into war with the Soviet Union.

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<sup>153</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 92-93.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-96.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

Therefore, Truman's administration avoided committing the United States to a permanent military partnership with South Korea, even though the President and the US military were fully aware that the Russians had supplied powerful weapons to the North Korean army.<sup>156</sup> The United States even deliberately tried to keep the South Korean army weak by not giving them any tanks or heavy artillery, so that Rhee would be incapable of initiating any attempt to march his army northward.

Apart from the administration's distrust of Rhee's government, another cause for the policy ambiguity was that the US military did not see South Korea as strategically crucial in comparison to Japan and the Philippines. The Pentagon wanted to withdraw from Korea as soon as possible due to the massive reduction of the military budget in 1948. Had it not been for the insistence of the State Department, the US Army would have departed as soon as the Republic of Korea was established in August 1948. Most US Asian specialists focused their attention more on China and Japan, seeing that the fate of the rest of East Asia depended on the result of the ongoing civil war in China and the conclusion of a peace treaty with Japan. As a result, China, Japan, and the Philippines consumed a lot of US attention and resources and the significance of Korea fell far below these countries.

### *The Churches' Clear Stand on Korea*

While the US Army was trying to pull out of Korea, American missionaries in contrast were eager to go there. Among all private groups in America, churches had the strongest ties, the greatest awareness, and the largest interest in Korea. The influence of churches on American public opinion has been a very important aspect in analyzing

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<sup>156</sup> Robert T. Oliver, *Syngman Rhee And American Involvement in Korea, 1942-1960* (Seoul: Panmun Book Company, 1978), 271-277.

domestic and foreign policy. Cultural historian Christina Klein, author of *Cold War Orientalism* (2003), studied the growth of American interests in Asia during the Cold War period and recognized a connection between Christianity and the American image of Asia. “The Protestant missionary movement,” Klein explained, “encouraged a U.S.-centered internationalism based on spreading American values and institutions and transforming other nations along American lines, initially through religious conversion and later by building schools, universities, and hospitals.”<sup>157</sup> “With its network of congregations and settlements,” Klein pointed out, “the missionary movement created a worldwide institutional infrastructure that enabled millions of Americans, especially in isolated Midwestern and rural communities, to understand themselves as participating in world affairs.”<sup>158</sup> In other words, religious belief became a crucial link in drawing a common bond between American Christians and Asian converts. “These institutions,” Klein argued, “enabled Americans to feel themselves bound to the people of Asia and Africa, despite the myriad of differences that separated them, through ties of religion, money, and emotional investment.”<sup>159</sup>

Klein’s study showed that the missionary movement was important in sustaining American interests in the Pacific Rim. In a few countries, when the US diplomatic establishment was unprepared for the task of US occupation, Christian groups and agents filled the need. In the case of Korea in the postwar period, the missionaries were very active in providing humanitarian services, such as hospitals, orphanages, and distributing

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<sup>157</sup> Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 30.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

relief supplies, proof that American churches were actively supporting missionary work in Korea.

Through religious networks, news about Korea and the condition of the Korean churches spread from coast to coast and from north to south. Even churchgoers in the most isolated Midwestern and rural communities somehow connected with distant Korea due to the flow of information through religious journals, pamphlets, and circulating letters. Equipped with language skills and cultural exposure, missionaries served as influential producers of knowledge through books, newsletters, and photographs. The writings and materials distributed by US churches generated increased interest in Korea among the American Christian population. While the United States government saw South Korea as a military liability, Christian groups in the US had a rather optimistic view of the future of Korea.

American churches wanted to send more missionaries back to Korea. Because of their intense efforts, the number of American missionaries in Korea increased from a dozen in 1945 to more than 200 by the end of 1949. Prominent clergymen also visited Korea, bringing back news and reports on the condition of the Korean churches. Bishop Arthur J. Moore from the Methodist Church visited Seoul in early 1946. He spoke to many Korean churches, reaffirming the commitment of the American Methodist Church to the independence and reconstruction of a new Korea.<sup>160</sup> In his journey report which was published in the form of a pamphlet, he quoted Chiang Kai-shek as saying, "If Korea is not independent, the peace of East Asia and the world cannot be secure."<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Arthur J. Moore, *The Church Cradled in Conflict: A Report of an Episcopal Visit to Korea in 1946* (New York: The Methodist Church, 1946), 3.

<sup>161</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 3.

Bishop Moore was not alone in emphasizing the American commitment to the future of Korea. According to the resolutions adopted by the Foreign Mission Conference (FMC) of North America in January 1947, Protestant leaders from both the US and Canada, acknowledged that there were “close bonds which have long existed between Korea and North America through the relations between Christians in these two countries.”<sup>162</sup> Therefore, the FMC urged its constituency to have “an intelligent and active interest in the great cause of our Korean brethren who demand their long-promised liberty.”<sup>163</sup> The resolution even recognized “the importance of United States policy in regard to the Korean situation and [called upon America] to rectify in part the *mistakes* our nation has made in this regard since 1905.”<sup>164</sup> Clearly, the Protestant churches in the United States had agreed not to let Korea down a second time in this moment of uncertainty.

To further propagate their cause, religious groups willingly provided a publicity channel for the Korean government. Dr. Robert T. Oliver, Syngman Rhee’s publicity advisor from 1942 to 1959, was welcomed by most Protestant groups. They published his papers in their religious journals and invited him to give speeches and seminars to their congregations. Oliver would skillfully present the case for Korea as a nation struggling for its independence and religious freedom. Other Christian figures such as Dr. Kim Hwal-lan (Helen Kim), the President of Ewha University, were well known among US church communities. According to one American Methodist missionary, Marion Lane Conrow, “To many people [in the United States], Korea is Helen Kim, and

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<sup>162</sup> The resolution was reported by *The Voice of Korea* 6, 15 February 1947, 1. This publication was found in the Vertical File: Truman Subject File – Religion in the Truman Presidential Library

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

Helen Kim is Korea. Fortunate is Korea to be so represented!”<sup>165</sup> Dr. Kim was so popular and famous in the United States that she was even given “the invitation of Smith College to receive an honorary degree on Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> [1949], along with Mrs. Roosevelt and other great women.”<sup>166</sup> In fact, most contacts that the American public had with Korea were through these Korean Christians and church lobbies. Since most of the Korean Protestant churches were the fruits of the American missionaries, Rhee’s supporters constantly reminded and lectured the churches in the United States of their responsibility for the preservation of Korean religious freedom.

As the political and economic situation in Korea showed no sign of improvement even though a new republic was established in the south, missionaries continued to send positive reports back to their home churches. In a 1948 report prepared by Rev. S. Dwight, Presbyterian missionaries not only urged American churches to send out more workers to the field, they also portrayed the “New Korea” as a country that “holds the center of the stage in international politics in the East.”<sup>167</sup> When they observed political developments in Seoul in 1949, they rejoiced because “many Christians [had] distinguished themselves as officials in the new government,” and because the churches were packed with sympathetic listeners.<sup>168</sup> They were hopeful for the future and wanted

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<sup>165</sup> Marion Lane Conrow, “Helen K. Kim, Ph.D. President of Ewha College,” File Name: Conrow, Marion L. (1940-1949), Missionary Vol.3, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

<sup>166</sup> Alice R. Appenzeller, “Letter IV from Seoul dated Nov. 12, 1949,” File Name: Appenzeller, Alice R. (1929-1949), Missionary Vol.3., United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

<sup>167</sup> Rev. S. Dwight, “Korea Mission,” *Annual Report of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions*, Presbyterian Church in the U.S. 1948 (Nashville, TN: Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, 1948), 78-79.

<sup>168</sup> Rev. Joe B. Hopper, “Korea Mission,” in *Annual Report of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions*, Presbyterian Church in the U.S. 1949 (Nashville, TN: Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, 1949), 86.

the American church to send more missionaries. Otherwise, they would “lose the field of battle to heathenism, or communism, or materialism.”<sup>169</sup>

In his article written in April 1950, “Which Way Korea?” in *World Outlook*, Dr. Thoburn T. Brumbaugh, the associate secretary of the Methodist Division of Foreign Missions who supervised the missions in Korea, Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines, asserted that Korea was the place where “the issue between Communism and Christian democracy is more clearly defined than anywhere else in the Far East.”<sup>170</sup> The American Methodist church viewed the ideological battle in Korea as a struggle “between Soviet and Christian concepts of democratic progress.”<sup>171</sup> Christianity, Brumbaugh asserted, would be “a great factor” in the internal political struggle in South Korea. He told his readers that since Methodism was the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, “what [the] Methodists think and do about the cause of Christian missions in Korea” would determine whether Korea [went] Communist or Christian.<sup>172</sup>

According to a booklet, *Korea at the Crossroads*, written by Rev. William E. Shaw, a Methodist missionary, and published by the American Methodist Church, “if Democracy of a Christian nature wins, America and all democratic nations will retain a friend in a most strategic part of the world, and democracy will have an important foothold in the heart of Asia.”<sup>173</sup> The fate of South Korea was tied to the policy of the United States and the “Christian forces of America.”<sup>174</sup> Rev. Shaw positively asserted that “Christianity [was] already the strongest religious influence in Korea” because “Japanese

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Thoburn T. Brumbaugh, “Which Way Korea?” *World Outlook*, April 1950, 798.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 798.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 800.

<sup>173</sup> William E. Shaw, *Korea At the Crossroads* (New York: The Methodist Church Editorial Department, 1950), 5.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 6.

Shintoism [had] been discredited” and “there [were] no great organized religions which [offered] stiff competition.”<sup>175</sup> He rallied American Christians to pray for Korea that “atheistic Communism may not succeed” and that “Christ and Christian Democracy may win.”<sup>176</sup> Shaw’s statement had its own ground. Certainly, the cultural and social influence of Confucianism and Buddhism remained strong in Korean society, but in terms of the level of political influence on a national level, Christianity took the lead due to its organizational strength and leadership quality, despite its relatively small number of followers in comparison to the traditional religions. The Korean people looked to well-educated Christian leaders for inspiration and guidance. Political groups led by Christian laymen were the major forces that could effectively challenge the Communist position in Korea.

#### *“The Loss of China”*

The creation of the People’s Republic of China in October 1949 fundamentally altered American strategy in Asia. The outcome of the Chinese civil war was especially frustrating to many Americans who had great hopes for the postwar political, economic, and religious development of China. When a Communist victory on the mainland became unavoidable, the United States government knew that it would soon lose its most valuable ally in East Asia. In 1949, the United States was therefore desperate to find a strategy to halt the spread of Communism in Asia.

Many different interest groups in America wished for more to be done to aid Chiang Kai-shek’s ailing regime. For one, religious circles considered the possible loss of China as devastating, because churches had made substantial investments of

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

missionaries and dollars. For another, business interests also regarded the loss of the China market as unacceptable. For yet another, Chinese Nationalists sent to America as lobbyists by Chiang Kai-shek had a personal interest in the outcome of the civil war. These Chinese lobbyists in the US, along with certain American business, media and other interests, formed the influential China Lobby and aligned themselves with the powerful China Bloc in Congress. They criticized the Truman administration vigorously and pushed for more financial and military aid to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan, hoping not only to preserve the Nationalists, but if possible to roll back Communist influence in China.

In spite of enormous political pressure from the China Lobby, the Truman administration refused to continue its aid to the Nationalists. In August 1949, the State Department published a thousand-page document known as *The China White Paper* to justify the administration's stand. From that point on, Truman pursued a new approach of strengthening the Asian periphery states such as Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines, following a strategy of containment. Since Japan was still under American military occupation, a speedy and comprehensive reconstruction program for Japan's war-torn economy was necessary to protect the US strategic position in East Asia. Truman wisely selected a Republican bipartisan figure, John Foster Dulles, who had enjoyed wide religious support through his participation in the FCCC, to lead the American delegation to negotiate a peace treaty with Japan.

In contrast, opinion within Truman's cabinet on how to deal with the newly formed, internally unstable, and potentially troublesome South Korean Republic was deeply divided. The military favored a complete withdrawal, but diplomats favored

maintaining American influence in South Korea, lest the domino effect lead to more losses in Asia. More important, economists argued that a stable, democratic, and capitalist South Korea would be a crucial factor in the recovery of Japan.

### *The Korean Aid Bill*

By mid-1949, President Truman had made up his mind to support the economic recovery of Korea instead of merely providing basic relief. He decided to present a Korean aid bill to Congress. In his address to Congress on June 7, 1949, Truman explained the importance of Korea as a model that carried American ideals and principles for the Asian world in the battle against Communism. Its ultimate survival, the President declared, would stand “as a beacon to the people of northern Asia.”<sup>177</sup> He proclaimed the fierce passion of the Korean people for freedom, and reminded his Congressional audience of what American missionaries had contributed to the struggle for freedom while the country was still under the bondage of the Japanese. He also appealed to the “sympathetic feelings” that the American people had for Korea through their long-established religious connections to win support for his economic aid bill.<sup>178</sup>

Truman had no intention of withdrawing economically from Korea. Instead, the administration asked for \$150 million dollars for a comprehensive program for the economic rehabilitation of Korea.<sup>179</sup> The President even identified the progress of the Korean people with America's foreign policy goals in East Asia. When Congress debated the bill, those who supported giving economic aid to Korea argued along the same lines

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<sup>177</sup> Message from U.S. President Truman to the Congress of the United States, Regarding Economic Assistance to the Republic of Korea, 7 June 1949, *Documents on Korean-American Relations 1943-1976*, ed. Se-jin Kim (Seoul: Research Center for Peace and Unification, 1976), 75.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>179</sup> Jongsuk Chay, *Unequal Partners In Peace and War: The Republic of Korea and the United States, 1948-1953* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 140.

as Truman, declaring that the United States had a “moral obligation” and “responsibilities” toward the Korean people and arguing the value of South Korea as “the last foothold” or “toe hold” to keep the Asian continent free from bondage.<sup>180</sup>

Nevertheless, the United States government was not ready to commit fully to the security of South Korea. According to Secretary Acheson’s National Press Club speech on January 12, 1950, the United States government was ready to commit to the defense of Japan and the Philippines. In the case of Korea, Acheson acknowledged that the United States had interests and a responsibility, but he skillfully put its security under the duty of the United Nations.<sup>181</sup> Acheson’s statement gave many people the erroneous impression that the Truman administration had abandoned Korea, but the secretary made it very clear at the end of his speech that the United States government intended to continue to support South Korea by providing economic aid and that it would be the “most utter defeatism and utter madness” to “stop half way [and] scrap all that.”<sup>182</sup>

#### *South Korea’s Appeal for US Support*

Meanwhile, the Korean administration understood that the United States government did not trust Syngman Rhee because he had an aggressive political agenda to unify the country on his own terms. To gain American support, South Korea had to influence general public opinion in America. Nevertheless, unlike China, Korea attracted little direct American economic interests, except related to the recovery of Japan. Its strategic position was not as crucial as Japan’s. The Koreans could only appeal to America’s moral obligation. However, such an obligation by itself could be burdensome to the American people, so would not be an effective propaganda tool.

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 141-142.

<sup>181</sup> Quoted in Thornton, *Odd Man Out*, 69.

<sup>182</sup> Quoted in Ibid., 71.

Therefore, the Korean government wanted to present a religious connection to the American audience and emphasized the symbolic role of Korea in the ideological battle between Communism and the Western world. Even though Korea was not a Christian nation, with only three to four percent of the population being Christian at that time, South Koreans enjoyed religious freedom. Korean propaganda materials also emphasized that Korea was on a path to becoming a Christian nation, hoping that the sense of Christian brotherhood could bring the two distant nations together. Most of the American missionaries endorsed such a vision, praised the potential of the South Korean Republic, and continued to present favorable reports to their American supporters.

To build US sentiment, the National Christian Council of Korea organized a public demonstration across Korea on June 23, 1949. More than 50,000 Christians participated in Seoul alone, carrying slogans such as, “We Christians will defend our native land from Communist attack,” “The insecurity of Korea is a threat to world peace,” “All Asia is watching America’s action in Korea in defense of democracy,” and “Let the churches of the world unite their strength to protect the churches of Korea.” They issued a proclamation, declaring that only in the atmosphere of Christian ideals could democratic government survive in Asia. They argued that if the Christian world refused to protect and help South Korea, the whole of Asia would be lost.<sup>183</sup>

The Koreans’ desire for American protection was not simply orchestrated propaganda. According to the letters of missionaries, Korean Christians were genuinely afraid of a Communist invasion. Two weeks before the outbreak of the Korean War, Syngman Rhee met with Dr. Bob Pierce, an American evangelist and a close friend of

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<sup>183</sup> Marion Conrow, “Christian Rally, Seoul, Korea, 23 June 1949,” File Name: Conrow, Marion L. (1946-1949), Missionary Vol.3, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

Billy Graham, and told him that every Christian in Korea knew that they were prime targets, especially those who served in the South Korean government. Rhee wanted to convince Dr. Pierce that there was not much time left for the South Koreans to live and enjoy freedom, if they did not have military protection from the United States.<sup>184</sup>

Most of the religious leaders and political leaders in the United States understood the significance of Korea in both religious and strategic senses. American public opinion in general strongly favored the Korean aid bill. But the Republicans, who wanted Truman to give economic aid to Chiang Kai-shek, blocked its passage. The rejection of the bill by the House on January 19, 1950, was panned by the American press. The *New York Times*, for example, called the failure of the House to pass the bill “a blunder” and “something of a legislative fluke” to be rectified. It also blamed the China Bloc and the “rat hole” view of its defeat.<sup>185</sup> In order to get a speedy passage through Congress, the administration was willing to cut \$30 million from the original budget and to extend a new economic aid program to Taiwan.

What happened to the Korean aid bill revealed something important about the attitude of the United States. According to historian Charles Dobbs, the bill paved the way for American intervention in the Korean War.<sup>186</sup> South Korea moved to the second-runner up position on Truman’s list of American interests in Asia. In addition, it also reflected the competition in American politics between idealists, who favored a moral commitment to Korea, and realists, who rejected the strategic significance of the peninsula.<sup>187</sup> The ambiguous attitude of the Truman administration, despite its clear aim

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<sup>184</sup> Franklin Graham, *Bob Pierce: This One Thing I Do* (USA: Samaritan’s Purse, 1983), 146.

<sup>185</sup> Chay, *Unequal Partners in Peace and War*, 142.

<sup>186</sup> Dobbs, *The Unwanted Symbol*, 537.

<sup>187</sup> Chay, *Unequal Partners in Peace and War*, 145.

to help South Korea, confused American legislators; some congressmen thought that the administration had already abandoned Korea. More important, according to historian Jongsuk Chay, the delaying of the aid hurt the Korean economy, defeating its very-intended purpose, and also strengthening the Communists' belief that the United States was uncertain of its commitment to Korea.<sup>188</sup>

The administration's ambiguous stand also caused historians to question US motives in Korean policies. Historian Richard C. Thornton suggested a theory that the US government, under Secretary of State Dean Acheson's direction, was "tethering a goat to trap a tiger" by intentionally keeping South Korea weak to invite an attack from the north so that "the United States would mobilize the 'free world' in justifiable defense against the communist menace, giving firm structure to the Cold War."<sup>189</sup> Thornton's argument was based mostly on circumstantial evidence that the United States not only denied South Korea aggressive weapons, but even defensive weapons such as anti-tank guns, anti-tank mines, anti-aircraft guns, and coastal patrol craft.<sup>190</sup> Such policies, Thornton believed, created confusion and invited the North Koreans to march south.

Thornton's interpretation has difficulty, however, in explaining the unpreparedness of the US military in both Washington and Tokyo. If the US had indeed set a trap in Korea to lure the Soviet Union into starting a war, then the peninsula should have been carefully watched and monitored by the intelligence community, so that the United States would be ready to confront the enemy. The evidence suggests that this was not the case. US troops in Tokyo were poorly trained and poorly equipped. No effective anti-tank

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>189</sup> Richard C. Thornton, *Odd Man Out: Truman, Stalin, Mao, and the Origins of the Korean War* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2000), 147.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 149.

weapon was available during the first month of the war. US aircraft and transportation equipment in Japan were insufficient to support the war effort. To explain these military deficiencies, Thorton's interpretation must presume that the State Department did not share its strategy with the Pentagon – a politically unlikely scenario.

Rather than being an elaborate ruse on the part of Acheson, it seems more likely that the lack of US support for South Korea was the result of an ill-thought-out foreign policy. The ambiguity of the US position sent wrong signals to the North Koreans, making them think that the Americans had little interest in Korea. The lack of military aid to defend South Korea encouraged Kim Il-sung to be confident that he could unify Korea quickly through military action before the United States had enough time to send troops. Therefore, impelled by these data and his own personal political ambition, Kim Il-sung urged Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong to support his military unification plan.<sup>191</sup>

## *CONCLUSION*

The years between World War II and the Korean War coincided with the dawn of a religious revival in the United States. To understand the religious aspects of the Korean War, the character of these prewar years must first be understood. It was an era where many were deeply religious, and saw America's place in the world in religious terms. The notion of a "civil religion" extended even into political life, with leaders speaking openly about God, appealing to Christian nature, and touting the virtues of freedom of religion.

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<sup>191</sup> Kathryn Weathersby, "New Findings on the Korean War," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 3 (Fall 1993): 1, 14-15.

President Truman employed religious ideas and rhetoric when he presented his policies to the American people, mobilizing them to support his domestic and foreign policy. The main difference between the American way of life and the Soviet way was religion, Truman argued. The Cold War was a struggle between godly and godless people. By 1949, religious freedom emerged as a major theme in Truman's foreign policy. To this end, he sought to build a Western Christian alliance to fight Communism.

Christian clergymen's anti-Communist preaching made direct connections between religious and public life. Such a theology would provide a channel for religious factors to enter foreign policy, both prior to the Korean War and even more so after fighting began. Religion provided a way to understand the frightening and rapidly changing world, and assisted in the internalization of the Cold War in the American mind. Religious groups were strong supporters of anti-Communism and anti-Communist propaganda both domestically and around the world. When the whole country was gripped by fear, religion became a means of rebuilding American confidence and national pride.

Religion became a common bond between Korea and the United States. Missionary interests aroused economic and political support for Korea. A common Christian brotherhood encouraged both personal giving and political leanings that would push the US government to act in Korea's interests. Such efforts met with strong government resistance in the pre-war years, as Washington was swamped with other concerns. Nevertheless, once the war started, such politics would soon gain a more receptive ear in the capital.

***PART II:  
Christianity in Korea and U.S.-Korean Relations  
During the Korean War***

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **The Outbreak of the Korean War**

#### *INTRODUCTION*

The road leading up to the outbreak of the Korean War had both domestic and foreign aspects. Internally, the competition between the north and the south intensified after the establishment of two separate regimes in Seoul and P'yŏngyang. Unification was a vital political objective for both sides, but neither one could act without the full support of their superpower allies. Whatever military designs Syngman Rhee might have were futile because he could not secure American backing and supplies to launch a military offensive. In contrast, Kim Il-sung had better luck with the Russians and the Chinese and eventually won the support of both Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong.

This chapter traces the major politically oriented religious developments leading to the outbreak of the Korean War. The first part considers the political maneuverings and military preparation of North Korea and the rest of the Communist Bloc. The second part explores conditions in the south at the time of the attack, focusing on how the Christian community in South Korea responded to war rumors. The third section examines the perspective of American policymakers and explains how the future Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and various American churches came to view the outbreak of the Korean War in a religious context.

## *PLANNING A SECRET MILITARY ATTACK ON SOUTH KOREA*

According to historian Kathryn Weathersby, who translated and interpreted most of the newly-released Russian documents for the *Cold War International History Project* (CWIHP), from 1946 to 1950, Kim Il-sung had sent forty eight messages to Moscow, urging the Russians to allow him to launch a military attack against the ROK.<sup>1</sup> Kim naturally wanted to unify Korea, but why was he so bent upon a military approach? The following three subsections will consider three possible reasons. One possible explanation was personal ambition – that Kim wanted the glory of being a conqueror. Another possibility was that a war would allow Kim to eliminate his political enemies. A third reason was that should he receive the support of his Communist neighbors, an attack might have seemed to him to be the quickest, easiest, and most certain means of unifying the peninsula.

### *Kim Il-sung's Ambitions and the Personality Cult*

Revisionist historians have long described Kim Il-sung more as a nationalist than a Communist, arguing that he was not alone in his desire for national unification. His political rivals, including Pak Hŏn-yŏng and Syngman Rhee, also wanted unification, even through military conquest. But this view fails to appreciate the extent of Kim Il-sung's personal ambition. From 1945 to 1950, Kim Il-sung took advantage of the worldwide Communist revolution in order to strengthen his own position against the political challenges from Kim Tu-bong, Kim Mu-jŏng, and Pak Hŏn-yŏng. Regardless of how his opponents in the South might have chosen to behave, Kim planned to be the "Supreme Leader" of a unified Korea.

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<sup>1</sup> Kathryn Weathersby, "The Cold War in Asia: New Russian Documents on the Korean War," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996): 30-35.

One religious aspect of Kim's plan was his establishment of a personality cult. Theoretically, Communism should be atheistic, but in North Korea, Kim's personal ambition was to be deified. The campaign to establish a personality cult began in 1946, soon after Kim's purging of the Christian leader Cho Man-sik. During the Founding Congress of the North Korean Workers Party (NKWP), Kim Il-sung was hailed as "the leader of all the Korean people," "the hero of the nation," "the great leader," and many other venerable titles.<sup>2</sup> When the Central Historical Museum of P'yongyang opened in 1947, Kim's Kapsan supporters tried to highlight his military achievements by designating a special room with 316 items on display to show his military credentials as a guerrilla ranking as "general" in his campaign against the Japanese. The propagandists credited the creation of the People's Army (*Inmingun*) to Kim Il-sung. It was an attempt to lift Kim up above other famous Communist fighters such as General Kim Mu-jong, who had served bravely in the Chinese Communist Army and was a close comrade of Mao Zedong. Like Stalin, Kim Il-sung enjoyed military poses and postures, but instead of dressing himself in military uniform, Kim wore a gray Mao suit to draw a connection with Mao Zedong, casting himself in the images of two supreme Communist leaders.<sup>3</sup>

Kim's personality cult program was a combination of different religions and ideologies including Christianity, Confucian familism, Korean shamanism, Japanese emperor worship, and Stalinism.<sup>4</sup> Kim sought to portray his family as the consummate example of a Korean noble family, embodying the virtues of hard work and nationalistic

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<sup>2</sup> Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 134.

<sup>3</sup> Allan R. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 176.

<sup>4</sup> See Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 223-224.

loyalty.<sup>5</sup> He represented himself as the successor to his noble father's nationalistic, anti-Japanese revolutionary movement.<sup>6</sup> Despite his relatively young age when compared to other nationalist leaders, Kim Il-sung was able to cultivate the image of being a great leader (in Korean terms, a *suryŏng*) for the Korean people.<sup>7</sup> In 1946, the North Korean novelist Han Sŏr-ya, who became the head of the North Korean writer's league and the chief engineer of Kim's personality cult, described Kim as the "sun of the nation" – a title that had been formerly used in the Shinto religion to describe the Japanese emperor.<sup>8</sup> In 1947, according to North Korean Communist hagiographical writer Han Chaē-dŏk, Kim Il-sung's fight against the Japanese was like a brilliant star and his return to Korea like the rising of the sun. Han also borrowed Christian imagery to portray Kim as a savior who had shed his "precious blood" for the sake of national salvation.<sup>9</sup>

Kim also "indigenized" Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism to make it more appealing to the popular masses in Korea by incorporating aspects of folk belief.<sup>10</sup> In this effort, the images of Confucian familism proved useful. Stalin and Kim Il-sung became paternalist figures for the Korean nation, a replacement of the traditional ancestor worship culture. Throughout North Korea, pictures of Stalin and Kim Il-sung were displayed side-by-side in courthouses, post offices, schools, theaters, and other public buildings. Even religious buildings, including worship halls, temples, and Cathedrals were required to show

<sup>5</sup> Yong-ho Ch'oe, "Christian Background in the Early Life of Kim Il-sung," *Asian Survey* 26 (Oct 1986): 1083-1085.

<sup>6</sup> See Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 223.

<sup>7</sup> *Suryong* was a Korean term reserved to address political leaders, such as Yo Un-hyong, Cho Man-sik, Syngman Rhee, and Pak Hŏn-yŏng in very respectful terms. The use of *Suryong* for Kim Il-sung began shortly before the formation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 1948 and became his main title after the mid-1960s.

<sup>8</sup> Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 223.

<sup>9</sup> Chaedok Han, *Kim Il-song changgun kaeson'gi* (Record of the Triumphant Return of General Kim Il Sung) (P'yŏngyang: Minju Chosonsa, 1947), 10. Quoted in Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 223.

<sup>10</sup> Young-sook Kim Harvey, "The Korean Shaman and the Deaconess: Sisters in Different Guises," *Religion and Ritual in Korean Society*, ed. Laurel Kendall and Griffin Dix (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 156.

Stalin's and Kim's portraits.<sup>11</sup> Not surprisingly, some churches refused. The police then closed these churches, confiscated their properties, and arrested their leaders.<sup>12</sup>

To ensure the success of his personality cult and political dictatorship, Kim Il-sung planned to destroy Christian churches and silence opposition from all religious groups.<sup>13</sup> Christians, Ch'ōndogyo followers, and Buddhists were identified by the Communists as "reactionaries" and individual believers were persecuted by the authorities.<sup>14</sup> Resistance from Ch'ōndogyo worshippers ended in 1948, when its political leadership chose to support the Communist authorities. Some Christians, however, continued their struggle against the government by organizing underground churches and participating in guerrilla activities in Hwanghae Province, the province of Syngman Rhee's ancestors.

Since Korean Christianity had strong connections with Western countries such as the United States, Canada, and France, Communist authorities did not trust Christian believers, regardless of their political affiliation. The government began to systematically destroy the influence of the Christian community. From 1947 to 1950, all churches that had been built by foreign missions were considered "enemy alien property" and were therefore forced to close down.<sup>15</sup> The Communist government and officials occupied most of the former mission compounds and mission school buildings. For

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<sup>11</sup> Letter from Harry Hill, 22 August 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 14 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia. Rev. Harry Hill was a Northern Presbyterian (USA) missionary in the P'yōngyang Station before World War II. This information was obtained through his interview with North Korean Prisoners of War.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Veolkel, 15 November 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>13</sup> According to Charles Armstrong, the major opposition against the Communist groups came from the Christians and Ch'ōndogyo. Since Ch'ōndogyo's power base was among the landless masses, the Communists' land reform had very little impact on cutting Ch'ōndogyo's followers. See Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 125-131.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 130-131.

<sup>15</sup> Letter from Harry Hill, 22 August 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 14 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

example, the Presbyterian mission station in P'yŏngyang, which had been the largest Presbyterian mission station in the world, was converted into the Communist headquarters.<sup>16</sup> And Kim Il-sung's own personal office had formerly been the home of an American missionary, Margaret Best.

Next, Kim Il-sung sought to prevent the young people from joining religious groups by converting them to Communism instead. According to the memoir of No Kŭm-sŏk, the North Korean pilot who defected to the South with his MIG-15 in 1953, students were instructed that there was no God and that the world Communist victory would be won with a vast amount of modern weapons, not with religious faith or superstition.<sup>17</sup> Sales of Bibles and other religious materials were prohibited. Bookstores were allowed only to sell Communist publications and Russian materials. School officials harassed children from Christian backgrounds. Naturally, many young people left their parents' churches, while many older believers went underground to avoid persecution.

The government also planned to liquidate the church leadership gradually. Christian leaders and educators were divided by the North Korean secret police into three categories: 1) openly against Communism, 2) potential hindrances to Communist rule, and 3) those with a close southern connection. Pastors who refused to join the government-sponsored Christian League were arrested and summarily executed.<sup>18</sup> When

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<sup>16</sup> A confidential letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel from P'yŏngyang, 29 October 1950, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, ed. Kim Heung Soo (Seoul: Institute of Korean Church History, 2003), 146-147.

<sup>17</sup> No Kum-sok, *A MiG-15 to Freedom* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1996), 36. No Kum-sok's mother was a devout Catholic.

<sup>18</sup> Seong-Jae Lee, "解放以後 北韓基督教會 共產政權과의 關係에 대한研究 *Haebangihu buk'hankidokkyohoe gongsanjeonggwongwauwi gwangyee tehanyeongu* Study on the Relation Between North Korea Government and North Korean Church since Liberation" (M.A. Thesis, Yonsei University, 1992), 70.

preparations for war intensified in early 1950, the government further tightened its control over all religious groups because Kim Il-sung worried that news of his secret war plan might leak to the south. On the eve of the attack, the police arrested even more pastors and Catholic priests so that they could not hinder the war effort.<sup>19</sup> Once the attack started, all religious activities were forced to stop. No more worship services or religious gatherings were allowed, not even in Communist-controlled churches. The police locked the doors of most churches.<sup>20</sup>

### *Kim Il-sung's Political Intentions in Military Conquest*

Kim had two southern political rivals, Pak Hŏn-yŏng and Syngman Rhee, and a war might enable him to beat both of them and assume supreme control over the whole peninsula. Historian Robert Simmons, who has explored domestic conditions in North Korea in his book *Strained Alliance* (1975), attributed Kim Il-sung's eagerness to march south to his power struggle with Pak Hŏn-yŏng.<sup>21</sup> Simmons argued that Pak pressured Kim to attack because Pak wanted to return to Seoul and unify the country.<sup>22</sup>

However, it was also possible that Kim did not act simply because of Pak's political pressure. Kim intended to nullify the influence of Pak Hŏn-yŏng in South Korea. Pak had the loyal support of most domestic Korean Communists. He had led the Communist resistance throughout the colonial area inside Korea and had suffered immensely in his pursuit of Korean independence. After the Japanese surrendered to the Allies, Pak established the Korean Communist Party in Seoul. Being a native of Kwangju, Pak's main power base was in the southern region of Korea. He headed the

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Robert R. Simmons, *The Strained Alliance: Peking, P'yŏngyang, Moscow, and the Politics of the Korean Civil War* (New York: The Free Press, 1975).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 104-110.

Communist guerilla forces in the Chölla region before fleeing to P'yöngyang in October 1946. His credentials made him highly popular among all Korean Communists. Pak directly challenged Kim's claim to the throne in Seoul.

In North Korea, Pak Hön-yöng received solid support from Communist refugees who had fled South Korea because of the anti-Communist purge launched by Rhee's government.<sup>23</sup> Once in P'yöngyang, Pak plotted how he might return south and lead an uprising. He promptly organized the Democratic Front for the Unification of the Fatherland (DFUF), which advocated a peaceful unification of Korea.<sup>24</sup> Because of his invaluable knowledge of the south, he also became the supervisor of the Kangdong Political Institute, which was responsible for training guerillas to be sent south for infiltration and subversive activities.<sup>25</sup> Since Pak enjoyed wide support in the newly unified Korean Workers' Party, and also among the guerrillas, Kim Il-sung appointed him as the Foreign Minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in September 1949, hoping to use his influence in the South to gain Stalin's support for a swift military conquest.

Using military means, nevertheless, was not the only option for the North Koreans. There were two other ways to achieve unification: to allow a national election sponsored by the United Nations, or to overthrow the Republic of Korea (ROK) regime through subversive means and guerrilla attacks. Nevertheless, these two options were not options for the benefit of Kim Il-sung because both ways offered Pak the upper hand in the control of Seoul. For instance, a national election would certainly favor Pak because

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<sup>23</sup> Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950*, 175.

<sup>24</sup> Although the Democratic Front for the Unification of the Fatherland (DFUF) was organized by Pak Hön-yöng, his name was not listed on the seven-member chairman group of the front. See Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 120.

<sup>25</sup> Simmons, *The Strained Alliance*, 104.

leftists in the South knew Pak better than Kim. If Pak succeeded in overthrowing Syngman Rhee's regime in Seoul and eventually unifying the country through subversive activities without the help of the North Koreans, then Kim's position in the newly unified Korea would be over-shadowed by Pak's remarkable success. And since Pak enjoyed a larger following in the South than Kim did, the Soviet Union might install Pak in Seoul rather than Kim in a newly unified Korea.

From 1945 to 1949, Stalin favored subversive activities to take full control of the south. Therefore, he ignored the American plan to have a national election for all Korea under the direction of the United Nations and rejected Kim's constant pleas to march south. In March 1949, Stalin told Kim plainly that the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel had to be peaceful and the Korean People's Army (KPA) existed only for defensive purposes.<sup>26</sup> He would allow Kim to use force only if the South Koreans launched an attack against the North.

Kim Il-sung, nonetheless, did not give up his plan, due to his political ambition. If Kim wanted to be the supreme ruler of all Korea, he had to march south *before* Pak's uprising succeeded. To do so, he needed to find ways to control Pak's power base and eliminate all of Pak's supporters. A swift military operation might allow Kim to absorb the guerilla units into the People's Army (*Inmingun*). This strategy was consistent with Kim Il-sung's constant efforts to incorporate the Korean Communist Party into the Korean Workers' Party, allowing the northern Communists to control their southern comrades.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Quote by Evgueni Bajanov, "Assessing the Politics of the Korean War, 1949-51," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996): 54.

<sup>27</sup> See Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 218-219. According to historian Dae-sook Suh, against the hope of most domestic Communists, it was Kim Il-sung's initiative, with Soviet leaders' support, to establish a Worker Party that was independent of the party in Seoul. See Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader*, 70-71.

Knowing Kim's political ambitions, Pak Hŏn-yŏng also wanted a military conquest, but he had a different plan in mind. He knew that time was against him because Syngman Rhee was cracking down on the southern guerrilla forces. Two of Pak's guerrilla leaders, Kim Sam-yong and Yi Chu-ha, were arrested by ROK police in March 1950.<sup>28</sup> Pak needed to act quickly in order to save his comrades from annihilation. Since he had the loyalty of the southern guerrillas, Pak depended on them for political leverage against Kim Il-sung. His strategy was to divert the ROK army's attention with a military attack from the north, so that the 500,000 loyal members of the South Korean Labor Party (about 2 percent of the overall southern population) would rise up and seize Seoul *before* the KPA could enter.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps Pak also expected that, with the ROK moving all of its troops to the north to prevent the fall of Seoul, his own guerrilla forces would have time to overrun the southern half of the peninsula. In this way, Pak might have calculated that his guerrilla forces would become the new KPA in the south on their own merits and would not be incorporated into Kim's units.<sup>30</sup>

Both Kim and Pak took great risks, but Pak thought that he had a better chance because his popularity in the South meant that he would be sure to win more support in Seoul than Kim Il-sung.<sup>31</sup> His failure was tied to the fact that he over-estimated the strength of the guerrilla forces. In addition, what he did not expect was the overwhelming power of the northern army, the ROK's strategy of withdrawing its army from Seoul, a

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<sup>28</sup> Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader*, 121.

<sup>29</sup> "The North Korean Labor Party's Internal Factions," originally published in the Japanese monthly *Jiyu*. Written by "The Neighbouring Countries Research Institute." Translated in the *Selected Summaries of Japanese Magazines* (U.S. Embassy, Tokyo, June 26-July 3, 1967), 4; quoted in Simmons, *The Strained Alliance*, 110. The number 500,000 was provided by Pak Hŏn-yŏng. It is quite possible that Pak overestimated the strength of the guerrillas in the south.

<sup>30</sup> This line of reasoning is also supported by Dae-sook Suh's analysis. See Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader*, 121.

<sup>31</sup> Simmons, *The Strained Alliance*, 110.

lack of public enthusiasm toward guerrilla uprisings, and the effectiveness of ROK police action against subversive activities.<sup>32</sup> Pak's failure to foresee the defeat of his guerrillas later made him a convenient scapegoat. Eventually, his comrades in the North arrested and sentenced him to death after the conclusion of the armistice.<sup>33</sup>

### *Building a North Korean People's Army*

Since Kim Il-sung calculated that he would need a massive army to overthrow the southern government and unify the country under his rule, his preparations began in 1947, even before the formation of the Republic of Korea (ROK). During a meeting with the North Korean People's Committee, Kim argued that since "there [existed] aggressive forces" in the south under the direction of American imperialists, North Korea would need its own army to defend against an attack.<sup>34</sup> By exaggerating the southern threat, Kim got his proposal accepted by the committee and the process of recruitment for the People's Army began.

The Korean People's Army (KPA) was initially composed of Kim's partisan contingency, Korean returnees from Russia, the Korean Volunteer Corps and several thousand independent Communist fighters from Manchuria and other parts of China.<sup>35</sup> Recruitment efforts sought young men from reliable backgrounds: poor peasants or workers, with no relatives in the south.<sup>36</sup> Former landlords, the bourgeois, and Christians

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<sup>32</sup> The ROK government employed strong tactics against potential guerrilla uprisings once the war started. For example in Kochang (Map 5), the police arrested and executed a huge number of leftists and their sympathizers. See H. K. Shin, *Remembering Korea 1950: A Boy Soldier's Story* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2001), 39-40.

<sup>33</sup> Simmons, *Strained Alliance*, 109, 234.

<sup>34</sup> Kiwon Chung, "The North Korean People's Army and the Party," *The China Quarterly* 14 (April-June 1963): 107.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>36</sup> Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 235.

were generally excluded.<sup>37</sup> Although marred by low public enthusiasm, falsification, and inefficiency, the recruitment effort was, for the most part, smooth and successful.<sup>38</sup>

Kim Il-sung carefully concealed the size of his army by organizing divisions under various non-military names such as the “Peace Preservation Corps,” the “Border Constabulary,” and the “Railroad Guards.”<sup>39</sup> In the early stages, the People’s Army, despite its size, was still inferior to the southern forces, because the KPA lacked weapons and ammunition. In his report to Moscow in March 1949, General Terentii Shtykov, Ambassador to North Korea, told Stalin that the North Koreans did not have enough trained personnel, adequate weapons, and sufficient bullets to defend the country if the South attacked.<sup>40</sup> In June 1949, the Soviets finally yielded to Kim and Shtykov’s requests, supplying numerous planes, tanks, cannons, landing ships, machine-guns, and engineering equipment.<sup>41</sup>

Kim’s war preparations also involved the construction of elaborate bomb shelters. According to Lieutenant Howard Moffett, who was among the first to enter the city after its fall (having been born in P’yöngyang to missionary parents), the shelter was “a fabulous subterranean system of passageways and rooms extending down an estimated 100 feet.”<sup>42</sup> It was “a real atom proof shelter with electricity and air-conditioning.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See No, *A MiG-15 to Freedom*, 36-39.

<sup>38</sup> Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 235.

<sup>39</sup> Chung, “The North Korean People’s Army and the Party,” 107.

<sup>40</sup> Bajanov, “Assessing the Politics of the Korean War 1949-1951,” 54.

<sup>41</sup> Ambassador Shtykov reported that the ROK and the United States were preparing a large-scale war against the north and complained that the DPRK army would not be able to resist. See Shtykov report to Stalin, 2 May 1949, Archives of Foreign Policy, Russian Federation (AVP RF), also Marshal Vasilevsky and Ambassador Shtykov’s cable to Stalin on 20 April 1949, N 17064, Archives of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF). The documents were mentioned by Bajanov, “Assessing the Politics of the Korean War, 1949-1951,” 54. For the treaty between the Soviet Union and the DPRK, see APRF, Fond 6, list 9, file 14, p 57.

<sup>42</sup> Letter from Howard Moffett, 25 October 1950, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 139-140.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Perhaps such preparations were defensive in nature, but they could also indicate that Kim Il-sung was ready to confront the atomic threat of the United States, should his invasion plan fail.

The military operation would not be successful if China was not on Kim's side. From 1946 to 1950, Kim Il-sung strengthened his ties with the Chinese Communists. In December 1947, Kim and Mao reached an agreement. Mao would provide foodstuffs and recognize the North Korean People's Committee as the legitimate government of Korea. In exchange, Kim would send two divisions to assist Mao in his revolution. These divisions totaled about 100,000 young men, and consisted of both North Koreans and Korean residents of Manchuria.<sup>44</sup>

This deal benefited Kim Il-sung in two ways. First, the Chinese civil war served as a training ground for his soldiers. When these two divisions were finally returned to North Korea, these veterans doubled the strength and fighting capacity of the KPA. Moreover, American intelligence estimated that 80 percent of the officers in the Korean People's Army (KPA) had fought in China. Second, because "the bright five-starred national flag of the People's Republic of China was also dyed with the blood of the Korean revolutionaries,"<sup>45</sup> Mao would be obligated to support Kim's own war when the time came.

In March 1948, a secret Soviet-Chinese-North Korean Joint Military Council (*Haptong kunsu hyobũihoe*) was established in P'yŏngyang, for the purpose of coordinating military activities between the three Communist countries.<sup>46</sup> These military

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<sup>44</sup> Chung, "The North Korean People's Army and the Party," 109. See also Richard C. Thornton, *Odd Man Out: Truman, Stalin, Mao and the Origins of the Korean War* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2000), 109.

<sup>45</sup> Chung, "The North Korean People's Army and the Party," 109.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

connections between the Chinese and the North Koreans paved the way for Chinese intervention. Once the Chinese entered the war, this council would work extensively with both Soviet military advisers and Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV).<sup>47</sup>

### *Stalin's Approval of Kim's Military Conquest*

Kim Il-sung understood the crucial role of the Soviet Union in his unification scheme. Regardless of how well he prepared, his hands were tied unless he had full Soviet support and Stalin's approval. Therefore, Kim carefully cultivated a friendship with Stalin, demonstrating his loyalty to the Russian leader and his commitment to Communism at every opportunity. He constantly thanked Stalin for liberating Korea from the Japanese imperialists and praised the Soviet Union as the Communist fatherland. Stalin's picture was posted everywhere in Korea. Standing before the Russian dictator, Kim Il-sung practiced humility and self-control by remaining patient and persistent while pursuing his goal of unification.

From 1947 to 1949, Stalin carefully restrained his young Korean comrade from stirring up trouble along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. However, in January 1950, Stalin reversed his position – giving Kim the go-ahead and supplying him with Russia's most advanced weapons. Adam B. Ulam, the ex-director of the Russian Research Center at Harvard University and an expert in Russian foreign policy, pointed out that Stalin would never have made such a reversal just because of Kim's persistence.<sup>48</sup> The decision to attack in 1950 must have served Stalin's own purposes.<sup>49</sup> Although it is still not known what was truly in Stalin's mind, his comments to Mao about the "changed international situation"

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Adam B. Ulam, "Letters: Stalin, Kim, and Korean War Origins," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 4 (Fall 1994): 21.

<sup>49</sup> Ulam's idea is further supported by Thornton's *Odd Man Out*.

might be the primary reason for the new Russian strategy.<sup>50</sup> Stalin might well have felt more comfortable with starting a Korean conflict once he had atomic bombs and Communists were in firm control of the Chinese mainland. Soviet documents further suggested that Stalin received intelligence information, a message sent from a British spy Donald MacLean prior to Secretary Dean Acheson's National Press speech of January 12, 1950, that the United States would not intervene in Korean affairs.<sup>51</sup> Acheson's speech further strengthened Stalin's conviction.

Looking at the situation from another angle, historian Richard C. Thornton argued that Stalin's real motivation was that he was uncomfortable with Mao's success in China and thus tried to control him.<sup>52</sup> According to Thornton's analysis, Stalin had a plan not only to prevent Mao from conquering Taiwan in August 1950, but also to drag the Chinese Communists into a war with the United States, thereby isolating China from the Western world. Stalin may have seen Korea as an opportunity to confront the United States without using his own troops. One indication of this was Stalin's insistence that Kim Il-sung obtain a Chinese commitment to send ground troops if the Americans or the Japanese intervened.<sup>53</sup>

Stalin, nevertheless, wanted to conceal his involvement in the planning of a North Korean attack in order to avoid a direct confrontation with the United States. He instructed the Soviet ambassador to the United Nations, Jacob (Iakvo) Alexandrovich Malik, to walk out of the UN Security Council on February 3, 1950. Outwardly, Malik

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<sup>50</sup> Coded message N 5500, 14 May 1950, APRF, Fund 45, list 1, file 331, p. 55, *Wilson Center Cold War International History Project*. Document quoted in Paul Wingrove, "Who started Korea?" *History Today* 50 (July 2000): 46.

<sup>51</sup> Kathryn Weathersby, "The Korean War Revisited," *Wilson Quarterly* 23 (1 June 1999): 91.

<sup>52</sup> Thornton, *Odd Man Out*.

<sup>53</sup> Coded message N 5500, 14 May 1950, APRF, Fund 45, list 1, file 331, p. 55. *Wilson Center Cold War International History Project*. Document quoted in Paul Wingrove, "Who started Korea?" *History Today* 50 (July 2000): 46.

was protesting the refusal to admit Communist China into the United Nations and the presence of the Nationalist representation, but in reality, Malik's action was to shield his country from accusation of any foreknowledge of the attack and to avoid potential diplomatic damage caused by the outbreak of the Korean War. Had the Soviets been present at the Security Council meeting, Malik would have found himself confronted with the decision of whether or not they should use the veto power. If the Soviet Union had vetoed the UN resolution against North Korea, it would have been condemned by world public opinion. However, if the Soviet Union had supported the UN resolution, it would have prevented any other Communist nation from coming to North Korea's aid. Even if the Soviet Union had simply abstained from voting, it would have destroyed its credibility in the Communist world by allowing the capitalists to win without putting up a fight. Therefore, the absence of the Soviet Union from the Security Council meetings was the best way to avoid a no-win situation.

### *Stalin's Use of Churches for Anti-Atomic Weapons Propaganda*

Stalin's next step was to find a way to nullify US atomic superiority should the United States enter the war. In March 1950, Moscow started a propaganda offensive by launching the "Signatures For Peace Campaign" in Stockholm, Sweden. The Communist-controlled World Congress of Partisans of Peace (WCPP) adopted the "Stockholm Resolution," urging a complete ban on the use of atomic weapons.<sup>54</sup> This campaign sought to convince the UN to condemn any first-use of atomic weapons.

What was the political purpose of this campaign at this time? Putting this event in the context of the upcoming attack in June, it was a psychological offensive in preparation for the Korean War. Given the fact that Stalin had in mind to start a war, his

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<sup>54</sup> "Moscow' 'Signatures for Peace' Campaign," *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 151.

goal was to prevent the United States from using atomic weapons against North Korea.<sup>55</sup> According to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, shortly before the outbreak of the Korean War “more than half the population of North Korea was reported to have signed the petition.”<sup>56</sup> The petition requested the United States and the Soviet Union not to never to use atomic weapons. The campaign played on public sentiments, such as a universal aversion to war, the fear of atomic destruction, the concern for economic recovery, and the desire for international tensions to cease.<sup>57</sup>

In fact, the Stockholm Peace Campaign targeted religious groups in the West and served to confuse religious opinion on the use of atomic weapons, rendering the weapon morally indefensible. To publicize the message of this peace initiative, Communists employed religious leaders from Eastern Europe, under the leadership of Bishop Albert Berezky, the leader of the Hungarian Reform Church. Stalin was not above benign manipulation of religious opinion in the West with one hand, even while his other hand crushed the churches in the East. He understood that Christianity was the major moral foundation of the Western world, so he appealed to religious morality and ideals to limit US military options and hopefully to ground all atomic weapons for the benefit of North Korea’s invading army. By May 1950, the WCPP claimed to have received 100 million signatures, mostly from behind the Iron Curtain.<sup>58</sup> Although there were fewer signatures than had been anticipated from the West, the effort was successful in swaying European

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<sup>55</sup> The North Koreans’ fear of the atomic bomb was real because Kim Il-sung had built an underground bomb shelter to protect himself from any potential U.S. atomic bombardment.

<sup>56</sup> Statement by Dean Acheson on the “Soviet Peace Petition on July 12, 1950, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 45.

<sup>57</sup> “Moscow ‘Signatures for Peace’ Campaign,” *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 151.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

opinion. Religious leaders, such as the Bishop of Chichester, would later lobby the British government to prevent the use of atomic weapons in the Korean War.<sup>59</sup>

*Preparing For a Surprise Attack on June 25, 1950*

As soon as Kim Il-sung received approval from Stalin, he immediately accelerated preparations for war. In March 1950, Kim Il-sung asked to use the Soviet credit that had been allocated for 1951, in order to acquire additional military hardware. The Soviet Union promptly agreed.<sup>60</sup> The Russians also delivered more arms and equipment for forming additional units of the KPA. A month later, leaders of the southern Communist guerilla forces arrived in P'yŏngyang to work out a program of action for before and after the invasion.<sup>61</sup> After Kim Il-sung met with Mao Zedong in May 1950, the Chinese promised to send food aid and to transfer one army closer to Korea, just in case the Japanese entered on the side of the South."<sup>62</sup>

In May 1950, Kim Il-sung informed General Shtykov that his general staff had started to plan for a June attack, contingent on the arrival of the promised Soviet armaments. Kim was in a hurry because he was afraid that a possible leak would spoil the element of surprise, or that the July rainy season might hinder its speed.<sup>63</sup> At his insistence, the war was finally scheduled for June 25, 1950.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> The Russians' planning paid off eventually when the British obtained Truman's promise not to use the atomic bomb without consulting them. Truman's hands were tied due to international and religious opinion.

<sup>60</sup> Bajanov, "Assessing the Politics of the Korean War 1949-1951," 54.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Telegram 362, 1950. Quote in Weathersby, "New Findings on the Korean War," *Cold War International History Project Electronic Bulletin* 3 (Fall 1993): 16.

<sup>63</sup> Bajanov, "Assessing the Politics of the Korean War," 54.

<sup>64</sup> Telegram 408, 1950, quoted in Weathersby, "New Findings on the Korean War," 16.

## *A SOUTHERN REVIVAL ON THE EVE OF WAR*

According to historian Kathryn Weathersby and Christian F. Ostermann, Director of the Cold War International History Project, the North Korean leadership had “greatly overestimated the support it enjoyed among the population of the South and underestimated the likelihood of U.S. intervention to defend” the South Korean government.<sup>65</sup> The main reason for this discrepancy was the religious factor, an important aspect that was somehow missed by both North Korean leaders and Korean War historians. Before the outbreak of the Korean War, the South Korean government, the Korean churches, and American missionaries had labored intensively to rescue the nation from Communist expansion through religious means.

### *Church and State*

Religion and politics were intertwined in the Republic of Korea (ROK). While traditional religions were losing their share of political power, Christianity was on the rise, especially after Syngman Rhee came to power.<sup>66</sup> Not only did Christians closely identify with Rhee’s regime, but they were active in both the National Assembly and the provincial governments. In spite of their small percentage in the overall Korean population, Christians were gaining political power in the South. By May 1950, about half of Rhee’s cabinet members were Christians. Around forty of the newly elected 210 legislators in the National Assembly were also Christians. The Vice Chairman of the Assembly was a Presbyterian elder. The mayor of Seoul and three of the eight provincial

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<sup>65</sup> Christian F. Ostermann and Kathryn Weathersby, “New Evidence on North Korea,” *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 14/15 (Winter 2003-Spring 2004): 5-7.

<sup>66</sup> The growth of Christianity and its political influence in the South has been catalogued in chapter 3.

governors were also Christians.<sup>67</sup> The future of these Christian leaders depended very much on keeping the Communists at bay.

Fear and uncertainty were inescapable elements of life in South Korea due to the division of the Korean peninsula. Those who were either in the ROK government or loyal to Rhee were particularly worried. According to President Rhee, "Every Christian knows he is a prime target" since so much of the Korean leadership was closely connected to the church and the foreign missionaries.<sup>68</sup> Rhee believed that because these Christians had "ideas and convictions and would stand up against the Communists," they would be murdered if the North took control.<sup>69</sup>

As rumors of war grew louder and the prospect of American military support faded away, many Christian clergymen and some ROK officials became convinced that a national revival was the only way to avert disaster. They hoped that God's divine intervention would save the country from an invasion and would counteract the climate of fear. President Rhee told Rev. Bob Pierce, a Youth for Christ evangelist who visited Korea in April 1950 and later became the founder of World Vision, Inc., that "the reason Communism had been unable to destroy his government through termite tactics was because of the tremendous surge of spiritual passion which had come to his people," in the words of Pierce.<sup>70</sup> The nation, Rhee believed, needed "some kind of a spiritual renewal" if the South wanted to survive a military conquest from the North.<sup>71</sup> In early

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<sup>67</sup> Letter from Harold Voelkel to Dr. John C. Decker, 29 July 1950, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 61.

<sup>68</sup> See quote in Franklin Graham, *Bob Pierce: This One Thing I Do* (USA: Samaritan's Purse, 1983), 146.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Bob Pierce, *The Untold Korean Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1951), 5.

<sup>71</sup> Rhee as quoted in Graham, *Bob Pierce: This One Thing I Do*, 146.

1950, a National Day of Prayer was called by the churches and supported by the ROK government.

***Bob Pierce and the “Save the Nation Evangelistic Crusade”***

In March 1950, Protestant churches under the sponsorship of the Korean National Council of Churches (KNCC) conducted a nationwide evangelistic campaign, entitled the “Save the Nation Evangelistic Crusade.”<sup>72</sup> American missionaries, such as Rev. Harold Voelkel and Rev. Otto De Camp, were involved in the interdenominational preparation committee.<sup>73</sup> The crusade was to be a series of city-wide evangelistic campaigns in key areas throughout the nation, modeled after Billy Graham’s successful American crusades. The cities that were chosen represented Korea’s major population centers. The areas with the highest Christian population were Taegu, Seoul, and Inch’ön, but the campaign also went to Pusan, Taejön, and Kaesöng (see Map 4), thereby covering the major political, economic, and strategic areas of the south (see Table 5.1). During the Korean War, most of these cities (except Pusan) would be completely destroyed and many of their residents became refugees.

The highlight of this campaign was the participation of three young American preachers: Gill Dodds, Rev. Bob Findley, and Rev. Bob Pierce. Their participation arose from unplanned happenstance. Rev. Eddie Kilbourne of the Oriental Missionary Society and his wife Ernie Kilbourne were friends of Pierce. They had left China for Korea after the fall of Beijing, and had become involved in planning the crusade. When they heard that Pierce would be visiting Korea on his way to Tokyo, they invited him to lead the

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<sup>72</sup> The government did not pay for the campaign, but Rhee’s administration was supportive of the efforts of the churches.

<sup>73</sup> The crusade was greatly praised by Rev. Harold Voelkel in his letter (29 July 1950) to Dr. John C. Decker, the Secretary of the International Missionary Council, shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War. *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 61.

“Save the Nation Evangelistic Crusade.”<sup>74</sup> The Kilbournes specifically asked him to bring along Gill Dodds, a famous US track star, because of high Korean interest in the sport of track and field. Rev. Pierce not only brought Dodds but also invited Bob Findley, a national inter-collegiate boxing champion who also planned to take a trip to Korea and Japan. Upon arriving in Seoul, they were enthusiastically welcomed by the leading sports writers, government officials, Korean church leaders, and missionaries.<sup>75</sup> They stayed in Korea for almost nine weeks, leaving in early June 1950, a few weeks before the outbreak of the Korean War.<sup>76</sup> Revival meetings were carried out in major cities including Taegu, Pusan, Seoul, Taejŏn, and Inch’ŏn.

The “crusade” specifically focused on high school and college students – the very groups that Communist propaganda also targeted. Daily meetings were conducted in local high schools while the crusade team was in town. These usually were not mission schools, but public and non-religious private schools. On every night of the crusade, the entire student body of that school (typically one to two thousand) would crowd into the school auditorium to listen to the American speakers through a Korean translator. Based on data provided by Rev. Pierce, he visited at least forty schools and spoke to about seventy to a hundred thousand students during the nine-week schedule.<sup>77</sup>

Why would secular public schools and non-Christian private schools want to invite American preachers? It was because the schools were concerned about leftist activities among the youth, so that even secular educators encouraged religious teaching

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<sup>74</sup> Bob Pierce met the Kilbournes in China. After the Communists took power in Korea, they joined the Korea mission instead of returning to the United States. See Pierce, *The Untold Korean Story*, 6.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 9,

<sup>76</sup> Graham, *Bob Pierce: This One Thing I Do*, 146.

<sup>77</sup> The size of high school was usually from 1000 to 1500. The American team spent 10 days in Taegu, 5 in Pusan, 11 in Seoul, and unknown in Taejŏn (at least 5 days).

to counteract Communist utopianism. One non-Christian principal explained to Rev. Pierce, “We want you to preach your Christ, because even though most of us on the faculty are not Christians, we know that only Christianity offers a challenge strong enough and stirring enough to turn these young people from Communism.”<sup>78</sup> Since the beginning of the century, Christianity had gained a positive reputation among Korean educators. Its influence on Korean nationalism and postwar anti-Communism marked it as an essential social and political force in South Korea. Although the majority of South Koreans were not Christians, most of them respected Christianity and embraced Christian ideas.

The ROK military in particular was eager to support the crusade. Many military leaders invited the American preachers to preach to their soldiers. In Taegu, Rev. Pierce and his companions drove out to an ROK army camp and preached to hundreds of soldiers.<sup>79</sup> In Kaesŏng, they visited the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, and again spoke to the troops. Most of the guards whom they talked to that day would be captured or killed by the KPA a month later.<sup>80</sup> The Korean army invited these preachers because they believed that Christian soldiers were better fighters and that Christian beliefs were essential to containing Communist infiltration.

The best example of the influence of Christianity in the ROK military was the case of the Coast Guard. The American Military Government (AMG) organized the Coast Guard in early 1946. Like the Constabulary, the Coast Guard attracted many dissidents, including Communists from the radical sailors’ unions. Many defected to the north with their boats and equipment. When the Republic of Korea was established in

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<sup>78</sup> Pierce, *The Untold Korean Story*, 30.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-59.

August 1948, President Rhee appointed Admiral Son Wŏn-il, a Methodist, to take charge of the Coast Guard. Admiral Son immediately established a new way to corner the subversive elements by making Protestant Christianity the official religion of the Korean navy. Starting from November 1948, Admiral Son ordered that sailors who were stationed at his Seoul headquarters had to attend chapel services. His policy became common practice throughout the ROK navy so that eventually a Chaplain Office was established in November 1950, five months ahead of other ROK forces. In addition, under Admiral Son's order, navy recruiters sought out Christian refugees from North Korean fishing communities, while investigators were tracking down the last Communists hiding in the ROK navy. When the American advisors came to have training sessions with the ROK navy, they discovered that the navy had the strongest anti-Communist fighters in the ROK military.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to Admiral Son, there were other Christian generals in the ROK army. The most famous one was General Wŏn Yong-dŏk, the son of a Christian minister from North Korea and a medical doctor trained by American missionaries. He was the most loyal supporter of Syngman Rhee and took charge of Rhee's coup against the National Assembly in May 1952 and the release of the anti-Communist North Korean POWs in June 1953.<sup>82</sup> The famous "Paik brothers" in the ROK army – Colonel Paek Sŏn-yŏp of the Capital Division and Colonel Paek In-yŏp, the Commander of the 17<sup>th</sup> Regiment on the Ongjin Peninsula – who were later promoted to become generals during the Korean War, were very pro-Christian because of their close connection with Cho Man-sik.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950*, 174.

<sup>82</sup> Sun-yup Paik, *From Pusan to Panmunjom: Wartime Memoirs of the Republic of Korea's First Four-Star General* (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 1992), 82, 194, 229.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 77, 79, and 82.

Support from provincial officials also facilitated the campaign. For example, in Taegu, where the crusade began, Pierce recounted, “The city officials gave it their wholehearted cooperation.”<sup>84</sup> The governor of the province (North Kyöngsang) Cho Jae-chön (Jo Jae-cheon), who was a Christian, even came to the revival meeting in the Town Hall for all eleven nights. Governor Cho allowed them to use the city’s giant stadium to host Gill Dodds’ exhibition race. On that day, 60,000 people came to the revival meeting at the stadium. The event was highly publicized and students were dismissed from high school so that they could participate in the campaign (see Table 5.2).<sup>85</sup> Each night, over a hundred people came forward to make a public confession of their faith.

In Pusan, the American team was invited by the governor of South Kyöngsang Province, Yang Söng-bong (Yang Seong-bong), who was also a Christian, to combine their evangelical meeting with the celebration of the return of 3000 soldiers from guard duty along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, in the city’s biggest stadium. Around 30,000 Pusan residents came to the stadium to attend the celebration and to see Dodds, because Korean runners had just swept the top three places in the Boston Marathon the week before.<sup>86</sup> After the ceremony and an exhibition race, all the soldiers and townspeople stayed to listen to Dodd’s testimony and Rev. Pierce’s message.<sup>87</sup>

The “Save the Nation Evangelical Crusade” was the most successful evangelical campaign in Korean Church history up to that point. After nine weeks of preaching, Dr. Pierce reported that over 25,000 new converts made their public confessions.<sup>88</sup> These numbers were much higher than the crusades led by Rev. Billy Graham in Los Angeles

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> *Newsweek*, 1 May 1950, 70-71.

<sup>87</sup> Pierce, *The Untold Korean Story*, 36-37.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 29.

(1949) or any other Youth for Christ rallies in the United States. In fact, Dr. Pierce did not plan the campaign. Nor did he personally know much about the Korean churches and political, social, and military conditions prior to his visit. The crusade's planning committee headed by missionaries and Korean pastors made all the arrangements. The name of the crusade demonstrated the goal of the planners to identify personal salvation with national deliverance. Christianity thus emerged as a dominant ideological force against Communism in South Korea.

### *Warnings Go Unheeded*

As North Korea proceeded with preparations for a surprise attack, intelligence began to reach the ROK by May 1950. The North's large concentrations of troops and tanks along the border alarmed the Korean Defense Minister, Sin Söng-mo (Shin Sung-mo). As early as May 10, Minister Sin had called a press conference for foreign correspondents to announce the discovery of at least 155 Soviet-made T-34 medium tanks, the massive military build-up along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, and the presence of 118,000 Communist troops in combat positions.<sup>89</sup> Two days later, President Rhee also held a press conference, referring to Minister Sin's report, complaining about the United States' ambivalent position and emphasizing the need for immediate action.<sup>90</sup> The ROK hoped that the United States and its allies would recognize the threat, respond with military supplies, and make preparations to repel an attack.

Nevertheless, neither the US press nor US experts took these warnings seriously. The *New York Times*, for example, buried Sin's report on page 14, in a thirty-three-word

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<sup>89</sup> Thornton, *Odd Man Out*, 172.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

newsbrief.<sup>91</sup> Minister Sin's warning was further refuted by Charge d'Affairs Everett Drumright who argued that the Korean reports were exaggerated and reasoned that the South Koreans intended to manipulate the threat to elicit additional military aid from the United States.<sup>92</sup> Drumright's argument was supported by intelligence reports submitted by the CIA, the Pentagon, and the Far Eastern Command in Tokyo.<sup>93</sup> The United States government therefore refused to answer the pleas of the ROK. The South Koreans were desperate to find even one sympathetic ear in Washington.

*John Foster Dulles Visits Korea Eight Days before the War*

Ambassador Dr. John M. Chang, himself a devoted Korean Catholic, believed that John Foster Dulles was the key to persuading the Truman administration to supply equipment to the South. He knew that Dulles was an influential Republican foreign policy expert who was willing to work with Democrats to pursue a bi-partisan approach to post-war reconstruction in East Asia. And, since Chang had previously worked closely with Dulles in obtaining recognition of Korea by the United Nations, he felt that he could get Dulles' attention. Hearing that Dulles had been appointed as a special envoy to negotiate a peace treaty with Japan, and that he was planning a stopover in Korea, Ambassador Chang invited Dulles and other high-ranking State Department officials to a dinner at the Wardman-Park Hotel in Washington, DC. He urged Dulles to investigate the factual conditions along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel and to speak before the newly elected

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>93</sup> For the CIA report, see CIA report #172: ORE 18-50, 19 June 1950, "Current Capabilities of the Northern Korean Regime," National Archives Record Administration (NARA). For the details of the US Army position, see James F. Schnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), 64. For Tokyo's report, see Thornton, *Odd Man Out*, 175.

National Assembly. Dulles agreed and prepared a speech, which was approved by Secretary of State Dean Acheson, for the assembly.

To appreciate how Dulles' visit would come to impact the religious aspects of the war, his political and religious background must first be understood. Dulles' record reveals close connections with the Federal Council of Churches of Christ (FCCC) and the Presbyterian Church (USA) throughout the 1940s. He was the son of a liberal Presbyterian minister, Rev. Allen Macy Dulles, and the grandson of a missionary to India, John Wesley Dulles. On his mother's side, his grandfather, John Watson Foster, had been Secretary of State under President Benjamin Harrison. He therefore inherited the genes of a politician and a preacher. Growing up under the influence of his father and grandfathers, Dulles held liberal religious beliefs and a worldview of American mission and exceptionalism.<sup>94</sup> Dulles became a successful lawyer and chaired the Commission to Study the Basis of a Just and Durable Peace, created by the FCCC in February 1941. As a well-known Christian layman with political and business connections, he rose quickly within the ranks of the Republican Party.

Dulles' influence in Washington was not overlooked by American missionaries in Korea. They understood that Dulles would be a great friend within the administration, if they could only impress upon him the vitality of Korean Christianity and the spiritual nature of the Korean struggle. Since Dulles was coming to Korea, the Presbyterian missionaries in Seoul invited him to a special reception in his honor. Being a Presbyterian himself, Dulles gladly accepted. Flying from Tokyo to Seoul on June 17, Dulles found himself on the same plane as Dr. John C. Smith, the Foreign Secretary of

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<sup>94</sup> For details, see Richard H. Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999), 1-3.

the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Mission, who was on his way to Korea to attend the Annual Conference of the Northern Presbyterian Mission.

This dinner party with Dulles would be a prime opportunity for the missionaries and the Presbyterian Board Secretary to plead for Korea's need of support, to recount the history of the Korean Church, and to present a vision of a future when Korea would be largely Christian. They reported the recent success of Bob Pierce's evangelical crusade and the Christian influence within the ROK government. After the dinner party, the missionaries persuaded Dulles to take a detour with them to visit the Yŏngnak Church, a well-known North Korean refugee church in Seoul established by Rev. Han Kyŏng-jik.<sup>95</sup> The church was holding a special Saturday night evangelical meeting of three thousand people. Dulles and Smith made a quick stop and briefly greeted the refugees. Although there were hundreds of churches in Seoul, Yŏngnak was the biggest and most beautiful of the refugee churches. The missionaries chose to take Dulles to this church because they wanted him to tell the American people and the President that the Korean people deserved their support because they were fighting for freedom (in particular, religious freedom).

Dulles saw his trip as a fact-finding mission and so he paid close attention to every detail.<sup>96</sup> Before going to the dinner reception, he first visited the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel together with the Foreign Minister Im Pyŏng-jik, and other Korean officials. At the same time, Dulles sought to counteract the feeling among Koreans that the United States had

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<sup>95</sup> Letter from Harold Voelkel to Dr. John C. Decker, 29 July 1950, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 61.

<sup>96</sup> Jongsuk Chay, *Unequal Partners in Peace and War: Republic of Korea and the United States, 1948-1953* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 167-168.

abandoned them.<sup>97</sup> In his address before the Korean National Assembly on June 19, he described how he had seen the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, met with ROK soldiers, conversed with government officials, educators, and economists, and prayed with North Korean refugees. He confided that he was impressed and had found “in the Korean nation a worthy ally for peace and justice in the world.”<sup>98</sup> He assured the Korean people that they would not stand alone against the Communists, so long as they acted worthily in the great design of human freedom. After spending five days in Korea, Dulles left for Japan on June 22, 1950.

Undoubtedly, Dulles’ speech and personal convictions did not represent the official policy of the United States government. Also, his visit was too short and occurred too late to influence US preparations for an attack that would come in only three days. Nor did any practical help immediately follow his visit. His “You are not alone” statement, however, was widely circulated across the south, and some Koreans felt that he had given “the most explicit assurance of American protection.”<sup>99</sup> Though not official policy, his words did convey the underlying sentiment of at least some Americans (from Senators<sup>100</sup> to officials, clergymen, and citizens) that the United States had a moral obligation toward Korea. Such sentiments should not be overlooked, especially not in a

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Speech before the National Assembly, 19 June 1950, John Foster Dulles Papers (MC#016), Korea, Box 48, Folder 1950, Seeley Mudd Library.

<sup>99</sup> Quote in Chay, *Unequal Partners in Peace and War*, 168.

<sup>100</sup> Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg and Congressman Walter Judd were the most outspoken in Congress on America’s moral obligation to Korea. When they visited other Asian countries, they were impressed to hear the often repeated questions, “What will the US do about Korea?” Korea became an important symbol. How the United States handled Korea would seriously affect the confidence of other Asian countries toward the United States leadership position in the Far East. See Robert Oliver’s letter to Syngman Rhee, dated January 7, 1950, 大韓民國史資料集 29 李承晚關係書翰資料集 *Taehanmingoksa jaryojip 29* (Documents of the History of the Republic of Korea Vol. 29: Syngman Rhee Collection (1949-1950) (Seoul: 國史篇纂委員會 Guksapyeonchan wiwonhoe The Committee of National History Compilation), 245.

highly moralistic and religious decade, when the pressure of public opinion might influence decision making in Washington. Dulles' visit to Korea transformed his understanding of the Korean problem and marked his new personal commitment to the defense of South Korea. He became a crucial voice in the State Department advocating a firm policy on Korea.

### *THE OUTBREAK OF THE KOREAN WAR*

The outbreak of the Korean War itself was hardly a military surprise to many Korean officials because they had already received intelligence reports and observed signs of a possible attack, although they did not know the exact date of the operation. The real surprises came, however, when the fighting actually began. First, the South Korean troops discovered that the strength of the invading North Korean army, especially the power of the Russian-made tanks, was completely beyond their calculations. Second, the quick abandonment of Seoul by the ROK government shocked most Koreans and disappointed many foreign diplomats in Seoul. Third, the swift action of the United States to send American troops to defend the Pusan Perimeter upset the plans of the North. The focus of this section is on examining how the United States government, the missionaries, and the churches responded to the outbreak of the war and how the religious factor emerged as the key "selling point" in defending the US military intervention to the American people.

#### *The Attack on June 25, 1950*

On June 25, 1950, at 4:00 AM on a Sunday morning, while a third of ROK officers were in Seoul for a special gathering and half of the Korean soldiers were on

leave to harvest their crops, the North Koreans launched an all-fronts attack along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. The first shot was fired on the Ongjin Peninsula and the fighting quickly spread to six other major points along the border. After five hours of intense fighting, the city of Kaesŏng, once the ancient capital of Koryŏ, was in Communist hands.<sup>101</sup> Five Methodist missionaries living in the city, and one missionary visitor from Seoul, became the first group of Americans captured by the North Korean soldiers.<sup>102</sup> Their internment served as a rallying cry among American religious groups, who wished to locate their whereabouts and sought their release throughout the Korean War.

News of the assault, sent by the Korea Military Advisory Group (KMAG), reached General MacArthur's office in Tokyo within two hours of the attack. Hours later, he also received a chain of telegrams from Ambassador John J. Muccio in Seoul, forwarding President Rhee's pleas for arms and ammunition. In his first complete report to Washington, MacArthur warned, "Enemy effort serious in strength and strategic intent and is undisguised act of war subject to United Nations censure."<sup>103</sup> Even before directions from Washington arrived, MacArthur ordered General Walton H. Walker, the Commander of the US Eighth Army, to load the MSTs *Keathley* with ammunition and mortars to send to the ROK troops so long as they had the ability to use them.<sup>104</sup>

Dulles rushed from Kyoto to Tokyo to meet with MacArthur as soon as he heard the news of the invasion. The general, however, expressed confidence and downplayed the attack, telling Dulles that it was just "a bonfire" and that soon "the North Korean

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<sup>101</sup> Quoted in Schnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year*, 65.

<sup>102</sup> For the details of their imprisonment, see Larry Zellers, *In Enemy Hands: A Prisoner in North Korea* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991).

<sup>103</sup> Quoted in Schnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year*, 65.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

tanks would run out of gas.”<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, Dulles’ own recent observations of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel had convinced him that the situation was more dire than MacArthur had admitted. That evening, Dulles and his assistant from the State Department, John M. Allison, sent a telegram to Washington, stating their strong belief that if the South Koreans could not repulse the attack, “US force should be used even though this risks Russian counter moves.” They suggested that it was possible to ask for UN intervention through the Security Council under Article 106.<sup>106</sup>

### *Washington’s Response*

To Dulles’ delight, Truman responded to the outbreak of the Korean War swiftly. Informed by his Secretary of State Dean Acheson, the President, who was on a weekend visit to his hometown, authorized the State Department to bring the problem immediately to the UN Security Council. Hurrying back to Washington approximately 20 hours after the attack, Truman met with his top advisers from the State Department and the Pentagon. Secretary Acheson was convinced that the Soviet Union was behind the attack and that “to back away from this challenge” would damage the prestige of the United States. Therefore, he concluded that the United States “could not accept the conquest of this important area by a Soviet puppet.”<sup>107</sup> Most officials believed that Korea was the place where the United States had to take a stand against the Soviets. Acheson, in particular, advocated taking a clear stand in Korea because he believed that US inaction would jeopardize the Western Alliance in Europe.<sup>108</sup> The President agreed, but cautioned that

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<sup>105</sup> Robert H. Ferrell, “Dulles, John Foster 1888-1959,” *Historical Dictionary of the Korean War* ed. by James I. Matray (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 146.

<sup>106</sup> “Korea: Summary of Actions and Decisions, June 24-25,” *Korea Project of the Division of Historical Policy Research*, RG 59 General Records of the Department of State, Lot Files 78/D174, National Archives.

<sup>107</sup> Acheson as quoted in Wingrove, “Who Started Korea?” *History Today* 7 (July 2000): 44.

<sup>108</sup> Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 507.

the United States “had to meet [the Communists’] thrust without getting embroiled in a world-wide war.”<sup>109</sup> The President then sent the Far East Air Force (FEAF) to assist in the evacuation of American civilians to Japan. The Air Force was authorized to destroy enemy tanks if necessary during the evacuation process. Truman also ordered General MacArthur to send a survey group, headed by Brig. General John H. Church, to Korea and to provide ammunition and military supplies to the South Koreans.

From the beginning, the President made it clear to his advisers that the United States would wait for the resolution of the United Nations before acting because he believed that the Korean question was the responsibility of the United Nations. The United States should react as a firm supporter of the United Nations. Immediately after this meeting, the State Department stepped into high gear, preparing a draft resolution recommending a police force from all UN member states to restore the international boundary between the two Koreas. During the second Blair House meeting a day later, the President authorized the Far Eastern Air Force to attack all North Korean tanks, guns, military columns and other military targets south of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. He also ordered the Navy to guard South Korea against invading forces.

On June 27, when the UN Security Council passed its resolution condemning the North Korean attack and urging its members to aid the South, following Secretary Dean Acheson’s suggestion, Truman ordered the Seventh Fleet to neutralize the Taiwan Strait.<sup>110</sup> This order effectively blocked the advance of Chinese Communists and frustrated their plans to launch an assault upon Taiwan in August. Step by step, the United States was drawing itself deeper into the Korean conflict. By June 30, US

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<sup>109</sup> Truman as quoted in Wingrove, “Who Started Korea?” 44.

<sup>110</sup> Isaacson and Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made*, 508.

involvement was official. Alarmed at the rapid collapse of South Korean defenses, Truman committed US ground troops to defend the Pusan Perimeter. Otherwise, the last foothold on the Korean peninsula would have been lost. Naturally, South Koreans welcomed the President's decision to confront the crisis in East Asia.

### *"Operation Highball"*

President Truman's evacuation order reached the American Embassy in Seoul on June 26 (Korean time). Ambassador Muccio immediately broadcasted the codeword "*Highball*" over the army radio station, WVTP. American civilians in Seoul had been instructed to listen for this word and then assemble at the American Embassy, bringing only small hand-carried items.<sup>111</sup> The General Headquarters in Tokyo had drawn up the evacuation plan, named CHOW CHOW, in July 1949. The American military estimated that North Korean forces needed about four days to overrun the Seoul-Inch'ŏn area.<sup>112</sup> In the evacuation plan, Inch'ŏn and Pusan were the primary evacuation ports.

In June 1950, more than fifteen hundred Americans lived in Korea. The majority of them were families of military personnel from the American Mission in Korea (AMIK). Others were employees of the State Department, Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), and United States Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea (KMAG) installations. About three hundred were missionaries and their dependants. While most Americans lived in Seoul, American missionaries were spread

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<sup>111</sup> The term "highballing" meant getting away as quickly as possible.

<sup>112</sup> Schnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year*, 71.

out in major cities on the peninsula. They also were to be evacuated, but would need to find their own means of getting to one of the evacuation ports.<sup>113</sup>

Inauspiciously, the Northern Presbyterian Mission was having its annual conference at the beautiful Taech'ŏn Beach, about 135 miles from Seoul (see Map 5), when the war broke out. The eighty Americans present at the meeting were unaware of their danger because the beach had neither electricity nor telephone service. The closest telegraph was eight miles away, in the town of Taech'ŏn. Knowing that an evacuation order was imminent, Bob Kinney, who worked for the US embassy, drove to the beach through the rain and darkness because his wife, his mother-in-law, and his three children were at the conference.<sup>114</sup> He awoke some of the missionaries in the middle of the night and a patrol was set up to watch the resort perimeter. In the morning, Frank Barnhart, another embassy worker and the son of a former YMCA secretary in Korea, arrived with news of Operation "Highball" and the evacuation of civilians, mainly women and children in Seoul.<sup>115</sup>

Since they could not get back to Seoul for evacuation, the missionaries at Taech'ŏn Beach decided to head south to Pusan. At eleven o'clock in the morning of June 26, they headed for Pusan with three rented trucks, five jeeps, two jeep trailers and two station wagons.<sup>116</sup> They first headed to Taejŏn, about 85 miles away, in the hopes of catching a train to Pusan. It was a slow and painful journey, traveling at 10 miles per hour over rough countryside. Upon reaching Taejŏn, they discovered that most

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<sup>113</sup> The American military was also responsible for evacuating other foreign diplomats and residences, excluding the Chinese (and unclear as to the situation of the White Russians). See Harold Joyce Noble, *Embassy at War* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1975), 21-23.

<sup>114</sup> Letter from John C Smith, 30 June 1950, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 32.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

Americans had already left. Hearing rumors that the Korean People's Army (KPA) had landed on the east coast at P'ohang to disrupt road and rail traffic, the missionaries opted to drive over the mountains to Taegu in the middle of the night. Dr. John C. Smith, the Presbyterian Foreign Mission Secretary from the United States, described this 120-mile journey as the worst travel he had ever experienced, having to abandon most of their luggage as they fought against numerous punctures, repeated breakdowns and over 25 washed-out bridges. After 14 hours of struggle, they arrived at Taegu Mission Station, one of the large mission stations in Korea.

Their ordeal was more than a memorable adventure; it would have ramifications in the years to come. Because they were not evacuated from Seoul, these missionaries still had a choice of whether to stay in Korea or retreat to Japan as most other missionaries had done. Those who chose to stay behind would not only represent the concern of the American churches, but also give valuable services to facilitate the UN effort to save South Korea. Those who stayed behind included Rev. Harry Hill, Rev. John Underwood, Horace Underwood, Rev. Edward (Ned) Adams, Rev. Arch Campbell, and Rev. Fran Kinsler. Their wives also wished to stay, but the group would not allow them to, arguing that "the men who remained must have mobility and in addition that the presence of American women in a theater of war would be a serious handicap to any government."<sup>117</sup> While the rest of the group proceeded to Pusan for evacuation, the Underwood brothers and Rev. Harry Hill drove back to Ch'ungju (Ch'öngju) (see Map 5), where Rev. Hill and Rev. John Underwood lived.

In Pusan, the majority of the Northern Presbyterian Mission boarded the *Lone Star State* and left for Fukuoka, Japan, on June 28 at two o'clock in the morning (see

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 33.

Map 6). Before they departed, the group gave all their Korean money to Rev. Edward Adams, the Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Presbyterian Korea Mission. The total amount of this special offering was “over half a million won, almost completely filling one pillow case.”<sup>118</sup> The missionaries would soon put this money to use by starting their first private relief effort of the Korea War.

Meanwhile, the Southern Presbyterian missionaries were having their annual conference in Chŏnju (see Map 5). As soon they heard the news of a North Korean attack, they began to prepare for evacuation to Japan (about 60 people, including women and children).<sup>119</sup> The mission executive committee decided that mothers and children had to leave first, but a skeleton crew of men and a few single female missionaries remained to take care of the two major Southern Presbyterian Mission Stations in Chŏnju and Kwangju for as long as possible (see Table 5.3). Eventually, these two groups of missionaries, except Miss Florence Root, were all evacuated safely to Pusan on July 16, when the People’s Army advanced forcefully into the Chŏlla region. Miss Root was protected by a group of Korean Christians, whom she called “the organization,” living in mountain villages in South Chŏlla Province.<sup>120</sup> She survived the ordeal miraculously because of their help. Some of them died in order to protect her.

In Wŏnju, three female Methodist missionaries, Esther Laird, Sadie Maude Moore, and Mary Jane Spindlow, were serving in a nursery in the city. Hearing of the war from an army sergeant, they left for Pusan on June 26, because they were not sure they could get to Inch’ŏn harbor in time. Driving their station jeep, these three American women

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Letter from Robert Knox, 2 July 1950, Presbyterian Church (U.S.) Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

<sup>120</sup> George Thompson Brown, *Mission to Korea* (USA: Board of World Missions, Presbyterian Church U.S., 1962), 190.

undertook a long and dangerous journey over unknown terrain. Fortunately, they evaded the Communist guerrillas in the mountains along their route and made it safely to Taegu late that night.<sup>121</sup>

The Koreans in Taegu assured these ladies that the Communists would be driven back, but the American soldiers of the KMAG told the missionaries to hurry on to Pusan because Seoul was about to fall and the North Koreans might have landed somewhere else on the east coast. So they moved on to Pusan, in spite of Esther Laird's case of food poisoning. From Pusan, they boarded the *Jesse Lykes* for Fukuoka on June 28.<sup>122</sup>

Back in Seoul, most of the missionaries from different denominations, mainly women and children, and other American civilians were evacuated by the Embassy to Inch'ŏn and sailed for Japan. The Catholic missionaries, however, were determined to stay. The only commercial freighter that could be used for immediate transport was a Norwegian fertilizer ship, the *SS Reinholt*, that had anchored in Inch'ŏn. It normally carried twelve passengers, but on the afternoon of June 26, it took on 682 evacuees. The stench of nitrate fertilizer made the two-day journey to Fukuoka almost unbearable.

Rev. William E. Shaw, a senior missionary who had served in P'yŏngyang in the 1930s, wanted, as did some of the other male missionaries, to stay longer in Seoul once their families were safely away. However, on the next day, all Americans in Seoul were ordered to evacuate by air immediately.<sup>123</sup> Rev. Shaw drove all over Seoul to gather up

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<sup>121</sup> Letter from Esther Laird, 10 July 1950, Missionary Collection 4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Korea Letter #1, 23 July 1950, Church and Society, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

the remaining missionaries and then headed to Kimp'o Airport, about twenty miles away. As they drove, they were "strafed by machine-gun fire" from enemy planes.<sup>124</sup>

At Kimp'o, there were about 360 people waiting for departure, but only five C-54 transport planes were available. Each plane could only take sixty people. No baggage was allowed and thus a large amount of luggage was left behind at the airport, but there were still thirty-six men left standing on the runway, including Rev. Shaw.<sup>125</sup> At 7:30 that evening, one of those planes unexpectedly returned. Without even stopping its engines, the C-54 evacuated the last group of men to Tokyo.<sup>126</sup> Most of the missionaries found refuge in Japan and continued their missionary activities among the Korean populations there.<sup>127</sup> In the end, when Seoul fell into the hands of the Communists, thirty foreign Christian workers, mostly Catholics who refused to be evacuated, were captured by the Korean People's Army (see Table 5.4).

Although the missionaries who had evacuated were physically outside Korea, they continued to exert an influential role on the war relief effort. First, they organized relief collections in Japan. Second, under Rev. Shaw's leadership, they published an interdenominational newsletter called "Korea Letter" to circulate in American churches. Their goal was to supply the latest information on Korea that was provided by the "stay-behind" missionaries to stir up public interest in the Korean War. Third, some of these missionaries, having served in World War II, reenlisted in the American military as a means of finding their way back to Korea. Fourth, those who had returned to the United States performed a more direct role in publicity. Supported by their denominations, some

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Letter – Movement of Missionaries, 10 July 1950, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 19.

of them traveled across the United States to give lectures and seminars, speaking out for the cause in Korea. They also wrote articles for church journals and the secular press, thereby encouraging public sentiment for the support of nationwide relief for the Korean churches and the American military operation in Korea.

### *The Conditions in Seoul from June 25 to June 28*

In spite of their difficult and dangerous journey, the missionaries who escaped to Japan fared better than most of the Korean populace. The majority of Koreans were kept in the dark about the true war situation. The ROK government had no plans to evacuate the citizens of Seoul. Only top government officials, such as the President and other ministers, were able to leave before the army destroyed the Han River Bridge to prevent the Russian tanks from crossing.

The speed of the North Korean advance surprised many. With the war just two days old, Seoul was already teetering. The blame for this situation fell squarely on American shoulders for failing to equip the ROK army with even basic defensive weapons. American anti-tank guns were completely useless against the Soviet T-34. What made it worse was the fact that most ROK soldiers did not have sufficient antitank training due to the rapid expansion of the ROK army from 1948 to 1950. Some had never even seen a tank. ROK troops were struck with fear when they first saw the enemy tanks and discovered the ineffectiveness of their weapons. Some simply turned their backs and ran when they heard the word "tank."<sup>128</sup> Outnumbered, outgunned, and deprived of their best soldiers, the morale of the ROK army quickly deteriorated. Most of the troops lost their capacity to fight. The ROK commanders of the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Divisions had no option but to retreat.

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<sup>128</sup> Paik, *From Pusan to Panmunjom*, 7.

Under the leadership of Colonel Paek Sŏn-yŏp, the ROK 1<sup>st</sup> Division (also known as the Capital Division), however, defended their position bravely, not knowing that the other defense lines along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel had already collapsed. The 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division was able to hold their ground for one day by sending suicide teams to destroy the Russian tanks. The loss was huge, but it bought precious time for the 1<sup>st</sup> Division to regroup after the loss of Kaesŏng. Colonel Paek set up a new defense line in Munsan, when the effort to retake Munsan Salient failed. The 1<sup>st</sup> Division retreated to the line of linchpin and asked Seoul for reinforcement. General Ch'ae Pyŏng-dŏk, the ROK chief of staff, ordered the 1<sup>st</sup> Division to hold their ground and fight to the death if necessary. Unlike other Division commanders who later retreated in spite of the order of General Ch'ae, Colonel Paek followed Ch'ae's direction. What Colonel Paek did not know was that shortly after receiving Ch'ae's order, Seoul fell into the hands of the North Koreans when the People's Army broke through the defense of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division at Ŭijŏngbu (see Map 5). As a result, the 1<sup>st</sup> Division (with about 10,000 ROK soldiers) was trapped and left to be annihilated. The condition of Colonel Paek's troops was further weakened when a misinformed U.S. pilot mistook the 1<sup>st</sup> Division for the North Korean troops and bombed the ROK position, causing many more deaths. Without any other options, Colonel Paek ordered the 1<sup>st</sup> Division to withdraw to the south of the Han River, hoping to preserve the 1<sup>st</sup> Division from complete destruction.<sup>129</sup>

The experience of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division revealed the lack of coordination of the ROK government in facing the attack. Military orders were inconsistent and communication between commanders and the headquarters in Seoul was poor. Initially, Rhee had planned to remain in the city to boost the morale of the soldiers and to inspire citizens to

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 7-15.

defend the capital, but the hopelessness of the situation discouraged him from staying. His cabinet members feared for their own lives and thus urged Rhee to leave the city immediately. They argued that Rhee needed to preserve his life to lead the long term battle against North Korea. Against Ambassador Muccio's advice, Rhee decided to flee Seoul on June 26.

The ROK government kept the news of Rhee's departure from the citizens of Seoul, which was about one and one-half million people, because officials feared that a negative report would create chaos and affect the morale of the soldiers at the front. An official ROK radio broadcast provided false assurances to listeners. The bureaucracy in Seoul was left alone to help itself, receiving no clear direction on how to handle the crisis. By June 27, when the people finally realized that the North Korean army had reached the suburbs of Seoul, it was too late for the majority to get out, especially after the Han River Bridge had been hastily destroyed by the ROK army.

When Ambassador Muccio saw that the ROK government had given up the defense of Seoul, he ordered the evacuation of all American Embassy personnel. Bringing a few key embassy workers with him, Muccio flew to Suwŏn to meet with Brig. General John H. Church and fourteen other officers representing MacArthur's survey team.<sup>130</sup> As a testament to America's unpreparedness, the embassy was abandoned in such haste that they left behind "\$4.5 million in personal effects, not counting vehicles, \$100,000 worth of food, and \$40,000 worth of duty-free liquor in the commissary – and a considerable number of documents including personnel records."<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> For the details of the US embassy response, see Noble, *Embassy at War*, 36.

<sup>131</sup> Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 364.

### *The Response of American Churches*

Getting the news of a North Korean attack from the missionaries and ROK officials, Protestant church leaders gathered together for prayers. Rev. Han Kyöng-jik, the pastor of Yöngnak Church, met with Dr. Namgung Hyök, the Executive Secretary of Korea National Council of Churches (KNCC). They decided that the KNCC should wire President Truman in Washington, General MacArthur in Tokyo, and the International Missionary Council in New York requesting immediate assistance.<sup>132</sup> On June 26 (American time), Mr. Charles W. Ranson of the International Missionary Council received Dr. Namgung's telegram, and another from C. Y. Hwang of the Salvation Army. They urged American churches to use their influence to mobilize the United States to support South Korea.<sup>133</sup>

Responding to the Korean appeal immediately, on June 27, the Methodist Board, the Presbyterian Board, and the Foreign Mission Conference of North America sent telegrams to the State Department, urging the United States government to support the measures already taken by the United Nations.<sup>134</sup> To pacify these church groups, the State Department responded by sending a staff member, Niles W. Bond, to provide information on the evacuation process that was then underway in Seoul and Pusan. On June 27 (American Time), the Foreign Mission Conference of North America called for a meeting with the Board secretaries from various denominations and religious

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<sup>132</sup> Letter from Rev. Kyung-chik Han, 12 August 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 37 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>133</sup> Letter from Rowland M. Cross, 27 June 1950, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 1.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

organizations with interests in Korea. At the meeting, they decided to mobilize financial and prayer support for those missionaries who volunteered to remain in Korea.<sup>135</sup>

Saving the Korean Christians from the hands of Communist persecution would become a major theme within Western churches throughout the war years. Dr. Thoburn T. Brumbaugh, secretary of the Methodist Board of Foreign Missions, wrote an article entitled "Disaster to Missions in Korea."<sup>136</sup> He told his Methodist readers that, since the democratic developments within Korea were the direct result of the Christian movement, American Christians should use whatever means they could to keep the Korean church alive. The position of American Christians, according to Brumbaugh, should not only be to pray earnestly for Korea, but also to "give of [their] resources to strengthen the morale of those who [were] striving still to hold high the banner of Christian enlightenment in that unfortunate land."<sup>137</sup>

American church leaders also appealed for moral support from the World Council of Churches (WCC). On July 13, 1950, the Central Committee of the WCC denounced the North Korean attack as "an act of aggression" and called for support of the UN police action.<sup>138</sup> In particular, the WCC supported the unification of Korea by the United Nations, arguing that "every opportunity which [might] arise from the present tragic situation must be used to gain this end."<sup>139</sup> Even though the statement issued by the WCC recognized that "atomic and bacteriological weapons and obliteration bombing

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<sup>135</sup> Letter from Rowland M. Cross to Member Boards of the Korea Committee, 27 June 1950, *Document of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 3.

<sup>136</sup> Thoburn T. Brumbaugh, "Disaster to Missions in Korea," *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 18.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> This statement was adopted unanimously with the exception of the call for a police measure of the UN. Two members out of 45 conscientiously opposed the use of military force.

<sup>139</sup> "Korean Situation and World Order," Approved by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, 13 July 1950, Toronto, Canada, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 22.

[involved] force and destruction of life on so terrible a scale,” it did not rule out their use. Instead the WCC formally denounced the “Stockholm Appeal” as “a strategy of propaganda,” since it only demanded the outlawing of atomic weapons without providing any suggestions for effective international inspection and control.<sup>140</sup> Such a position taken by the WCC faced serious objection from the Communist-controlled Protestant churches in Eastern Europe. Many representatives from Communist countries boycotted the WCC to demonstrate their discontent.

Back in the United States, the Federal Council of Churches of Christ (FCCC) stood behind the WCC’s position and mobilized the Christian community to support the defense of South Korea. Meanwhile, Washington officials also courted the support of religious groups because they understood that presenting a just cause and maintaining the moral high ground were keys to stirring public favor for a major military operation in Korea. In John Foster Dulles, the Truman administration found the ideal champion for the war effort: a man who was capable, bi-partisan, and popular in religious circles.

After his brief visit to East Asia, Dulles took a keen personal interest in the defense of South Korea, and held strong opinions on how the US should respond. According to Ambassador Chang, Dulles felt personally responsible for the well being of Korea, because of his remarks to the National Assembly. Upon returning to the States, Dulles began to campaign for the Korean cause. On July 1, 1950, a day after the United States had committed ground troops, Dulles gave an interview to CBS. He described his experiences in Seoul the following way:

This Republic of Korea was attracting a constant stream of refugees from the north who wanted to escape from Communist despotism. Just two weeks ago tonight at this very hour, I was meeting at Seoul with a group of 3,000 Christian refugees from the north.

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 23.

We were in a great new church which was in [the] process of construction. I talked to the refugees through an interpreter and I have never seen men and women more clearly dedicated to Christian principles. The Communists seem to have felt that they could not tolerate this hopeful, attractive Asiatic experiment in democracy. They had found that they could not destroy it by indirect aggression, because the political, economic, and social life of the Republic was so sound that subversive efforts, which had been tried, had failed. The people were loyal to their Republic. Therefore, if this experiment in human liberty was to be crushed, this could only be done by armed attack. That is what is being attempted.<sup>141</sup>

Dulles had met many groups in Korea and had seen many things, so why did he mention this particular experience with the refugee Christians in such detail, even though he only stayed with them briefly? There were two possible explanations. First, this refugee church was surely very fervent and must have made a powerful impression upon Dulles. Second, speaking on behalf of the administration, he was looking to justify US intervention to the American people, so that the Korean War should not be viewed as merely a civil war, but as a war for freedom and human liberty.

In a meeting concerning US actions in Korea with several representatives from different Protestant denominations on July 17, Dulles told them that the Republic of Korea, after a shaky start, had become a promising experiment because the new elections in May 1950 had shown democratic vigor.<sup>142</sup> His view on the democratic progress of the ROK government was positive, despite the various charges that Syngman Rhee had used repressive measures against leftists in South Korea. He avoided commenting on Rhee. Instead, he emphasized the achievement of the Christian community in leading the Korean democratic movement by exaggerating the percentage of Christians in the South Korean National Assembly. He stated that one fourth of elected representatives in the Assembly were Christians, while the actual number was about 19 percent rather than 25

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<sup>141</sup> "Speech: Re. Korea and Japan, CBS Broadcast," 1 July 1950, John Foster Dulles Papers, Speech, Statement, Press Conference, etc: 1950 January to August, Box 301, Seeley Mudd Library.

<sup>142</sup> "Confidential Notes on Interview (Not to be attributed in any public manner)," 21 July 1950 *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 46.

percent. His emphasis on the influence of Christianity was due to his belief that Korean Communists were jealous of the rapid Christianization of South Korea. The success of Christianity in the South, Dulles argued, was “an additional factor in the [North Korean] attack.”<sup>143</sup>

Dulles further developed his religious interpretation of the Korean War in his article, “To Save Humanity from the Deep Abyss,” published in the *New York Times Magazine* on July 30, 1950. He again mentioned his meeting with Christian refugees and argued that Korea was worthy of the blood of Americans because it was a land of freedom and religious liberty. The Korean War was a “great cause” because it was a battle to “preserve human liberty” and “to extend liberty by gradually releasing the captive peoples.”<sup>144</sup>

Judging by Western standards of democracy, South Korea was hardly a truly democratic state and Rhee’s regime was not a very democratic government. In fact, the majority of South Koreans had very little understanding and limited experience of democracy. Rhee’s stern anti-Communist stand and repressive policies might have alienated him from American liberals, but perhaps gained him more friends among leading American anti-Communists. In a decade when most Americans had very limited access to Asia, especially Korea, and when Korean experts were rare even within in the US government, Dulles’ interpretation might have earned more sympathetic ears for Korea than Rhee’s publicity men in Washington. The Gallup Poll did not conduct a public survey on whether or not the United States should intervene in the Korean War,

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> John Foster Dulles, “To Save Humanity from the Deep Abyss,” *New York Times Magazine*, 30 July 1950. The article can be found in John Foster Dulles Papers (MC#016), Korea Box 48, Folder: Korea 1950, Seeley Mudd Library.

but the majority of the American people gave their approval when they heard that the United States would send troops to save South Korea. Almost everyone inside and outside the US government agreed that the United States had to intervene to save South Korea from the Communists. The support was so overwhelming that Truman's administration did not bother to get any formal congressional resolution or declaration of war before sending US troops to Korea.<sup>145</sup>

### *CONCLUSION*

In the contest between the North and the South, Korean Communists won the first round with the help of Soviet weapons. Nevertheless, the attack was a disappointment in many ways, despite the fall of Seoul. For one, the ROK army was not destroyed and it eventually regrouped at Pusan. For another, despite Kim Il-sung's belief that America had limited interest in defending Korea, US troops were sent quickly to help hold the Pusan Perimeter.

Prior to the attack, South Korea gained two friends for its causes. The first one was Rev. Bob Pierce. His nine-week visit in April and May drew him closer than ever to Korea. He became a key religious actor who crossed the Pacific Ocean back and forth throughout the Korean War period, bringing crucial information to shape the American perception of Korea. The second one was John Foster Dulles. His one-week stay in Seoul gave him a new perspective on the Korean cause. He had been sympathetic to South Korea before he arrived, but because of the influence of American missionaries and Korean church leaders, he began to interpret the Korean War from a religious perspective. The religious factor affected the perspective of these two men on Korean

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<sup>145</sup> Isaacson and Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made*, 509.

affairs and in the next three years, they fought for the interests of Korea by using their political and religious influence. Joining hands with the “stay-behind” missionaries, the evacuated mission personnel, and American church leaders, they gave life to the religious factor that eventually shaped the development of the Korean War.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Missionaries and Christians Living in the War Zone**

#### *INTRODUCTION*

Just as the decision in Washington to send American troops to Korea was a crucial moment for the survival of Syngman Rhee's government, the decision of seventeen American missionaries to remain in Korea had a great impact on the preservation of Korean Christianity and the development of Korean-American relations. The Christian experience during the Korean War consisted of two aspects. The first aspect was the missionaries' experiences in UN controlled areas, and the second aspect was the experiences of the Christian community in the North Korean-controlled areas. Although the Korean War was not about religion, religion was a crucial factor that dominated the survival of many who were trapped by the war. In Communist-occupied areas, whether one lived or died was often related to the religious affiliation and the ideological leanings of an individual.

#### *MISSIONARIES AT WAR*

When the evacuation call went out, the majority of foreign missionaries fled to Japan, some retreated to within the Pusan Perimeter (a total of sixteen Presbyterian missionaries), and some chose to stay behind in the North Korean-occupied areas (Florence Root and other Catholic priests and nuns). The most influential of these groups would be the missionaries in the Pusan Perimeter, because those in Japan would have

difficulty returning, while those who did not evacuate soon fell into Communist hands and became civilian internees (see Table 6.1).<sup>1</sup>

Missionaries within American-held areas would serve as important liaisons between American troops and Korean civilians, providing crucial support for the survival of Korean Christianity. Some of them were attached to the US military, eating with the officers in the mess halls, serving side-by-side with foot soldiers, flying reconnaissance with commanding officers, and leading worship services for US troops, Korean soldiers, and civilians. Their footprints could be found in every corner of the UN-controlled region. As the level of American involvement expanded, so did the number of missionaries in the war zone, with many evacuees finding their way back through military or diplomatic channels. Collaborating with South Korean Christians, the emergency relief program established by these missionaries eased the burden of the Korean local governments and saved the lives of many refugees.

Among them, Horace G. Underwood (also known as Hedge Underwood) was the most significant. Underwood's service throughout the Korean War can be divided into three periods: the early stage with the 24<sup>th</sup> Division, the middle stage with the X Corps, and the final stage with the Negotiation Team in Panmunjom. This section covers the first two periods of his service. Using Underwood's journey in Korea as a guide, this section explores the full extent of missionary activities during the initial stage of the Korean War, and examines their contributions to the war and relief efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> See Larry Zellers, *In Enemy Hands: A Prisoner in North Korea* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991).

*Civilians in the US Military*

As soon as Horace Underwood sent his family and fellow mission workers to Pusan in late June 1950, he drove back to Taejŏn with his brother John, an ordained minister, and his missionary friend, Rev. Harry Hill. The three men were looking for ways to assist their Korean friends to win the war. Rev. Hill and Rev. John Underwood decided to head back to Ch'ŏngju, where their mission station was located. Horace Underwood, however, could not return to Seoul because the city had been cut off by the destruction of the Han River Bridge. ROK troops, led by Brig. General Yu Chae-hung, the commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division, were fighting fiercely to keep North Korean forces from crossing the Han River.<sup>2</sup>

Having no mission station to return to, Horace Underwood therefore decided to look for his friends in the ROK government, hoping that he might be able to offer his help in the defense of South Korea. When Underwood arrived at Taejŏn on June 29, he found Dr. Paek Nak-chun (George Paik), an ordained pastor and a well-known Christian educator, who served as both the president of Yonsei University and the minister of education in the ROK government.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Paek arranged for him to meet with Gen. Chŏng Il-kwŏn, who had just returned from the United States in order to serve as the new ROK army chief of staff. Chŏng advised Underwood to find General John H. Church, who was the head of the US military survey group, and offer his expertise to assist the US Army.

Nevertheless, no one seemed to know the exact location of the survey team. Driving his jeep north for miles, Underwood embarked on a dangerous search for the American military while the war waged along the Han River. He first left for Suwŏn to

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<sup>2</sup> Harold Joyce Noble, *Embassy at War* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1975), 71-72.

<sup>3</sup> Horace G. Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace: The Recollections of Horace G. Underwood*, ed. Michael J. Devine (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2001), 136.

look for the general, and then searched again in Taejŏn after hearing that the group had evacuated southward due to the collapse of the Han defense line.<sup>4</sup> At that time, the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division led by Lt. Colonel Charles B. Smith (also known as Task Force Smith) had arrived at Pusan, and was making its way northward to defend Osan, hoping to delay the advance of the North Korean troops.

After days of searching without success, around July 2 Underwood found Major General William F. Dean, who had just moved into Taejŏn to set up the headquarters of the 24<sup>th</sup> Division. General Dean immediately invited him to his division (Underwood did not have any formal military commission in the US Army at that point, but simply remained “attached” to the 24<sup>th</sup> Division until August).<sup>5</sup> After the Battle of Osan (July 5) and the defeat of Task Force Smith, American troops made a full retreat to Ch’ŏnan. By July 10, the Kŭm River became the new defensive line of Taejŏn (see Map 1). Underwood became the first American missionary to fight alongside American troops on the front line, helping to defend Taejŏn against the advancing North Korean Army.

Underwood had no clear job description within the 24<sup>th</sup> Division because he was merely an attached civilian. He was not required to do any actual fighting, but only to assist the troops in whatever ways he could. However, his services were gladly welcomed by the 24<sup>th</sup> Division. This special position made him a useful liaison for the stay-behind missionaries and other Korean Christian workers. He was able to arrange accommodation and meals for them while they were taking refuge in overcrowded Taejŏn city.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

These stay-behind missionaries soon proved their usefulness to the war effort. Underwood asked his younger brother, Rev. John, who had fled from Ch'öngju, to guide some of the Army scouts in the Taejön area.<sup>6</sup> Being a missionary in Ch'öngju, Rev. John was very familiar with the Osan-Ch'öngju-Taejön region due to his frequent visits to the local churches in the countryside. Because army scouts lacked accurate maps, in addition to their lack of experience, intelligence information, and language skills, Rev. John's help proved invaluable for several critical days.<sup>7</sup> After the Taejön defense collapsed on July 18, Rev. John then moved on to offer relief services to refugees, constantly driving his jeep all over the Pusan Perimeter.

Underwood also worked closely with US troops and their commanders. He fought, ate, and bathed with the foot soldiers in the 24<sup>th</sup> Division (and later the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry).<sup>8</sup> With the Taejön defenses collapsing, the deputy commander of the Division, Brigadier General Pearson Menoher, took Underwood with him to Yöngdong, where a new headquarters was to be established. Underwood's mission in Yöngdong was to assist the retreating soldiers. Later, after accompanying the 24<sup>th</sup> Division to Yöngchon, he joined the "fire brigade" under General Church, who took over the command of the 24<sup>th</sup> Division following General Dean's capture. General Church's "fire brigade" was a special US mobile task force set up to rescue forces in different locations in order to defend the line along the Naktong River.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>7</sup> We do not know exactly how long John helped to guide the scouts, but it seems reasonable he did so during the days before and after the fall of Taejön.

<sup>8</sup> Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 137-138.

General Church often took Underwood with him on his flights within the Pusan Perimeter.<sup>9</sup> He probably used Underwood as his interpreter in meetings with ROK troops, and valued his advice on the defense of Pusan. Because of his close association with the troops and the officers, Underwood witnessed the unpreparedness of US troops and the tension between US soldiers and Korean civilians.<sup>10</sup> US Army morale was poor: Russian tanks were proving difficult to destroy, local guerrillas were constantly infiltrating the US army's positions, and American soldiers knew very little about Korea. Underwood's presence with the troops and his language skills helped to ease some of these tensions.

Underwood's informal service with the Army ended in early August when his request to come back on active duty in the Navy was accepted.<sup>11</sup> He was awarded the highest civilian honor, the Medal of Freedom, for his two months with the Army.<sup>12</sup> This medal recognizes civilians who make exceptional contributions to the security of the United States.<sup>13</sup>

Underwood was not alone in serving the US military as a civilian missionary during the first two months of war. Wherever a qualified interpreter was needed, missionaries would answer the call. On July 6, Rev. Francis Kinsler (Northern Presbyterian) went to Taegu as an interpreter for UN officials. The US Army also asked Rev. Harry Hill, who had lived in P'yŏngyang before World War II, to help them interrogate North Korean POWs, and to provide religious services to the war-weary US

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>11</sup> For these two months, Horace was supported by the Presbyterian Mission. He received no pay check from the US government. He applied for re-enlistment because he believed that it was "not right to go on working for the Army as a missionary." See *ibid.*, 140.

<sup>12</sup> The Medal of Freedom is also known as the Presidential Medal of Freedom. *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>13</sup> It is given by the President on the recommendation of the Distinguished Civilian Service Board for "exceptional meritorious contribution to the security of the United States or other significant public or private endeavors." See Norm Goldstein, ed., *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law* (New York: The Associated Press, 2004), 200-201.

troops.<sup>14</sup> In return, these missionaries were allowed to preach to North Korean prisoners and received informal logistical support from the US military. Rev. William Linton (Southern Presbyterian) and Rev. Kinsler also volunteered to help the US army chaplains by offering religious services to the US troops.<sup>15</sup> Because of the immediate needs of the war, missionaries who stayed behind had to play a double role -- both as loyal American citizens to the US government, and as ambassadors of mercy to suffering Korean refugees. They were kept very busy with their work among POWs, US troops, ROK soldiers, and refugees.

Up to this point, American missionaries received no compensation from the US government. Instead their salaries were still paid by American churches. The churches were willing to support them because they saw their presence in Korea as important to the preservation of Christian influence in Korea. They believed that missionary activities would facilitate the long-term collaboration between Korea and America in their battle to contain the spread of Communism. According to Dr. John C. Smith, the Secretary of the Presbyterian Foreign Mission to the Far East, the presence of the Presbyterian missionaries in the Pusan Perimeter was “very important to the future of the work in Korea” and crucial to the development of the Korean-American relationship. Smith promised to “push very hard” and “do everything” needed for full-scale relief work in Korea and for the return of missionaries.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Letter from Rev. Harry Hill, 22 August 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 14 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>15</sup> Letter from Mrs. (Charlotte) Linton to her children, 13 August 1950, in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

<sup>16</sup> Dr. John Smith’s letter to Ned Adams, 5 August 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 197, Box 1, Folder 2 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

Meanwhile, American military authorities in the war zone also understood that American missionaries and their Korean Christian friends were their best allies in Korea. In return, the military provided informal support to the missionaries, and allowed them some special freedoms in the defense perimeter, so long as they did not hinder the military effort. The close partnership between these missionaries and the US military gave them the clout that they would need to carry out their essential tasks among the refugees – something that native Korean preachers would not have been able to do.

### *Returning to Korea on a Military Ticket*

The uncertain war situation and the complications of logistical support, however, discouraged the immediate return of other missionaries.<sup>17</sup> The Army could not approve the return of civilian missionaries unless the tide of war turned in favor of UN forces and unless the applicants were able to guarantee their own supplies of food and shelter. Such demands were reasonable, given that the Army was straining to feed its own soldiers, and was fighting a losing battle in the defense of Pusan.<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless, these restrictions did not prevent some missionaries from finding various ways back into Korea. Since some of them, like Horace Underwood, had served the US military during World War II and the US occupation in Korea, the quickest way was for them to re-enlist. The Army was quick to approve their requests; with the memories of cooperation between the American Military Government (AMG) and the missionary community still fresh in the minds of many US commanders in the field, they knew that these missionaries' knowledge, skills, and expertise would help the war effort.

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<sup>17</sup> Letter from Harold Voelkel, 12 November 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

The first returnee from Tokyo was Dr. Howard Moffett, a Presbyterian medical missionary born in P'yŏngyang. Moffett held a commission as lieutenant in the Naval Medical Corps Reserve due to his service in World War II. After being evacuated to Tokyo with other US nationals, Moffett requested that he be given active duty status as a naval medical officer. His request was approved on July 27, 1950, by Vice Admiral Charles T. Joy, commander of US naval forces in the Far East.<sup>19</sup> His commission came quickly because of his medical skills and experience as a residence in Taegu, the Headquarters of the Eighth Army in the defense of the Pusan Perimeter. Since the Navy had no direct action within the Pusan Perimeter, and because his medical and language skills were badly needed inside Korea, Moffett was sent back to Taegu in an Air Force uniform instead. His job with the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force in the city was to manage the Taegu hospital, which he had run before the evacuation.<sup>20</sup> While the city was being subjected to heavy shelling by the North Koreans, Dr. Moffett remained from July to September to keep the hospital running, thereby saving countless American and Korean lives.

Horace Underwood's father, Dr. Horace H. Underwood, was with his youngest son, Richard, visiting family and friends in the United States when the war broke out on June 25, 1950. The news was brought to them through General Archibald Arnold, the ex-military governor of Korea, whom Dr. Underwood had worked closely with during the American occupation. Their friendship continued to grow even after the general's retirement. In fact, the Underwoods were attending worship service with the general that Sunday morning when he told them of the attack.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Religious New Service, 27 July 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>20</sup> Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 140.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Underwood, "Memories and Thoughts," (unpublished manuscripts, 2002), 78-79.

Hoping to find a way to return to Korea and lobby the U.S. government to save Korea from the invading army, the Underwoods drove down to Washington, D.C. from New York the following day. Dr. Underwood had friends in Congress and the Pentagon. With the help of Major General Thomas W. Herren, the commander of the Military District of Washington (MDW), who had previously been to Korea, Richard Underwood was quickly re-commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army intelligence service, waiving all the red tape of obtaining a new top-secret clearance.<sup>22</sup> He arrived in Pusan in mid-September and was immediately assigned to the Advance Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ADVATIS). His job was to interrogate North Korean POWs, in the town of Tongnae, east of Pusan (see Map 7).<sup>23</sup>

Shortly after Richard's arrival in Japan, Dr. Underwood also flew to Tokyo from the United States as a DAC (Department of the Army Civilian) advisor. According to Richard Underwood, his father's assignment in Korea was somewhat "mysterious" because, though he wore a DAC uniform, he had "no acknowledged assignment, and worse yet, no support in rations, quarters or even gasoline." His father had told him that his association with the military agency was supposed to be a secret so that no one would suspect him of having any connection with the US government.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, none of his sons knew exactly what he did in Korea for the US government.

Like Dr. Underwood, other older missionaries also tried to find ways to return through the Army civilian office. For example, while waiting in Tokyo, Rev. William Shaw (Methodist) and later Rev. Harold Voelkel (Northern Presbyterian), both of whom had worked in P'yŏngyang before World War II, applied to be civilian chaplains. The

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 79-80.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 91.

US Army hired them specifically to minister to South Korean troops and North Korean POWs. Their work among the ROK soldiers facilitated the establishment of a formal Chaplain Corps for the South Korean Army during the war.

It is important to note that most American denominations did not encourage their missionaries to formally join the US military during the war because they wanted to keep their staff ready for regular missionary work once the field was opened for re-entry. Nevertheless, they also recognized the difficulties of endless waiting, the desires of individual workers, and the potential benefit of having their people in the military. Once individuals made up their minds to join the military, their mission boards in the United States would support their decisions and continue to pay for their pensions even though the missionaries picked up their military assignments and received government paychecks. Except for those who worked on top-secret military projects, most of the civilian personnel were able to keep in close contact with their boards, and provide them with the latest war information. They also worked closely with other civilian missionaries to minister to the needs of the refugees, soldiers, and POWs.

### *REFUGEE PROBLEMS AND CHRISTIAN RELIEF EFFORTS*

There were not only battles along the frontlines between the two opposing armies, but also battles behind the lines against hunger and diseases. Many innocent people were forced to flee their homes or were caught in crossfire. War destroyed their homes and robbed them of their possessions. The destitute wandered around the south without food or shelter. Most able-bodied men were drafted into the war, while the women and

children were left to themselves, thus destroying the traditional family structure of Korean society.

The war also weakened traditional Korean religions, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shamanism. Their crippling lack of resources, effective nationwide organizations, and foreign connections proscribed them from offering extensive practical help to the dislocated masses over a prolonged period of time. Nevertheless, this humanitarian crisis was an unprecedented opportunity for the Christian churches. Despite being targeted by the Communists, and suffering great losses of leadership and materials following the fall of Seoul, the church soon rebounded with the help of the missionaries and their overseas funding. With the US military and American churches on their side, American missionaries were able to organize private relief services to cope with the mounting needs of the refugees. In the process, they also trained new leadership for the Korean churches. Throughout the war, the fame and influence of Christianity increased. This section explores how Korean Christians responded to the war and how missionaries and Christian workers gained influence and popularity through their immediate relief efforts.

#### *Christians' Initial Response to the Outbreak of the Korean War*

As soon as news of a northern invasion reached Christian clergymen in Seoul, most Christian ministers of the city met together to discuss the subject of helping refugees and aiding the soldiers. They declared June 27 a special day of prayer.<sup>25</sup> They prayed for the victory of the south and the preservation of Korean Christianity. The situation, however, deteriorated rapidly. By nightfall, most ROK government agencies

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<sup>25</sup> Letter from Rev. Kyung chik Han, 12 August 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 37 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

had stopped functioning because many officials had received instructions to flee south. As ROK troops withdrew, the danger of a Communist uprising within the city threatened the lives of many North Korean refugees and South Korean rightists.

While some native South Korean pastors and Catholic priests and nuns bravely decided not to desert their congregations in Seoul despite the danger, refugee Christians from North Korea sought every means of escape, because they saw no hope in staying behind. According to the testimony of Chang Sang, a young refugee girl from Sinŭiju, who decades later would become the President of Ewha University, her family and many Christian friends from the north chose to leave immediately because they feared that the local people might turn them in to Communist authorities in exchange for favors and food. Being outsiders, Chang explained, the refugees could not expect any help from the native southerners.<sup>26</sup> Hong U-jun (Hong Woo-jun), a homeless and young Christian refugee from P'yŏngyang, who later rose to become a millionaire and famous educator in postwar Korea, reached the same conclusion. His fiancée and her family urged him to leave Seoul because of his anti-Communist background.<sup>27</sup>

Of all people, refugee pastors had the strongest reason to flee, because most of them were blacklisted and hunted by the North as national traitors and potential trouble-makers. They knew that if they stayed, they would surely be arrested and possibly executed. On June 28, with the fall of Seoul inevitable, refugee pastors and their congregations began the trek south. Rev. Han Kyŏng-jik of the Yŏngnak Church, together with a group of refugee pastors and Christians, left Seoul at eleven in the

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<sup>26</sup> Allan R. Millett, *Their War for Korea: American, Asian, and European Combatants and Civilians 1945-1953* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2002), 25.

<sup>27</sup> Hong Woo-jun was the Vice-chairman of an underground anti-Communist youth league in P'yŏngyang, which had plotted to assassinate Kim Il-sung during the March First ceremony on March 1946. Donald B. Sheley, *Beggar At the Banquet* (San Bruno, CA: Donald B. Sheley, 1979), 25, 66.

morning. By the time they reached the Han River Bridge, they had to cross the river by small boats because ROK engineers under orders from General Ch'ae Pyŏng-dŏk, chief of staff of the ROK army, had destroyed the bridge earlier. Since the ROK had established its defenses along the southern bank of the Han, the army drove the refugees further south to Suwŏn.<sup>28</sup> Joining with the current of other refugees from Seoul, they began the slow march to Pusan.

### *The Influx of Refugees to the Southern Cities*

On their journey south, these Christian pastors traveled roads clogged with people in heart-wrenching agony. Everywhere orphans cried for their lost parents. Tired and weary refugees sat under the sun begging for food or a ride from passing vehicles. Many had had to flee Seoul in such haste that they had brought no food or supplies. Even a single bowl of rice soup or a simple shelter could make the difference between survival and death. Taejŏn was the worst of the refugee centers because it was located mid-way between Seoul and Taegu. It was overcrowded and had a severe food shortage. The suffering in Taegu was getting worse after the fall of Taejŏn, and Pusan was rapidly catching up, as refugees flooded into the city.

From July to August, approximately one million people took the road to Pusan. Feeding, clothing, and transporting these people was an impossible challenge for a South Korean government that needed all its resources for the war effort. At the same time, the government needed to find a solution before these crowds turned violent and brought internal disturbance to the southern provinces. Initially, provincial authorities turned local churches, temples, school buildings, factories, and department stores into temporary

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<sup>28</sup> Letter from Rev. Kyung chik Han, dated August 12, 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 37 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

refugee centers.<sup>29</sup> Sympathetic citizens offered what help they could. But these local relief efforts quickly collapsed as the North Korean army continued to advance, overrunning these relief centers, one by one. Those offering relief soon joined the ranks of those needing relief, as the ROK army continued to retreat. More and more people took to the roads as the North Korean army conquered more and more land. The national government was on the verge of collapse, the military situation was rapidly deteriorating, and the provincial governments had many other urgent needs besides feeding the multitudes.

The refugee problem became so serious that on July 22, Im Pyŏng-jik, minister of foreign affairs, sent a letter to Colonel Afred G. Katzin, the personal representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations in Korea, pleading for UN relief assistance.<sup>30</sup> The UN decided to offer help on July 31, 1950. But their organized relief effort did not actually start until October 1950, too late for those who perished in the interim. The situation continued to deteriorate throughout August, and on September 1, 1950, President Rhee sent a letter directly to General MacArthur asking for supplies of emergency food, clothes, and shelter for his people.<sup>31</sup> During the first three months of the war, massive organized relief programs did not exist. The only noticeable support came from private local charities, Christian churches, and the meager resources of the ROK government.

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<sup>29</sup> Letter from Mrs. (Charlotte) Linton to "folks," 10 September 1950, in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

<sup>30</sup> Letter from Ben Limb to Afred G. Katzin, 22 July 1950, 大韓民國史資料集 29 李承晚關係書翰資料集 *Taehanmingoksa jaryojip 29* (Documents of the History of the Republic of Korea Vol. 29: Syngman Rhee Collection) (1949-1950) (Seoul: 國史篇纂委員會 Guksapyeonchan wiwonhoe The Committee of National History Compilation), 327.

<sup>31</sup> 大韓民國史資料集 29 李承晚關係書翰資料集 (1949-1950), 338.

*Patriotic Relief Effort Initiated by Korean Christians*

Seeing that the country was in turmoil and that a major relief effort was needed among the homeless refugees, Christian clergymen took their own initiative to mobilize their congregations to support the nation's war effort. In Taejŏn, on July 3, Rev. Han Kyŏng-jik was able to gather a number of northern pastors, and formed the Save the Nation Christian Assembly (*Kidokkyo Kugukhae*) to promote and coordinate patriotic relief activities among Christians. Rev. Han was elected chairman, and decided to set up the headquarters in Taegu.<sup>32</sup> By mid-July, in Taegu alone there were about four hundred Christian workers taking refuge in the city,<sup>33</sup> with more on their way to Pusan.

By fleeing to the south, Rev. Han had become a prominent leader among Korean Christians. Having a master's degree from Princeton Theological Seminary, Rev. Han was also well-known among American church leaders. He worked closely with other Protestant leaders, including Dr. Yu Hyŏng-gi (Lew Hyung-ki), the acting bishop of the Korean Methodist Church, who had also been educated in the United States. Both men became pillars and spokespersons of the Korean Christian community during the war. They both took a trip to the United States in August 1951, representing the Korean churches to "express appreciation for aid given" to the South Korean people.<sup>34</sup>

The Christian National Salvation Assembly organized human networks to collect intelligence information and provide immediate relief for the refugees. Since some of the Korean clergy and Christian laymen knew English, they could find ways to affiliate with UN troops and offer their services to the United Nations authorities. Within the Pusan

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<sup>32</sup> Letter from Rev. Kyung chik Han, 12 August 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 37 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>33</sup> John C. Smith, "Our Stake in Korea," *Presbyterian Life*, 2 September 1950, 13.

<sup>34</sup> Edward Adams, "The Church Met a Need in Korea," *Presbyterian Survey*, August 1951, 17.

Perimeter, interpreters and English-speaking chauffeurs were in high demand.<sup>35</sup> Young Christians, such as Sin Yŏng-il (Shin Young Il) and his YMCA friends, who left their families in Seoul, quickly found jobs working for the US Army. Sin, for example, served the 25<sup>th</sup> Division, 35<sup>th</sup> Regiment as an interpreter in the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Section in Masan (see Map 7).<sup>36</sup> Although the clergymen had formed a basic structure for relief operations, they lacked the money or resources to carry out a nationwide campaign.

### *Missionaries and the Beginning of a Christian Relief Program*

It was during this period that the presence of American missionaries would have the greatest impact upon the fate of Christian refugees and the lives of the Korean people. Although American missionaries numbered less than two dozen, they had various resources and skills: they were the only civilians who still had their vehicles, they had external means of support, they had connections with local churches to organize workers, and they had influence within the US army to obtain special permission for their activities.

In Pusan, the three stay-behind Northern Presbyterian missionaries, Rev. Edward Adams, Rev. Archibald Campbell, and Rev. Francis Kinsler, who had earlier sent their families across the Korean Strait to Fukuoka, immediately launched an emergency relief program. Initially, they had only the million wŏn offered by the missionary evacuees.<sup>37</sup> Then, as Seoul's collapse precipitated a financial crisis, banks in Taegu would only issue 10,000 wŏn per person per week.<sup>38</sup> However, Rev. Adams was able to use his American

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<sup>35</sup> Letter from Mrs. Linton to her children, 13 August 1950, in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from Shin Young-il to Kyung Ho, 20 August 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 37 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>37</sup> See Chapter 5.

<sup>38</sup> Edward Adams to wife, 6 July 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 14 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

citizenship to negotiate the withdrawal of “a couple hundred thousand wŏn,” and establish a credit line for relief purposes with a New York bank.<sup>39</sup> All this money was urgently needed for food supplies, supporting refugee pastors to continue evangelical work, hiring more relief workers, and paying for the transportation costs of relief materials.

Since they could not bring their supplies from Inch'ŏn and Seoul, missionaries could only use materials owned by the Church World Service (CWS) that were stored in its Pusan warehouse.<sup>40</sup> Rev. Adams received authorization from the CWS in the United States and took charge of distributing these supplies until the arrival of the new CWS director, Rev. Henry Appenzeller, the son of the first Methodist missionary to Korea.<sup>41</sup> The supplies in this warehouse were only a temporary solution, however. Missionaries had to secure a continuous flow of relief materials if they were to establish a long-term relief program. Otherwise, they would be “out of business soon.”<sup>42</sup> Mission workers in Tokyo and American friends in the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) arranged the transport of fresh supplies in September 1950.<sup>43</sup>

Getting these supplies into the hands of the refugees was another problem. Small quantities could be moved by truck, but to service a whole city full of refugees, they

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<sup>39</sup> Edward Adams to wife, 12 July 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 14 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>40</sup> Church World Service (CWS) was founded to relieve needy people regardless of nationality, party, and religion. It supported Korean relief and restoration from 1946 under the guidance of Dr. Bliss Billings, a Methodist missionary, and later Dr. A. G. Fletcher, another Methodist missionary. From 1946 to 1950, the agency helped mainly refugees from North Korea with supplies sent by churches in the United States.

<sup>41</sup> Rev. Henry Appenzeller, however, did not arrive until January 1951. For six months, the relief work of CWS was directed by Rev. Edward Adams.

<sup>42</sup> Letter from Edward Adams to wife, 9 August 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 14 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>43</sup> According to the letter from Grace H. Wood to friends, the missionaries in Tokyo were able to send a large amount of relief goods belonging to the Presbyterian groups through the ECA because Bob Kinney, whose wife and in-laws were Presbyterian missionaries, was the ECA's Acting Director in Korea. Letter dated 21 September 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 37 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

would need the railroad. Empty freight cars for bulky materials were hard to come by, as the transportation network was being used almost exclusively for military purposes. After about two weeks of paperwork, Rev. Adams finally found a freight car and was ready, on July 12, to transport the CWS materials to Taejŏn, where the refugee problem was most serious.

In order to distribute the materials to both Taegu and Taejŏn, relief workers were divided into two groups. One group was headed by Rev. Kinsler and the other by Rev. Adams. While Rev. Kinsler drove loads of materials with his team of relief workers from Pusan to Taegu and its adjacent areas, Rev. Adams left for Taejŏn with the other team. It was important for at least one missionary to escort with the trucks, otherwise both the vehicles and the supplies could have easily been taken by the ROK army – one more way in which even a single missionary could be very important to the relief work. Nevertheless, due to the deteriorating military situation and transportation confusion, Adam's freight car never left Pusan. Rev. Kinsler re-routed it to Taegu instead.<sup>44</sup>

Not knowing what Kinsler had done, Rev. Adams was waiting vainly for “the lost freight car” in Taejŏn, while the North Koreans were trying to cross the Kŭm River.<sup>45</sup> Following the main roads, most refugees fled Taejŏn to Yŏngdong and Kimch'ŏn. On July 15, Rev. Adams became the last American civilian to depart the now empty city.<sup>46</sup> He and his faithful Korean CWS relief workers took a jeep, and laboriously dragged a

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<sup>44</sup> Letter from Edward Adams, 21 July 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 14 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

broken wagon to Taegu.<sup>47</sup> As soon as they arrived, Rev. Adams again looked for his lost freight car and was delighted to find it parked at the railroad station.<sup>48</sup>

The missionaries then established Taegu as their main relief center within the Pusan Perimeter. Trucks loaded with supplies were sent to different refugee-crowded cities, including Yōngdong and Kimch'ŏn. Local churches were often used as distribution points. The relief materials were mainly food such as beans, flour, wheat, and lard. The missionaries usually contacted local pastors and laymen ahead of time, depending on them to organize the local people and get the word out. Once the crowd gathered, relief workers distributed food together with some Christian tracts to the non-Christians. To Christians, they offered gospels or New Testaments instead. Rev. Adams reported that relief work was the “most excellent approach to the Gospel” in the midst of war because “the gratitude of recipients [was] most pathetic.”<sup>49</sup> Christians were particularly grateful because most of them had fled in such haste that they had left their Bibles behind. The gospels, Christian tracts, and New Testaments were in great demand.

Although supplies were distributed to all the refugees, those who were Christian received the most, because many American churches had made donations expressly to the Korean Christian community. Since their American supporters wanted to see the goods reach the hands of their intended beneficiaries, the missionaries usually left behind relief supplies for local churches so that pastors and elders could support the needs of the Christian community. Churches became famous places for additional relief supplies. As

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<sup>47</sup> Transportation equipment was precious during the war because all kinds of vehicles were in hot demand. The missionaries did not want to lose even one broken wagon.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

a result, the influence of Christianity continued to grow despite the destruction of many churches and the loss of leadership.

A Christian relief effort was, however, no substitute for government or UN programs. Its effectiveness lay in its collaboration with the authorities. Rev. Adams explained the goal of their relief effort to his American supporters: "In any case we recognize the major problem is a government and military one, in which we need to fill in by supplementing and personalizing – taking care of the fringes where the larger machine fails to function."<sup>50</sup> The missionaries were in constant communication with ROK officials to identify neglected areas, and fill the gaps. For example, on July 21, they received a report from the Minister of Welfare on the number of refugees in each county, and discovered that Ŭisŏng (Eui Sung) County had, at that point, more refugees than Pusan. The next day, they sent a truckload of food to Ŭisŏng.<sup>51</sup>

The relief work organized by these missionaries was not limited to food distribution, but also included emergency evacuation. The ROK government had conscripted most Korean-owned automobiles for military purposes; only those vehicles driven by the missionaries or high-ranking Korean officials had escaped. The missionaries' jeeps, trucks, and wagons became vital for moving supplies, people, and equipment. As the Communist soldiers advanced, private facilities depended on CWS transportation for their evacuation. For example, missionaries helped to move the important medical supplies of the Salvation Army Hospital of Yŏngdong to Taegu before that city fell to the North Korean army.

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<sup>50</sup> Letter from Edward Adams, 1 August 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 37 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>51</sup> Letter from Edward Adams, 21 July 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 14 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

American missionaries were especially interested in evacuating Christian leaders since they were certain to be killed if captured. They would drive in their trucks to evacuate pastors and their families, bringing them to safety along the coast near Pusan. They often even went into the war zone to rescue congregations of Christians who were caught between the two opposing armies. For example, about four hundred pastors and their families were trapped in Taegu when it came under heavy bombing from the North in August. Missionaries immediately arranged a large school building for them at a place called Kamp'ori on the east coast, about sixty miles north of Pusan and twenty miles south of P'ohang (see Map 7). In order to bring them there, they transported around sixty to eighty people each day, and arranged government relief supplies for them in addition to the little they could provide from the CWS supplies.<sup>52</sup>

The missionaries expanded their operation to the non-Christian population as they saw the military becoming increasingly hostile towards the refugees. After the fall of Taejŏn, the sheer number of refugees on the main road became a serious hindrance to military operations. The army, needing the roads cleared for supplies and troop transports, were constantly driving refugees away. Worse still, the refugee population was chaotic and unregulated. Many guerillas had infiltrated their ranks, causing serious problems for the military. Fearing clandestine attacks, some ROK and US soldiers became hostile to the civilians that they encountered while clearing the roads for military transports.

Refugee distrust flared up around the time of the fall of Taejŏn. On July 25, top staff officers of the U.S. 8th Army met with Ambassador Muccio's representative, Harold

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<sup>52</sup> Letter from Edward Adams, 9 August 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 14 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

J. Noble, and other South Korean officials to discuss the refugees problem. They decided to take serious measures to stop refugees from crossing US defense lines. According to a written report from Ambassador Muccio to Dean Rusk, at that time Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, if refugees ignored warnings from US troops and continued to advance toward their defensive lines, US soldiers were allowed to use lethal force to halt them.<sup>53</sup>

With the defensive line shifting daily, many refugees on the road from Taejŏn to Taegu were caught in between the retreating US army and the advancing North Korean forces. For example, in Nogŭn-ni, a village between Yŏngdong and Kimch'ŏn (see Map 7), where the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment held position, there was a report that about 400 people were killed by US troops on July 26. Although the actual death toll has been widely disputed, civilian casualties in Nogŭn-ni were an undeniable fact.<sup>54</sup> Similar incidents happened all along the road to Taegu. It was unknown how many innocent people lost their lives due to the combination of friendly fire and US efforts to keep refugees away from their defensive positions.

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<sup>53</sup> Sahr Conway-Lanz, "Beyond No Gun Ri: Refugees and the United States Military in the Korean War," *Diplomatic History* 29 (January 2005): 56. See also Charles J. Hanley and Martha Mendoza, "U.S. Policy Was to Shoot Korean Refugees," *Washington Post*, 29 May 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/29/AR2006052900485.html>.

<sup>54</sup> The number 400 was provided by North Korean troops who took over the Nogun-ni bridge later. See Spencer C. Tucker, "Nogun-ni Railroad Bridge Incident," in *Encyclopedia of The Korean War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, ed. Spencer C. Tucker (New York: Checkmark Books, 2002), 490. The actual number of victims, however, remained controversial. A report of the Yeongdong County Office in South Korea claimed that 248 people were injured, missing or killed by the US troops. Some Korean victims believed that the numbers should be higher according to the investigation conducted by the Associated Press. The study provided a list of 181 victims killed, 20 missing, and 50 wounded. See Charles J. Hanley, Sang-hun Choe, and Martha Mendoza, *The Bridge at No Gun Ri: A Hidden Nightmare From the Korean War* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001), 291-295. This report, however, was disputed by a West Point historian, Robert Bateman, who argued that apart from testimonies of the victims fifty years later, there was no hardcore evidence supporting the claim. See Robert L. Bateman, *No Gun Ri: A Military History of the Korean War Incident* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002).

The movement of troops and equipment was hampered by the refugees who were clogging the roads and railways. To prevent any further loss of time, all those evacuated from Kimch'ŏn and along the railroad line after the fall of Yŏngdong were shunted off the side, and/or pushed into the mountains by the military. The refugees coming from the north (the area around Andong) and the east were also diverted into the mountains (see Map 7). The hillsides and streambeds became packed with refugees. These people had nowhere to flee. Their suffering out in the open without shelter was beyond description. They had little food and were perishing in the heat of the sun and the chill of the rain. Unless they were transported into the Pusan Perimeter immediately, they would soon fall into the hands of the North Korean army or die of hunger or disease. The only people with the will and the means to help were the missionaries. With their trucks, jeeps, and wagons, Rev. Adams and his CWS workers directed and transported about 10,000 people who had been camped in the hills for days to refugee centers within the Pusan Perimeter.<sup>55</sup>

#### *Relief Work within the Pusan Perimeter*

When the war finally stabilized along the Pusan perimeter in August, the government was able to organize refugees according to their original counties (*kun*). The living conditions within these herds of people, however, were terrible. Pusan was particularly overcrowded. Every school building, department store, or other large building was being used either as a hospital, a barracks, or a refugee camp. Many temporary buildings were erected to house more refugees. Churches and temples were also overcrowded with people. In some cases, thousands of people lived in one

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<sup>55</sup> Letter from Edward Adams to wife, 9 August 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 14 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

temporary building. Each family had about ten square feet of space.<sup>56</sup> Rev. Adams described their conditions as living “like flies,” and feared that without adequate medical attention, an epidemic might break out.<sup>57</sup>

These overcrowded refugee centers needed immediate attention. The American missionaries again mobilized their limited resources.<sup>58</sup> Since most of the Southern Presbyterian missionaries had taken refuge in Pusan,<sup>59</sup> they began serving the city’s crowded refugee centers. A few women missionaries and their Christian helpers visited the overcrowded refugee centers regularly, bringing relief supplies and providing basic medical care. They would send for a missionary doctor if the cases were serious.

The Northern Presbyterians, who possessed more resources, were able to expand their work among the more remote corners of the perimeter, particularly those living outdoors in stream beds or on the hillsides, by using their precious trucks. The ROK government had tried to bring food to these people, but a lack of transportation equipment had slowed down the process. The conditions were far worse for those who did not have shelters or receive government support. “When it rains,” Rev. Adams described, “they get soaked. The nights have turned chilly, so during the night they shiver. During the day they bake.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Letter from Mrs. (Charlotte) Linton to “folks,” 10 September 1950, in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

<sup>57</sup> Letter from Edward Adams, 1 September 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 37 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>58</sup> The Northern Presbyterians were the Presbyterian Mission (USA) and the Southern Presbyterians were the Presbyterian Mission (US).

<sup>59</sup> Pusan was the mission base of the Australian Presbyterian mission. Most Australians were evacuated when the war broke out. Most of them did not return until the war was stabilized in 1952. The most famous ones were Dr. Helen MacKenzie and her sister Catherine MacKenzie. They ran the Australian Presbyterian Mission Hospital from 1952 to 1975.

<sup>60</sup> Letter from Edward Adams, 1 September 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 37 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

In addition to providing regular relief supplies, missionaries were concerned with ministering to the multitude, and hoped to develop a long-term evangelical network to reach out to the most remote places. They first established a relief program for the families of Christian clergymen and evangelists (not limited to Presbyterians). Missionaries would be responsible for supplying food and special shelter for their families so that the Korean pastors could go back to living in the refugee camps according to the *kun* from which they had originally come. Rev. Adams hoped that they could arrange at least one pastor or lay evangelist for each *kun*. In this way, each pastor would establish relationships with the refugees and be able to continue caring for his flock even after the refugees returned to their homes. These Christian workers, however, were not paid a monthly salary. Instead, the missions guaranteed “enough food and clothing to protect their health” so that they could focus on their work among the refugees “without compromising their voluntary spirit.”<sup>61</sup>

Missionaries also prepared one large tent for each *kun* to serve as a relief station and a temporary worship hall. These tents became the headquarters for church workers. The major practical function of each tent was to serve as a first-aid center for the sick, small babies, and pregnant mothers. Dr. Howard Moffett, being in the Air Force, supplied these stations with basic medicines like aspirin, mercurochrome, and penicillin.<sup>62</sup> According to Rev. Adams, the US Army advisor to the Minister of the Interior was so moved when he heard of the program that tears came to his eyes.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

### *The Impact of Missionaries on the Overall War Relief Effort*

Although no data was collected to confirm the effectiveness of the relief program operated by the missionaries in the first three months of war, their efforts certainly saved many lives. The long-term impact of these initiatives was equally important. Their work aroused public interest and inspired many Christians in the United States and other Western countries to support the survival of South Korea.

Church leaders in the United States were the first group to answer the requests of these missionaries. On October 19, 1950, shortly after the announcement of a centralized UN relief effort, American church leaders held a meeting at the office of International Mission Committee in New York with representatives from the World Council of the Churches (WCC), Foreign Mission Conference (FMC), International Missionary Council (IMC), and Church World Service (CWS). They recognized that “Christian concerns must find expression in an organized effort for Christian relief in Korea.”<sup>64</sup> They first decided to establish a formal Christian relief committee in Korea through the Korean National Christian Council (KNCC). This committee in Korea would evaluate the needs and report to the IMC and WCC for funds and supplies. It would also be responsible for carrying out Christian relief work and correspondence with UN relief officials in Korea. The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) would negotiate with the UN relief agencies in New York to allow Christian groups to distribute their own materials.<sup>65</sup>

This meeting was historic because afterward the tide of the Korean War turned against the United Nations forces. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese “volunteers”

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<sup>64</sup> C. W. Randon, “Korean Relief,” in *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, ed. Kim Heung Soo (Seoul: The Institute for Korean Church History, 2003), 136-137.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

entered the war in November 1950, and the severe cold weather in Korea threatened the lives of many Korean refugees.<sup>66</sup> The need for immediate relief was even more pressing than before. A lack of clothing and fuel was more critical than food, because Koreans in the Chölla regions were able to harvest their rice crop when the UN pushed the line back up to the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel in September 1950. Food was not the most pressing issue in the winter of 1950, because the local government organized soup kitchens to feed hungry crowds with their rice reserve. The need for clothing and fuel was more pressing when civilians were forced to leave home during one of the coldest winters in Korean history.

Religious news in the United States highlighted Korean suffering. The latest letters and reports of missionaries and Christians in the war zone were regularly published in an open pamphlet, "Korea Letters," produced by evacuated missionaries in Japan under the leadership of Rev. William Shaw and his wife, and supported by the Methodist Board of Foreign Missions. Christians in the United States were encouraged to pray and to donate money and relief materials. Retired missionaries, church leaders, Korean Christian churches in the United States, and interdenominational organizations mobilized to distribute the publication across the country. News about the missionaries and Korean refugees was also frequently reported in a variety of other denominational magazines.

Drives for cash donations and clothing began in November among individual denominations. A joint effort through the Church World Service's "One Great Hour of Sharing" was organized in December 1950. Churches and individual Christian groups throughout the United States and Canada responded eagerly by sending money to the Presbyterian Boards, Methodist Boards, Church World Service (CWS), Salvation Army,

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<sup>66</sup> The discussion of the Chinese entry into the Korean War is in Chapter 7.

Catholic Relief Service, Maryknoll Sisters, and other interdenominational relief organizations to support of Christian refugees in Korea. In that winter alone, the CWS shipped 223,000 pounds of cloth, and 95,000 pounds of food (milk, beans, vitamins, etc.) Churches in England and Australia also sent funds and relief supplies to Pusan.<sup>67</sup> The supplies were distributed to both Christians and non-Christians by the CWS.

Rev. Bob Pierce, who had visited South Korea shortly before the outbreak of the war, also returned to Korea to investigate the damage. The suffering he saw led him to establish World Vision, Inc. on September 22, 1950, which is now the largest Christian relief and development organization in the world. Later, he returned to Korea as a war correspondent for the United Nations, and traveled all over the war-torn country. Hoping “to shake people up,” he focused his reports on the plight of the Christians, widows, orphans, and babies that were left for dead in dump heaps.<sup>68</sup>

During the Korean War, Rev. Pierce made two documentaries on Korea. The first one, *The 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, documented conditions in Korea prior to the outbreak of the Korean War. Reports on the success of “Save the Nation Evangelistic Crusade” were presented, showing thousands of Koreans who became Christians after they heard Rev. Pierce’s preaching. One local newspaper described the film as telling “the story of [Korea’s] tragedies as well as its hopes found in the Christian way of life.”<sup>69</sup> Pierce’s story supported Dulles’ interpretation of the religious nature of the Korean conflict.

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<sup>67</sup> Heung-soo Kim, “한국전쟁 시기 기독교 의원단체의 구호활동 *Han’gukjeonjeong sigi gidokkyo oewondancheui guhohwaldong* (Relief Activities of Foreign Christian Voluntary Agencies during the Korean War),” *한국기독교와 역사 Hangukkidokgyo yeoksa History of Korean Christianity* 23 (2005): 105-108.

<sup>68</sup> Franklin Graham, *Bob Pierce: This One Thing I Do* (USA: Samaritan’s Purse, 1983), 170.

<sup>69</sup> “Korean Movies at Youth for Christ,” *Walla Walla*, Wash, 7 December 1951. See also “Korean Film Listed For Youth Rally,” *The Gettysburg Times*, 13 April 1951, and “Speaks and Shows Film,” *Mansfield O. News-Journal*, 9 April 1952.

The most noteworthy result was Pierce's second movie, *The Flames*, a Christian documentary on the Korean War released in 1952.<sup>70</sup> It was regarded as "one of the outstanding documentary records of all time."<sup>71</sup> Rev. Pierce showed the film to churches across America and invited their members to help the refugees and Korean orphans. It was the beginning of the World Vision Child Sponsorship Program. His graphic depiction of suffering women and children shocked the American people, and stirred great enthusiasm for Korean relief. The survival of the Korean Christian community and the future of these Korean orphans became familiar concerns to churches across America.

Throughout the Korean War, church relief organizers discovered that whenever the label "Korea" was attached to a relief drive the public response was exceptionally generous. Most of the Christian donors intended to send the relief supplies to the Korean Christians, especially women and children. These wishes could not be granted, however, since supplies had to be sent through the UN; once in UN hands, individual charities lost control over how the materials were distributed.

Nevertheless, cooperation with the UN brought many benefits to all concerned. First, given the astronomical costs of shipping bulky goods to Asia, the charities could not have sent their materials without UN help. Second, the relief work established "good will" between Christian charities and the UN and US army. The UN needed the experience, advice, and support of these Christian organizations. Third, Christians would, in turn, gain access to official information so that they could have a "better chance to help in steering supplies in the [neediest] areas, and reduce "irregularities in distribution."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Graham, *Bob Pierce: This One Thing I Do*, 170.

<sup>71</sup> "Dr. Pierce's Film on Korea to be Shown Here Oct. 1," *Bralaerd Daily Dispatch*, 23 September 1952.

<sup>72</sup> Letter to Dr. John Smith, sender unknown, 19 September 1951, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 197, Box 1, Folder 3 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

Therefore, most religious groups participated in the UN effort and volunteered to collect and distribute relief supplies on behalf of the UN.<sup>73</sup> By 1952, a total of forty Christian organizations were carrying out relief programs in South Korea through the UN. From July 1950 to November 1952, they offered as much as US \$4,856,446 worth of church donations for UN distribution, which was about 44 percent of the total donations by all US voluntary agencies (see Table 6.2).<sup>74</sup>

In 1953, when the UN eventually allowed private organizations to conduct their own distribution, Protestant churches in the US sent a total of US \$271,341.70 in cash, US \$1,599,752.82 worth of clothing, and 5,469,882 pounds of relief supplies through the Church World Service.<sup>75</sup> Under the leadership of Rev. Edward Adams and Dr. Henry Appenzeller, the Korea Church World Service emerged as the model relief agency (see Table 6.3 for the full list of staff members).<sup>76</sup> The money was used for orphanages, children's welfare, housing for widows, anti-tuberculosis projects, medical supplies, the purchase and distribution of relief supplies, and so on. These figures did not include materials and funds sent through individual denominations for church reconstruction and the rehabilitation of Christian education and medical institutions. It also did not include contributions made through Catholic charities or materials sent directly through the UN relief agencies.

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<sup>73</sup> Letter from TTB to Shaw, 6 October 1950, Missionary Collection 4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

<sup>74</sup> This amount does not include cash distributed through private church channels which the UN did not control. See Kim, “한국전쟁 시기 기독교 외원단체의 구호활동 Relief Activities of Foreign Christian Voluntary Agencies during the Korean War,” 107-108.

<sup>75</sup> Harry A. Rhodes and Archibald Campbell, *History of the Korean Mission Presbyterian Church in the USA*, Vol. 2, 1935-1959 (New York: Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1964), 323.

<sup>76</sup> Kim, “한국전쟁 시기 기독교 외원단체의 구호활동 Relief Activities of Foreign Christian Voluntary Agencies during the Korean War,” 109-110.

The Christian relief program, in the end, benefited the Korean Christian community the most. Pastors, Bible women,<sup>77</sup> and Christian teachers received special help from the churches and relief agencies in addition to the meager government supplies, which gave them a better chance of survival. For example, although the CWS supported a policy of equal distribution among both believers and non-believers, its long-term goal favored the development of Christianity. Its objectives were to encourage Christian social services, and strengthen ties of friendship between Korea and the United States, and also between Korean and Western churches.<sup>78</sup> Their hope was to build a new Korea based on the American Christian model.

In addition, missionaries helped to secure jobs for Christians not only as relief workers, but also as interpreters for US troops and chauffeurs for government officials. Seminaries, Christian colleges and schools, orphanages, and widows' houses were established throughout South Korea. Partly through the relief agencies' influence and partly through the evangelizing efforts of the Korean church, Christianity continued to expand during and after the Korean War. Foreign funding enabled the training of new Christian clergymen and the expansion of Christian institutions in post-war Korea. It marked the new beginning of an intimate American-Korean church relationship. For the first time in Church history, Korea replaced China and Japan as the primary recipient of American paternalism in East Asia. In this way, Christianity emerged as a dominant political, economic, religious, and social force in postwar South Korea.

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<sup>77</sup> Bible women were female evangelists supported by the Korean churches to evangelize women and children. They served as Bible teachers for women group and Sunday schools. In the remote countryside, the influence of Bible women was sometime as strong as pastors and elders.

<sup>78</sup> Arnold B. Vaught, "Relief and Rehabilitation," *Report to Korea Planning Conference* (October 13-14, 1953), World Council of Church Library (CCIA Country Files: Asia-Korea 1953-1973), Geneva, Switzerland.

## *THE FALL AND RECOVERY OF SEOUL*

While some Koreans fled before the advancing Northern army, many more remained without being fully aware of the consequences of their decisions.<sup>79</sup> They soon found themselves behind the iron curtain. The Communists immediately began purging all their opponents in the conquered territories. Christians were prime targets. Their experience during the North Korean occupation was a central component in understanding the religious aspects of the Korean War. Reports of their suffering would be widely circulated in Korea and the United States. These, in turn, mobilized American public opinion to provide political, economic, military, and moral support to the Republic of Korea.

### *The Fall of Seoul*

At roughly 3:30 on the morning of June 27, shortly after President Syngman Rhee and his cabinet left Seoul, about 140 members of the National Assembly held an emergency session. Mr. Sin Ik-hŭi (Patrick Henry Shinicky), the Speaker of the Assembly<sup>80</sup> and Syngman Rhee's major political opponent after the mid-1950s, asked the Assembly to decide whether or not they should follow Rhee's government. Following a heated debate, the Assembly passed a resolution that all assembly members should remain in the Capital, even if it meant imprisonment or death. The resolution also

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<sup>79</sup> Because of strict censorship by the South Korean Defense Ministry, most Korean newspapers and official announcements did not provide accurate reports on front-line conditions, during the first few days of the war. Some reporters were asked by government officials to write false stories to ease the people's fears. See Raymond S. H. Lee, "Early Korean War Coverage," *Journalism Quarterly* 55, no.4 (1978): 789-791.

<sup>80</sup> Donald Stone MacDonald, *The Koreans: Contemporary Politics and Society* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 120.

criticized Rhee's government for betraying the trust of the Korean people by giving up the defense of Seoul.<sup>81</sup>

The majority of the Assemblymen, including Sin himself, switched their position within a few hours, however, and had fled south by nightfall. Out of 210 members of the Assembly, only 60 ultimately stayed behind – mostly moderates and liberals.<sup>82</sup> Among them was Assemblywoman Pak Sun-Ch'ŏn, who, as president of *Women's Daily News* (*Yŏcha Ilbo*) in Seoul, was one of the most influential women in Korea.<sup>83</sup> Pak stayed behind not because she was sympathetic toward Communism, but because of the Assembly resolution and her personal responsibility to the voters in Seoul District A. But, she urged all her subordinates and friends to evacuate immediately.<sup>84</sup>

Initially, many Communists and leftists were excited over the war, and rose up to welcome the North Korean army. Students in Seoul and elsewhere were the most active supporters of the occupation, volunteering readily for all sorts of tasks. During the occupation period, women in particular experienced a great liberation, and enjoyed wide employment opportunities, holding jobs of honor.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, such cases were a small minority. The majority of those people who were not targets of the Communist persecution suffered severe hardships under the North's occupation policy.

During the transition period between the departure of the ROK government and the arrival of the Korean People's Army, the city of Seoul was in turmoil. There was

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<sup>81</sup> Sun-Chon Park, "Wearing a Blood-Stained Skirt," Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 39: 1 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>82</sup> Hugh Deane, *The Korean War: 1945-1953* (San Francisco, CA: China Books & Periodicals, 1999), 94.

<sup>83</sup> Andrew C. Nahm, *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Korea* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1993), 161.

<sup>84</sup> Deane, *The Korean War: 1945-1953*, 94

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

looting of foreigners' houses, and many shooting incidents.<sup>86</sup> Because the North Korean army lacked effective logistical support, very often the soldiers demanded food from local residents without giving any compensation. For three months, most of the people lived on barley gruel.<sup>87</sup> When an occupying army behaved in such a way, it did not endear itself to the native population. As the food started to run out, even leftists and leftist sympathizers began to regret the arrival of the Communists.<sup>88</sup> Abuse by Northern soldiers only became more prevalent as the tide of war started to turn against them.

Another source of conflict between North Korean authorities and the South Korean population was the KPA policy of conscripting young men and women from the ages of seventeen to thirty-eight, to serve in the North Korean army. Christians were particularly reluctant to serve in the KPA. Those loyal to the ROK went into hiding to avoid serving.<sup>89</sup> Pae Sun-Yōng (Pai Soon-young), a Christian woman, hid her husband and her brother in their attic to avoid being found by the Communist police.<sup>90</sup> Many, however, were unable to escape the order. Some who were seized tried to escape, but only a few succeeded.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Maud K. Jensen, "Korea Evacuation 1950," undated pamphlet printed for family and friends. Quoted by Donald N. Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience 1900-1950* (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2003), 364.

<sup>87</sup> Letter from Soon-Young to Rev. Min-soo Pai, 23 October 1950, Presbyterian Archive, Record Group 140, Box 1, Folder, 19 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>88</sup> Letter from Soon-Young Pai to her uncle Rev. Minsoo Pai in the United States, 10 December 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 1, Folder 19 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>89</sup> Letter from Soon-Young to Rev. Min-soo Pai, 23 October 1950, Presbyterian Archive, Record Group 140, Box 1, Folder, 19 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> The exact extent of conscription remained unclear. Yet, the testimonies of most survivors confirmed the policy of the North Korean authorities. The number of North Korean POWs who were determined as South Korean citizens was rather high. About 37,000 were determined as civilian internees. Most of them refused to be repatriated to North Korea and created a serious problem during the Truce Negotiation in Panmunjom.

Skilled personnel, such as the doctors and nurses in the Severance Hospital<sup>92</sup> and Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital,<sup>93</sup> were conscripted as soon as the North arrived and occupied Seoul. Since their medical skills were badly needed on the frontline, some of them were dispersed to different KPA units to serve with other North Korean medical personnel.<sup>94</sup> Very few survived the occupation.

### *The Fate of South Korean Politicians and Officials*

Once Seoul was secured, the Communist police began to round up ROK officials, police, and Assemblymen. Since most top officials had fled, while the rest were hiding in friends' houses or in the mountains, it took the KPA a great effort to root them out. First, the KPA collected information from secret informers and infiltrators. Then based on these reports, soldiers conducted house searches and set up road blocks to check identification. Few escaped.

One such case was ex-Assemblyman Kim Sang-don, a Presbyterian who had to stay in Seoul because of his large family. Kim's political record showed that he had always been critical of the policies of the ROK government. Some people suspected him of being pro-Communist because he did not leave the city. The North Koreans wanted to enlist his support. Knowing that he was a wanted man, Kim went into hiding in the attic of a church elder's house for months to avoid working for the Communists. When

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<sup>92</sup> The Severance Hospital was staffed by the joint effort of both Presbyterian and Methodist missions. It was the best-known medical institution in South Korea. Some reported that all the doctors and nurses were murdered by the Communists. The stories, however, were hard to confirm. It is highly possible that those who refused to collaborate with the North Korean authorities were shot on the spot. According to the investigation of the UN, mass graves were uncovered in the back yard of the hospital. The identity of these victims, however, was hard to determine. Those who were willing to work with the Communists were possibly taken by the North Korean Army when they departed from Seoul.

<sup>93</sup> The hospital was established by the Seventh-day Adventists. Most of the medical staff were trained by Dr. George Rue and his wife Grace.

<sup>94</sup> Penny Young Sook Kim and Charles Milles, *Though Bombs May Fall: The Extraordinary Story of George Rue, Missionary Doctor to Korea* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2003), 79.

someone reported his location to the authorities, the Communists came to search the house. Though they could not find him, they shot many holes in the ceiling. Kim miraculously lived to tell his story.<sup>95</sup>

Assemblywoman Pak Sun-Ch'ŏn was not so lucky. She went into hiding with her friends in Chaedong as soon as Seoul fell, but was betrayed. On July 3, a young Communist policeman from North Korea dragged her out from her hiding place. He told her that he had "been well acquainted with" her because he had seen "her picture in the north part of the country."<sup>96</sup> The policeman forced her to "walk with him" to the Chongno Police Station because the Communist authorities wanted to show people that she came with them voluntarily.<sup>97</sup> During interrogation, the interrogator tried to force her to agree that it was the ROK government that had started the war, but Pak refused to comply. Some of her other colleagues in the National Assembly, who had not left Seoul, were also arrested by the Communists, and faced the same pressure. Pak and her colleagues remained in prison for more than a week before they were released on July 13.

### *Political Pressure against Rightists*

Kim Il-sung had planned to establish Seoul as the new capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In order to earn national support and establish a legitimate government, he needed to convince the southern population and the international community that Syngman Rhee and the ROK were to blame for the war. To do so, Kim Il-sung needed the collaboration of ex-ROK officials and politicians in Seoul. The

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<sup>95</sup> Letter from Kim Eun-Hyung, ex-Assemblyman Kim Sangdon's daughter, to her sister Kim Shing Hyung, 5 October 1950, Presbyterian Archives, Record Group 140, Box 1, Folder 19 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>96</sup> Park, "Wearing a Blood-Stained Skirt," Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 39: 4-5. The manuscript was sent to the Presbyterian Church and later published by John W. Riley, Jr. and Wilbur Schramm, *The Reds Take a City: The Communist Occupation of Seoul with Eyewitness Accounts* (New Brunswick, NY: Rutgers University Press, 1951), 193-198.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

Communists, therefore, launched a propaganda effort aimed at discrediting Rhee's government, and disputing the justifications for UN intervention.

First, the North Korean authorities pressured South Korean politicians to pledge their allegiance to the Northern regime, and make broadcasts on behalf of the Communists, condemning the corruption of the ROK regime. They put the most pressure on Assemblymen and famous Korean politicians. The authorities' goal was to convert them to the Communist idea of unification, and to use them to condemn the ROK for starting the war. A program led by Northern political officers to re-educate National Assembly members began on July 8. Most of the Assemblymen were released by the authorities temporarily on July 13, as a gesture to win their support. In the end, about forty-eight of the sixty captured assemblymen pledged allegiance to the Democratic People's Republic. Some of them were appointed to judgeships and other offices.<sup>98</sup>

Pak Sun-Ch'ŏn was one of the twelve who refused to support the Communist government. After her release on July 13, she immediately organized a "suicide squad of the Republican volunteers," and for the next two months secretly led an underground resistance movement.<sup>99</sup> When word came of the Inch'ŏn landing, she hid to avoid being rearrested.

Second, the North Korean authorities also pressured Christian clergymen and laymen to support the Communist cause, in a bid to obtain international recognition for their government. Kim Kyu-sik, the famous moderate Christian leader, a political rival of Syngman Rhee, and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kyŏngsin Boys' Academy

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<sup>98</sup> Deane, *The Korean War: 1945-1953*, 95.

<sup>99</sup> Park, "Wearing a Blood-Stained Skirt," Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 39: 6 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

in Seoul, was forced to give “a few speeches,” criticizing the ROK government.<sup>100</sup> He, however, refused to join the North Korean government.<sup>101</sup> His life was spared, but the Communists took Kim with them when they retreated north.<sup>102</sup>

Many Christian clergymen, however, refused to cooperate. For example, the Communists wanted Dr. Namgung Hyök, the executive secretary of the Korea National Council of Churches, to lead their Korean National Christian Council, because he was well-known in American churches. Despite intense pressure, Dr. Namgung refused to participate in broadcasts supporting the Communists. He was arrested and never seen again.<sup>103</sup>

### *Clashes between North Korean Authorities and Christians*

Since the North Korean army needed places to stay in Seoul, conflict immediately arose with church laymen who had stayed to guard church buildings, schools, hospitals, and mission compounds. For example, at the Yöngnak Church, six members were killed with one elder being shot down in the churchyard. The Communists turned this beautiful, newly-constructed building into their ammunition and weapon storage base. They knew

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<sup>100</sup> Letter from Harold Voelkel to Dr. John C. Decker, 29 July 1950, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, ed. Kim Heung Soo (Seoul: Institute for Korean Church History, 2003), 61.

<sup>101</sup> See Deane, *The Korean War*, 95.

<sup>102</sup> According to the North Koreans, Kim Kyu-sik voluntarily left with them. It is possible that this account is accurate because Kim had worked with the Communists and would not be welcomed again by the South Koreans. Yet, according to the testimony of Park Sun-chon, her friend Wo Se-hun was about to inform Kim Kyu-sik about the coming of the UN troops and advise him to hide from the Communists on September 17, but the North Koreans were a step ahead of them. They had to flee before they could reach Kim. See Sun-Chon Park, “Wearing a Blood-Stained Skirt,” 6. His son’s testimony also supported the contention that his father was not pro-Communist and did not work closely with the North Korean government. In fact, Kim had already permanently retired from Korean politics due to his disillusionment after the failure of his trip to North Korea in 1948. He had no intention to seek office for himself. According to Rev. Harold Voelkel, who knew Kim Kyu-sik well, Kim was “one of the most dedicated Christian men in Korea.” He believed that Kim did the broadcast under great pressure from the Communists. See Voelkel’s letter to Dr. John C. Decker, 29 July 1950, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 61. Thus, Kim Kyu-sik’s decision to go north and his death remained a mystery.

<sup>103</sup> Letter from Harold Voelkel to Dr. Charles Ranson, 1 November 1950, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 158.

that American forces would not bomb this famous refugee church because of its symbolic reputation.<sup>104</sup>

Based on the generally strong anti-Communist sentiment in the Christian community and the refusal of clergymen and laymen to collaborate with the authorities, the North Koreans were highly suspicious of the loyalty of all Christians, fearing that they would leak information to the ROK. These fears were justified; Christians tended to support underground anti-Communist activities throughout the South. As a result, the homes of Christians were constantly checked by soldiers. If they found any suspicious items in a home, the whole family would be in danger. In the case of Pastor Kim In-Yŏng (Kim In-yung), the Communists accused him of installing a short-wave radio transmitter inside a church organ. He was arrested and tortured for three days. Finally, he was released when they could not find any radio transmitter in the organ.<sup>105</sup> Pastor Kim immediately went into hiding to avoid further arrest.

### *Seoul City Sue: The Beginning of Psychological Warfare*

The North put similar pressure on US POWs. Under coercion, one American officer of the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division gave a 900-word radio speech denouncing American involvement in the war:

We did not know at all the cause of the war and the real state of affairs, and were compelled to fight against the people of Korea. It was really most generous of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea to forgive us and give kind consideration for our health, for food, clothing and habitation.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> The Young Nak church was constructed by the offerings of Northern Korean refugees and American Christians. The construction was completed in 1950.

<sup>105</sup> Riley and Schramm, *The Reds Take a City: The Communist Occupation of Seoul with Eyewitness Accounts*, 190-191.

<sup>106</sup> Philip D. Chinnery, *Korean Atrocity! Forgotten War Crimes 1950-1953* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2000), 9.

To further confuse and weaken the morale of the US soldiers, the North aired messages from “Seoul City Sue.” “Sue” spoke with a standard American accent and was familiar with American culture and society. She told her radio audience that if she, a white traitor, were to return home to the United States, she would get better treatment from ordinary Americans than would a black soldier.<sup>107</sup> Although the identity of “Seoul City Sue” was a mystery, the most widely accepted theory is that she was Anna Wallis Suhr, a Methodist ex-missionary to Korea.<sup>108</sup> If so, then “Seoul City Sue” was an unintended by-product of the American missionary movement, and marked the beginning of religious workers’ involvement in psychological warfare.

While the Communists’ favorite attack against the United States was racism, the US fought back by criticizing Communist persecution of Christian churches behind the Iron Curtain. The American government enlisted ex-missionaries in Korea and China, and escaped native clergymen to wage their own brand of psychological warfare against the North through the *Voice of America* (VOA). Religious freedom became the championing cry of the VOA’s broadcasts during the Korean War. According to Foy D. Kohler, chief of the VOA, the United States had used “every peg” they could find to hang their hats on the idea of religious freedom.<sup>109</sup> The VOA covered the progress of the

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<sup>107</sup> Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 374.

<sup>108</sup> Anna Wallis came to Korea in 1935 but she lost both her position as a missionary and her American citizenship when she married a Korean leftist named Suhr (also spelt as Sö). They spent the years of World War II in exile in China. When the Suhrs finally returned to Korea and she sought to reclaim her US citizenship, she was rejected because her husband was a leftist. When the war broke out and US citizens were being evacuated from Seoul, she was therefore ineligible and had to stay behind. Some reports indicate that the Suhrs were arrested and taken north against their will. Most of Anna Wallis’ missionary friends felt sympathy for her, believing that if she was indeed “Seoul City Sue” then she probably only served to save her life and the life of her husband, as was the case with many collaborators. *Ibid.*, 374-375. According to Raymond B. Lech, however, Anna Wallis Suhr was active also in the northern POW camps, indoctrinating American soldiers. If so, then Anna Wallis Suhr’s support of the Communists might have been voluntary. See Raymond B. Lech, *Broken Soldiers* (Chicago, IL: Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, 2000), 119-121.

<sup>109</sup> Harriet Rasooli-sa’eed, “The Iron Curtain is Not Soundproof,” *Presbyterian Life*, 14 August 1951, 8.

Korean War from its headquarters in New York. Koreans who possessed short-wave radios, especially Christians in the areas controlled by the North, secretly listened to the VOA, risking their lives to get up-to-date news on the war. No Küm-sök, the North Korean pilot of Catholic background who later defected to South Korea together with a MiG-15, was in fact a secret listener to the VOA.<sup>110</sup>

*“Korea Kids” and the Inch’ön Landing*

As the citizens of Seoul suffered under northern policies, many of them held out hope of rescue. “When we heard the U.S. planes flying in the sky,” Kim Ŭn-hyöng (Eun-hyung) wrote to her sister in the United States, “we were encouraged and happy. But we were sad and disappointed on the days of quietness. Everybody predicted out of his wishful thinking [sic]. Someone said the Allies [would] enter the city on August 15, while others said it would be on September 1.”<sup>111</sup> As days became weeks and weeks became months, many people gave up hope, especially when food ran out.

Nevertheless, the US Far Eastern Command under General MacArthur’s leadership was eager to launch a daring amphibious assault on Inch’ön just as many ROK supporters in Seoul hoped. MacArthur favored Inch’ön over all other sites because it was the closest harbor to Seoul (about 15 miles away). His plan was to catch the North Koreans by surprise, recapture Seoul in short order, and cut the North Korean forces in half. The general believed that by opening a second front, he would also relieve the

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<sup>110</sup> No Kum-sok, *A MiG-15 to Freedom: Memoir of the Wartime North Korean Defector Who First Delivered to the Secret Fighter Jet to the Americans in 1953* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Publishers, 1996), 47.

<sup>111</sup> Letter from Kim Eun-Hyung, ex-Assemblyman Kim Sangdon’s daughter, to her sister Kim Shing Hyung, 5 October 1950, Presbyterian Archives, Record Group 140, Box 1, Folder 19 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

stress on the Pusan Perimeter and strengthen the morale of the Korean people by recovering their capital. It was a political as well as a military move.

The choice of Inch'ŏn, however, was generally regarded by amphibious experts in the Navy as unrealistic and dangerous. The channel leading to the harbor (which is known as the Flying Fish Channel) was not only narrow, but also studded with reefs and shoals. Its five-knot current created another problem. What made it worse was that there was no beach, but only twelve-foot-high sea walls that enabled big ships to approach the harbor. Since the water rose and fell an average of twenty-eight feet every six hours, there would be no way out once inside the harbor until the next high tide. All ships would be stuck on the mud beach, making the landing particularly vulnerable if the beach was guarded by heavy guns. Secrecy, careful planning, adequate preparation, and a strong will and heart were the only hopes for success. General MacArthur appointed General Edward Almond to oversee the landing. MacArthur combined the 7<sup>th</sup> Army and the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine together with other supporting units and formed the X Corps. Under huge pressure from MacArthur, the X Corps had to be ready to land by September 15.

During this preparation time, Navy re-enlistment applications arrived from three Korean-born second-generation missionaries: William H. Shaw, Jim Lampe, and Horace Underwood (who was already in Korea, and whose earlier missionary work was explored in the first section of this chapter).<sup>112</sup> These men, who had all served as naval officers during World War II, had “spent their boyhood summers boating to and from Sorai Beach,”<sup>113</sup> so they were very familiar with the treacherous tides of the Yellow Sea, and in

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<sup>112</sup> Jim Lampe was the son of Rev. Henry Lampe, a Presbyterian missionary in Seoul.

<sup>113</sup> Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 376.

particular the Flying Fish Channel.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, growing up in Japanese-occupied Korea, they had no language problem in working with Japanese advisors, Korean soldiers, and American officers.<sup>115</sup>

Born in P'yŏngyang in June 1922, William H. Shaw (also known as Bill Shaw), the son of Rev. William E. Shaw,<sup>116</sup> was particularly gifted. When the Korean War broke out, he was pursuing a Ph.D. in political science at Harvard in preparation to serve as a missionary professor at Yonsei University. As soon as Bill Shaw heard the news, he wrote to his father from Harvard, "What [good is] it for me to go out to Korea in times of peace, if I'm not willing to go out now and serve them in their time of stress."<sup>117</sup> Delaying his Ph.D. studies and leaving his wife and two young children, Bill Shaw rejoined the Navy in order to return to Korea. As soon as his application arrived at the Pentagon, he was sent to Tokyo to assist with the top-secret Inch'ŏn Landing.

These three "Korea Kids"<sup>118</sup> were all assigned to duty with the intelligence section of COMNAVFE, under the command of Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy. They participated in planning the landing operation (under the top-secret code name, OPERATION CHROMITE). While the Navy was responsible for transporting troops and bombing Inch'ŏn Harbor, the actual combat would be the job of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division under Major General Oliver P. Smith. The three "Korea Kids" were attached to the amphibious force headquarters command during the landing. They were not,

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<sup>114</sup> Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 42-45, 72.

<sup>115</sup> Both Horace and Bill received formal Japanese language training in the Navy during World War II.

<sup>116</sup> In order not to confuse him with his father Rev. William Shaw, he will be called "Bill" from now on.

<sup>117</sup> Quoted in "For His Friends," by R. J. C., *Presbyterian Life*, 3 February 1951, 37.

<sup>118</sup> This was how the children of American missionaries to Korea were called. See Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 141.

however, assigned to combat. Instead, their job was to “guide the landing craft” and “answer questions along the coast as they came in.”<sup>119</sup>

To the surprise of many, the Inch’ön Landing was an exceptional success despite being delayed by Typhoon Kezia. The North Koreans failed to guard the harbor, in spite of warnings from Mao Zedong. Lt. Eugene Franklin Clark, an intelligence officer under MacArthur, was sent to secure the off-shore islands on Inch’ön with his Korean aides. When he landed on Tökchök-do (*do* means island), he received information sent from a Christian school master in Yönghüng-do that the North Korean army had “temporarily withdrawn all but a handful of troops from [Yönghüng-do],” an island very close to Inch’ön.<sup>120</sup> Lt. Clark felt that the report was trustworthy, partly because the messenger was a Christian. So he decided to immediately take Yönghüng-do with the help of the Christian schoolmaster and the village headman. This earlier-than-planned capture of Yönghüng-do was fortuitous to the invasion, because the island became a crucial base for taking the other outer islands, including Wölmi-do, right before the Inch’ön Landing.<sup>121</sup> Lt. Clark discovered that the North Koreans had placed only very limited defenses along the Inch’ön harbor.

On September 15, the X Corps first landed on Wölmi-do and then proceeded to the mainland. The landing party encountered very little resistance. Within twenty-four hours the marines had secured the beach. Within four days, the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Marines occupied Kimp’o Airport. Lt. Horace Underwood’s job was to interrogate dozens of Koreans, including North Korean POWs and Korean civilians, collecting

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<sup>119</sup> “For His Friends,” by R. J. C., *Presbyterian Life*, 3 February 1951, 37.

<sup>120</sup> Eugene Franklin Clark, *The Secrets of Inch’ön: The Untold Story of the Most Daring Covert Mission of the Korean War* (New York: Berkley Book, 2002), 30.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-58.

information on the enemies' defenses in Seoul.<sup>122</sup> The Marines needed this intelligence quickly because they were racing to capture Seoul before September 25<sup>th</sup>, the deadline set by General MacArthur. For his part in the Inch'ŏn landing, Horace Underwood was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with V ("V" indicated combat).<sup>123</sup>

### *The Death of Bill Shaw*

Since the Marines needed experienced guides to find the best route to Seoul, the 1<sup>st</sup> Division gladly accepted the requests of Lt. Horace Underwood and Lt. Bill Shaw to join the march. Both of them went with the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment commanded by Lt. Col Raymond L. Murray.<sup>124</sup> They reached the Han River on September 19. Pushed by General Almond to meet the schedule, the Marines were ordered to brave the Han River without strong air support, not knowing that the North Koreans had moved in from Nŭng-gok (Nŭng-gol) to defend the far shore (see Map 7).<sup>125</sup> Lt. Col. Murray sent Captain Kenneth Houghton across the Han with a small advance team, which included Lt. Underwood and another Navy Public Information Officer. After swimming the river and preparing for the assault craft to cross, the North Koreans attacked from the hill behind the village, forcing the assault craft and the team to turn back. The next day, with heavy artillery and air support, the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment forced their way across the river. Lt. Underwood received the Bronze Star with V for his daring crossing the night before.<sup>126</sup>

On September 22, once across the Han, the Marines waged a pitched battle to retake Seoul in combat street by street, block by block, and house by house. The

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<sup>122</sup> Walt Sheldon, *Hell or High Water: MacArthur's Landing at Inch'ŏn* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968), 247.

<sup>123</sup> Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 187.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 143. See also Shelby L. Stanton, *Ten Corps in Korea, 1950* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1989, 1996), 97-106.

<sup>126</sup> Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 143, 187.

casualties were not only soldiers but also innocent civilians who were “sandwiched” between the KPA and UN forces, and “had no place to run.”<sup>127</sup> To fight the street war, the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment split up into two groups. Lt. Underwood went with one Marine company toward Moraena (Morinai) and Sinch'on (Shinchon), while Lt. Bill Shaw went with the other toward Hongje-dong. Both units came under heavy fire. About five miles outside of Seoul, Shaw's company was ambushed on three sides, and he was killed while “trying to assist a group of Korean civilians [who were] caught up in the skirmish.”<sup>128</sup> He was one of five hundred American soldiers who lost their lives in the battle for Seoul.

Lt. Bill Shaw's death was not only a great loss to his family, but also to the US military and the Korean people. His death revealed something unique about American missionaries in uniform. First, Shaw was not alone in his concern for Korean civilians. Missionaries and their children in uniform all showed a similar concern for the well-being of the Korean people. They would make special requests of the military to assist the civilians. Their courage and religious beliefs sometimes influenced US soldiers around them to also volunteer to help rescue innocents in danger.

Bill Shaw's death also showed the value of these mission workers in the war effort. The report of Shaw's death shocked the Marine Division Headquarters so much that the Commander immediately ordered Lt. Underwood back to the headquarters because they did not “want their few language officers out on the front lines.”<sup>129</sup> This

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<sup>127</sup> Letter from Soon-Young Pai to Rev. Minsoo Pai, 23 October 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 1, Folder 19 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>128</sup> Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 144.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

decision probably spared Underwood's life, because the Marine 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment suffered the highest casualties in the battle for Seoul, with losses of 85 percent in Company D.<sup>130</sup>

*“Hedge Goes Home”*<sup>131</sup>

Lt. Underwood, however, did not receive the order to report back to headquarters until late in the afternoon. He was with the 5<sup>th</sup> Marines crossing the Yōnhŭi Valley near the Yonsei University campus. His company faced strong resistance because the KPA had decided to make the hill (Hill #104), where the Underwood House was located, their defense line for western Seoul. Since Lt. Underwood was very familiar with the area, he was “to brief people on various features” and direct artillery fire to attack the enemy's positions.<sup>132</sup> This battle was one of the most difficult in Seoul, requiring four all-out assaults to take the hill. Casualties were high on both sides.<sup>133</sup> In the end, the Underwood House was completely destroyed, while the rest of Yonsei campus was badly damaged.

Lt. Horace Underwood's participation in the Inch'ŏn landing and the battle to liberate Seoul was reported by *TIME* on October 2. The article “Hedge Goes Home” pointed out that the Underwood family had labored for decades in Korea, and built up a fine institution, Chosen Christian University (today's Yonsei University), to educate Korean young men and women. It was precious not only to Koreans, but to Americans as well. “Perhaps more clearly than other U.S. officers,” *TIME* wrote, “[Underwood] knew what he was fighting for” – to prevent “one of the most Christianized nations of the

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<sup>130</sup> Stanton, *Ten Corps in Korea, 1950*, 102.

<sup>131</sup> “Hedge Goes Home,” *TIME*, 2 October 1950.

<sup>132</sup> Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 144.

<sup>133</sup> Underwood found at least 150 dead North Koreans around the central part of the campus. The ROK Marine platoon had only 19 survivors after the battle.

Orient” from falling into the hands of the Communists.<sup>134</sup> Here *TIME*, which was always sympathetic to the missionary cause, presented to the American public a religious rationale to support UN action in Korea.<sup>135</sup>

### *The Liberation of Seoul*

Because Lt. Horace Underwood was with the Division Headquarters, he had the opportunity to participate in the ceremony of the liberation of Seoul in front of the “Blue House,” the National Assembly building in Seoul. General MacArthur was determined to have a ceremony to mark the liberation of Seoul, despite opposition from Washington.<sup>136</sup> It created conflict with the State Department, which objected to “any participation by the military commander in ROK government matters.”<sup>137</sup> Nevertheless, as usual, MacArthur had his way; and the Joint Chiefs reluctantly authorized him to “facilitate the restoration,” but warned him not to get involved in Korean politics.<sup>138</sup> Because of pressure from General MacArthur, the X Corps had to rush to fight their way into the city. Even before the Marines had effective control, General Almond hastily declared Seoul recaptured on September 25 in order to meet his boss’s timeline.

On September 29, General MacArthur held the handover ceremony in front of the smoldering National Assembly building, while the Marines continued to fight only a few blocks away. From a military view point, it was unrealistic and even dangerous to have a ceremony in the midst of severe street fighting, but from a political perspective,

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<sup>134</sup> “Hedge Goes Home,” *TIME*, 2 October 1950.

<sup>135</sup> *TIME*’s owner Henry Luce, the son of American missionaries to China, favored the missionary cause and was strongly behind Syngman Rhee. See Robert Edwin Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce, Time, and the American Crusade in Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 114-115.

<sup>136</sup> Stanley Weintraub, *MacArthur’s War: Korea and the Undoing of An American Hero* (New York: The Free Press, 2000), 152.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

MacArthur was trying to establish unity between the US and ROK troops and boost morale.

The tone of the handover ceremony was deeply religious and sentimental. The service began at noon when General MacArthur and President Rhee stepped up to the platform. The general announced before the UN troops, "By the grace of a merciful Providence, our forces fighting under the standard of that greatest hope and inspiration of mankind, the United Nations, have liberated this ancient capital city of Korea..." while the rumble of artillery firing was still echoing outside the courtyard.<sup>139</sup> The general shook hands with President Syngman Rhee and told him, "[On] behalf of the United Nations Command I am happy to restore to you, Mr. President, the seat of your government that from it you may better fulfill your constitutional responsibilities."<sup>140</sup> Then, the general "sanctified" the proceedings by asking everyone to join him in the Lord's Prayer.<sup>141</sup> Tears came to MacArthur's eyes during the recitation. "If there had been any chaplains around," said Admiral James H. Doyle, the master of amphibious tactics who was present at the ceremony, "they would have had to have gone back to school again."<sup>142</sup> Most of the soldiers at that time, however, did not quite understand the action of their army general. One Marine officer whispered to Lt. Horace Underwood, "They didn't take the city. What are *they* doing, giving it back?"<sup>143</sup> Nevertheless, the ceremony was widely reported all over the United States. Church opinion in the United States praised MacArthur as a great Christian general in American history.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Sheldon, *Hell or High Water*, 327-328.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Stanton, *Ten Corps in Korea, 1950*, 112.

<sup>142</sup> Quote in Weintraub, *MacArthur's War*, 154.

<sup>143</sup> Sheldon, *Hell or High Water*, 329.

<sup>144</sup> "Hail To The General!" *The United Presbyterian* 109, 15 January 1951, 2.

Some historians have interpreted this ceremony as a colonial-style imposition of the Christian religion upon the Korean people,<sup>145</sup> but, given that Rhee was a Christian and that Christians dominated Korean politics and the anti-Communist movement, MacArthur's performance had a clear political purpose. No doubt the recapture of Seoul did boost morale in the UN and ROK forces, but the message of God's divine will for the restoration of the city carried a significant message for the entire free world. MacArthur intended to convey to the whole world that he stood as the leader of a just and righteous army under the banner of the United Nations, returning Korea's capital to its rightful ruler, Syngman Rhee.

The ceremony also showed that at least for MacArthur the Korean War had become symbolic of a religious crusade against atheistic Communism. On September 1, 1950, when President Truman reported the situation of the Korean War to the American people, he again emphasized the idea of freedom – including religious freedom – in the battle to save Korea:

It is your liberty and mine which is involved. What is at stake is the free way of life-- the right to worship as we please, the right to express our opinions, the right to raise our children in our own way, the right to choose our jobs, the right to plan our future and to live without fear. All these are bound up in the present action of the United Nations to put down aggression in Korea.... Right now the battle in Korea is the frontline in the struggle between freedom and tyranny. But the fighting there is part of a larger struggle to build a world in which a just and lasting peace can be maintained.<sup>146</sup>

Truman believed that the American concept of freedom had “deep religious roots” and that the American people were “under a divine command to be concerned about the welfare of [their] neighbors, and to help one another.”<sup>147</sup> He therefore saw the UN action

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<sup>145</sup> See Weintraub, *MacArthur's War*, 154.

<sup>146</sup> Harry S. Truman, Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Situation in Korea, 1 September 1950, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1950* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 610-611.

<sup>147</sup> Harry S. Truman, Address in Independence at the Dedication of the Liberty Bell, 6 November 1950, *ibid.*, 706.

as a just and righteous response. The United States had no wish to occupy Korea or destroy its people and property, as Communist propaganda claimed.<sup>148</sup>

### *War Atrocities*

Following the liberation of Seoul, the UN began to investigate reports of atrocities committed by the North against both UN troops and the Korean people. Among the general population in the South, ROK government workers, pro-ROK politicians, professionals, and Christian leaders were the main victims, because the North Koreans wanted to deny South Korea any future political, social, economic, or religious leadership.

As the KPA prepared to pull back from Seoul, North Korean authorities set out to liquidate many of the remaining ROK government officials, civic and business leaders, and well-educated professionals. Professors, teachers, engineers, and mechanics were the principal victims of this final round of violence. Many people could not be found once the UN troops recaptured the city, including several political activists, such as An Chae-hong who had been the American-appointed Civil Administrator of the South Korean Interim Government, and Yŏ Un-hong, the brother of Yŏ Un-hyŏng.<sup>149</sup>

Communist authorities also called a meeting of all Christian pastors in Seoul. The police sent cars around to pick them up and escort them to the meeting place. But when the pastors arrived, they discovered that the “meeting” was a trap. They were promptly arrested and sent marching northward.<sup>150</sup> In the end, about fifteen Presbyterian pastors

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<sup>148</sup> Before the attack on Inch'ŏn, General MacArthur issued to his troops a statement explaining the military purpose of the operation, but the Russian media translated the statement falsely: “Before you is a rich city. In it are many sweets and wines. Take Seoul and all the girls will be yours. The property of the inhabitants belongs to the victors and you can send it home in packages.” See “In Package,” *TIME*, October 2, 1950.

<sup>149</sup> Deane, *The Korean War*, 95.

<sup>150</sup> Letter from James M. Philips to John Smith, 8 November 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

and prominent laymen, fifteen Methodists, six Orientals,<sup>151</sup> and one Salvation Army worker disappeared.<sup>152</sup> According to data collected by the World Council of Churches (WCC), about one hundred eighty pastors and evangelists were taken by the Northern Army (see Table 6.4). In addition, hundreds of ROK army and police personnel and rightist youths were also involuntarily sent north.<sup>153</sup>

Many more were killed outright. According to CIA estimates, about a thousand people in Seoul alone were executed in the days before the KPA retreated.<sup>154</sup> But the killing of political prisoners was by no means limited to Seoul; the KPA left atrocities behind in every major city. For instance, in Inch'ŏn, on the night just before the American landing, approximately fifty-three Korean civilians were killed and twenty-eight others were wounded when three guards at the city's police station attempted to murder all the ROK leaders and United Nations sympathizers incarcerated in the jail.<sup>155</sup>

To be fair, the South Korean police also committed some atrocities against civilians during the first three months of battle. For example, in order to weaken the Communists' power in the southern provinces, the ROK police arrested many local leftists and suspected Communist sympathizers as the invading army drew closer.<sup>156</sup> At least 1,200 suspected Communists were executed without a fair trial between June 25 and July 14.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> "6 Orientals" referred to the six Korean pastors supported by the Oriental Missionary Society.

<sup>152</sup> Korea News Letter Number 3, 2 November 1950, *Documents of the WWC Library: The Korean War*, 160-161.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Deane, *The Korean War*, 95.

<sup>155</sup> Chinnery, *Korean Atrocity*, 42.

<sup>156</sup> H. K. Shin, *Remembering Korea 1950: A Boy Soldier's Story* (Reno & Las Vegas, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2001), 39-40.

<sup>157</sup> Deane, *The Korean War*, 96.

Nevertheless, the systematic extermination of ROK supporters by the North was more organized and on a vastly larger scale. In Taejŏn alone, about five thousand to seven thousand people were murdered by North Korean authorities during the occupation, according to the investigations of the War Crimes Division within the Judge Advocate Generals Corps.<sup>158</sup> Most were policemen, officers of the Youth Defense Army, chiefs of the South Korean Youth Association, chiefs of local government offices, or headmen from various villages.<sup>159</sup> Many were Christians. Similar massacres also took place in Chŏnju, Sunch'ŏn, and other areas in the southern provinces (see Table 6.5 for the civilian casualties of the Korean War).<sup>160</sup> A US investigation revealed that some 14,606 or 84.6 percent of the total were killed during the last four days of September.<sup>161</sup> Most of those who escaped, like Pastor Kim In-Yŏng, did so by hiding during those critical days.<sup>162</sup> The Christian community concluded that “another occupation of Seoul, or any part of Korea, [would mean] the wholesale slaughter of Christians and all other outstanding people.”<sup>163</sup>

These reports of Communist atrocities were widely circulated in the United States. Not only were Koreans appalled, but so was the rest of the world. As firsthand witnesses, missionaries were particularly sickened by what they saw. For example, Dr. Horace H.

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<sup>158</sup> The War Crimes Division was established by the General Headquarters, Far East Command with Colonel James W. Hanley as its head. See Millett, *Their War for Korea: American, Asian, and European Combatants and Civilians 1945-1953*, 226-232 and also Chinney, *Korean Atrocity*, 21.

<sup>159</sup> Chinney, *Korean Atrocity*, 47.

<sup>160</sup> In these cases, formal investigations were conducted by the United Nations and therefore recorded. But, in most of other areas, the loss would be hard to account for. The South Korean government had too few resources to investigate most of the cases, leaving the actual condition inconclusive.

<sup>161</sup> Chinney, *Korean Atrocity*, 39.

<sup>162</sup> Letter from James M. Philips to John Smith, 8 November 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia. A similar story was also told by Lee Hyun Sook, a housewife from Seoul, seeking refuge in Hong Song. See Richard Peters and Xiaobing Li, *Voices from the Korean War* (Lexington, KY: The University of Press of Kentucky, 2004), 206-209.

<sup>163</sup> Letter from Rev. Francis Kinsler to Dear Friends, 9 December 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

Underwood, bitterly expressed his views on Communism a few days before his death, in January 1951:

When oh when will Christians in America begin to realize that Communism is avowedly and unchangeable [sic] ANTI-CHRIST? ... Americans are more highly educated than the Koreans understand various theories of politics better and of economics but the millions of people fleeing in abject terror before the Communists are not merely disagreeing with an economic theory, or even because they prefer one type of constitution to another, they are not afraid of the kindly old traffic cop – they have learned through massacred sons and kidnapped daughters, through all kinds of terrors what Communism is.... There is no compromise possible between Christ and Anti-Christ, there is no strategy that will avail except that of faith in God to the death if necessary. I was about to say that I hope America could learn what it means yet as I think back over what even I have seen I can only say I hope she doesn't have to learn the way Korea has learned.<sup>164</sup>

Dr. Underwood's portrait of Communism as the Anti-Christ was confirmed by these tales of unreasonable persecutions and the mass murder of innocent lives. The desires for justice and victory were strong in both Korea and the United States. Hatred and resentment of the Communists and their supporters intensified.

Therefore, even though President Rhee emphasized "unity, understanding, and forgiveness" in his speech at the handover ceremony, anger against accused collaborators seriously radicalized the Southern population. Even Christians, who should theoretically be forgiving and not seek revenge, were caught in an emotional dilemma. According to a letter from a Presbyterian elder, Yun Yŏng-ch'un (Young Choon Youn), a high school teacher who had been arrested and physically tortured by the KPA, could not forgive the Communists for what they had done to him and his nation. Following his release, he had hidden underground for forty days "like a rat" to escape death. In a letter, he asked his friend, Rev. Pae Min-su (Pai Min-soo), who was living in the United States at that time:

I had redetermined [sic] to consecrate my life to the Lord and our people.... That rascal [Choi Moon-sik] came out of the prison (on June 28 when the Reds opened the gate) and was very active. I saw him a few times according to the former fellowship, but when I look back [at] what they have done, I would shoot and kill him right away. I am so rough now. Is this a sin to kill such a fellow, Reverend? No, I have understood through the

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<sup>164</sup> Letter from Dr. Horace H. Underwood to My Dear Dr. Smith, 31 January 1951, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 17 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

experience of this war that it is not a sin to get rid of such a fellow. I have lost innumerable friends and all possessions. The Lord left me to finish the job for this country.<sup>165</sup>

Hatred caused revenge and further loss of life after the occupied areas were retaken by the South. Many survivors of the Communist occupation sought reprisals to revenge themselves on those who had collaborated with the North Koreans.<sup>166</sup>

Extensive violence against leftists, therefore, haunted the liberated areas. Investigations against Communist collaborators began as soon as Seoul was conquered, but many accused collaborators were arrested and even shot by ROK authorities without a fair trial. One man, Pai Sun-yŏng (Pai Soon-young), witnessed such an atrocity. As the troops entered Seoul, a large crowd of young men ran up the mountain with ROK national flags to greet them. Many people were shouting “*Mansei!*” (a greeting of praise) to the troops. The ROK Army shook hands “with boys and men with long hair and whiskers on white faces,” but immediately shot those “who had clean dresses, haircuts, and good looking people.”<sup>167</sup> Their reasoning was that only those who had been in hiding could be trusted.

The discovery of signed statements of contrition or cooperation during the northern occupation inspired further revenge on collaborators.<sup>168</sup> Some historians suggested that the figure for innocent lives lost in these retributions could be as high as 100,000.<sup>169</sup> When Colonel James M. Hanley, chief investigator of the War Crimes Division within the Judge Advocate Generals Corps, “raised the issue of investigating

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<sup>165</sup> Letter from Young Choon Youn to Rev. Pai Minsoo, 10 November 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 1, Folder 19 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>166</sup> Lee Hyun Sook, “Housewife in Seoul, Korea,” translated by her daughter, Lee Hong Im. See Peters and Li, *Voices from the Korean War*, 209.

<sup>167</sup> Letter from Soon-Young Pai to her uncle Rev. Minsoo Pai in the United States, 10 December 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 1, Folder 19 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>168</sup> Deane, *The Korean War*, 96,

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

war crimes committed by the South Korean army, the Korean National Police, paramilitary and special forces under ROK control, and civilian vigilantes,” he found that the UN command was uninterested in the issue.<sup>170</sup> Since his initiative was dropped, the true figure remains forever unknown.

The US military was similarly unenthusiastic over investigating misconduct by its troops during the Korean War. The most serious US atrocity was the use of lethal weapons against refugees. This crime was completely neglected during and after the war. Nor did the ROK government raise the issue either, for fear of controversy and of losing American military support. For many years, the Nogun-ni Incident and other attacks on refugees remained unacknowledged by the US government.

In the late 1990s, the incident was rediscovered by journalists from the Associated Press. Based on the testimonies of victims, veterans, and declassified documents, they published a Pulitzer Prize winning account that was later expanded into the book, *The Bridge at No Gun Ri: A Hidden Nightmare From the Korean War* (2001). The allegations stirred controversy in South Korea as well as in the United States. Under public pressure, the US defense department investigated the event and concluded that it had not been a deliberate killing of Korean civilians.<sup>171</sup> The incident, they determined, was a tragic and regrettable event caused by the poor training of the US soldiers, combined with fears that Communist guerrillas were pretending to be refugees. West Point historian Robert Bateman supported this claim, arguing that the number of victims

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<sup>170</sup> Millett, *Their War for Korea: American, Asian, and European Combatants and Civilians 1945-1953*, 232.

<sup>171</sup> Report of the No Gun Ri Review. U.S. Department of Army Inspector General, January 2001, <http://www.army.mil/nogunri/>.

was far smaller than the AP journalists had suggested and that there was no direct order from the US Command to massacre refugees.<sup>172</sup>

In response, historian Sahr Conway-Lanz discovered a letter from Ambassador John J. Muccio to Dean Rusk, proving that it was an existing policy within the US Command to shoot at refugees if they did not stop running toward American defenses. This policy was to prevent guerilla attacks. Although Conway-Lanz's discovery did not directly answer what specifically had happened in Nogŭn-ni, it did raise concerns over the general conduct of US troops throughout the Korean War and how much violence civilians had suffered. This finding unmasked the ugliness of war and showed the difficulties of upholding basic human rights or meeting the minimum humanitarian standards set by the international community when inexperienced soldiers faced a complicated wartime situation.<sup>173</sup>

## *CONCLUSION*

During this early period of the war, the US military's harsh policy on handling the security problems posed by the massive influx of refugees into its defense lines presented a sharp contrast to the US missionaries' relief efforts among the refugees. It is perhaps not surprising that the stress of fighting a losing battle and the paranoia of guerilla attacks would override humanitarian concerns for many soldiers and US officials. It was also natural for missionaries to champion the destitute.

American missionaries in the war zone constantly advocated the need for relief and fought for the rights of the refugees. Yet, it would be wrong to imply that the US

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<sup>172</sup> See Bateman, *No Gun Ri: A Military History of the Korean War Incident*, 123-130.

<sup>173</sup> Conway-Lanz, "Beyond No Gun Ri: Refugees and the United States Military in the Korean War," 50.

army showed no concern for the refugees; on many occasions, the military assisted the missionaries' efforts, as when officers would allow missionaries to cross the battle lines in order to bring refugees to safer locations. Although the missionaries could only help a limited number of people, their moral guidance perhaps saved US involvement in Korea from becoming bogged down in atrocity scandals and a public outcry over the ignoring of the refugee crisis. It is hard to measure the level of their success or contributions, but the voices of the missionaries were surely heard both in the battlefield and on the home front. Their presence in the war zone made the difference between life and death for many Korean civilians.

As the US entered the Korean conflict, religion offered a way for Americans to identify with the Korean cause in a decade of revival. The efforts of missionaries to bring the war home to America through reports and food-and-clothing drives strengthened this connection and produced a paternalistic view of the Korean people. Then, as reports of Communist atrocities against the southern people, particularly Christians, flooded in, America felt as a father would at the persecution of his children.

The relief work of the missionaries served a vital role, particularly in the first critical months of the war, when need was great, supplies were limited, and no other relief agencies had yet noticed the problem or gotten through the bureaucracy to address it. Countless lives were saved in this brief period. Furthermore, in being the first, the missionaries established their leading role in raising and distributing relief supplies. It was in this period that American Christians began or expanded some of the most famous charities of today. They became outspoken, and actively worked to promote awareness of the war and the plight of the Korean people, thereby influencing American public opinion.

The war also offered new opportunities for the growth of the Korean church despite its initial losses. Missionaries connected relief work with pastoral care by providing pastors for each *kun* in the overcrowded refugee centers. People began to identify the church as the place to find compassion and practical help, leading to an even more positive public image than the church had enjoyed before. The phenomenal growth of the Korean churches during and after the war is therefore understandable. In addition, with the help of American missionaries, the Christian community emerged as the most prominent political-moral force in consolidating South Korean nationalism against Communist expansion.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **Occupation and Evacuation**

#### *INTRODUCTION*

The victory at Inch'ŏn encouraged the United Nations to pursue a new goal of unifying Korea by force. The crossing of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel parted the Iron Curtain for a brief period, affording the world a rare glimpse of life under Communism. As UN troops marched into North Korea, missionaries, especially those who had worked in the North before World War II, eagerly followed behind. These missionaries would lend assistance to the brief UN occupation of North Korea. Then, in the ensuing evacuation crisis, they pressed the UN forces to transport hundreds of thousands of refugees. Although missionaries had no real authority, their eagerness to save civilians made an impression on those who did have authority. Their work was a major factor in the military decision to lend its support to the most massive human evacuation process in history. And though the evacuation of so many destitute human beings had no military advantage, this decision would prove to be a great psychological weapon. To the troops on the ground, it would give them a sense that the cause they fought for was just; and to the eyes of observers back home, it would serve as proof that people, given a choice, would choose freedom over Communism in droves.

## *UN OCCUPATION OF NORTH KOREA*

The UN occupation of North Korea was a unique period of the Korean War, but no historian has carefully analyzed its impact on the development of the war. Because of the success of the Inch'ŏn Landing, more missionaries were allowed to return to Korea; some even entered North Korea. Religious interests filled a special role in these events, as the US military, in an effort to stabilize the occupied regions, enlisted the help of missionaries and other religiously motivated people.

### *The Decision to Cross the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel*

The decision to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel has been a controversial issue in Korean War historiography. Historian Jongsuk Chay provided critical analysis of the debate in the State Department, while historian William Stueck has explored the international dimensions of the decision.<sup>1</sup> Within the Truman administration, there was a desire to unify Korea, so long as there was no definite sign of Chinese or Soviet intervention. The President authorized the crossing of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel on August 27, 1950.<sup>2</sup> It took another month for the United States to secure United Nations approval. On October 7, the UN passed a resolution “to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea.” In its ambiguity, this resolution sanctioned UN forces to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel.<sup>3</sup> Public opinion in the United States also favored a plan to “continue fighting” in pushing northward until

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<sup>1</sup> Jongsuk Chay, *Unequal Partners in Peace and War: The Republic of Korea and the United States, 1948-1953* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 210. See also William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 85-126.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 209-210.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

the North Koreans surrendered.<sup>4</sup>

Among South Korean officials, however, there was never any debate. President Syngman Rhee and his troops were eager to liberate the North. Rhee believed that the ROK Army had the right to cross the parallel and unify the country even if the United Nations refused to do so. Unification was both a personal and national crusade. Rhee's position was supported by a majority of the Southern population. Christians and northern refugees were particularly vocal supporters – the refugees were eager to return home, while the Christians wanted to liberate P'yŏngyang, the so-called “Christian capital of Korea.” On October 1, without waiting for the final decision of the UN, President Rhee (with General MacArthur's permission) ordered the 3<sup>rd</sup> ROK Infantry Division, which was waiting at Kangnŭng on the East Coast, to march north (see Map 8).<sup>5</sup> The 26<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiments were sent next. They first reached Kosŏng, and then pushed toward Wŏnsan. With the help of the Capital Division, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division captured Wŏnsan on October 10. ROK troops, however, did not stop but continued to march north and reached Hamhŭng on October 17. Ten days later, the ROK 6<sup>th</sup> Division reached the Manchurian border separating China from North Korea.

Rhee's political ambition and autocratic rule in South Korea had alarmed members of the United Nations, so they sought to deny him jurisdiction over the North by

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<sup>4</sup> In October 1950, the Gallup Poll did a public opinion survey on the question: “What do you, yourself, think -- should the fighting stop when we have succeeded in pushing the NK back over the line from where they started -- or do you think we should continue the fight in their own territory until they have surrendered?” 64% favored “continue fighting” in North Korean territory while 27% thought that the UN should “stop fighting.” See George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971, 1949-1958* (New York: Random House, 1972), 2:943.

<sup>5</sup> Chi Op Lee, *Call Me “Speedy Lee”: Memoirs of a Korean War Soldiers* (Seoul: Won Min Publishing House, 2001), 98. The United States had already decided to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel with UN troops on September 29. See Secretary Marshall's directions to MacArthur, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1950*, Vol. VII *Korea* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), 826. Rhee's action was not completely on his own initiative, but he was glad to obtain permission from MacArthur.

instructing General MacArthur to set up a military government in the North. When UN troops marched North on October 9, the race with the ROK army was on. General MacArthur directed General Walton H. Walker's 8<sup>th</sup> Army to take P'yŏngyang as soon as possible, while General Edward M. Almond's X Corps was to make an amphibious landing somewhere along the North Korean east coast. MacArthur's plan was that, if P'yŏngyang fell before General Almond landed, then he should no longer strike westward across the peninsula.<sup>6</sup> Instead, the X Corps would continue north to catch up with the ROK troops. This decision proved fatal, however, because a failure to secure the P'yŏngyang-Sinanju-Hŭngnam-Wŏnsan quadrilateral<sup>7</sup> – the “bottle-neck” and the heart of North Korea – left UN troops vulnerable to counter-attack (see Map 8). In addition, there was no coordination between the 8<sup>th</sup> Army and X Corps; they had poor communication and were under different commanding generals.

### *The Capture of P'yŏngyang and Other North Korean Cities*

P'yŏngyang fell to the UN on October 19. Before the war began, the city had approximately 300,000 residents. While most Communists had fled the city before UN forces arrived, the majority of the civilian population remained. The damage from UN bombing was not severe, and the public welcomed the troops enthusiastically. According to *TIME* correspondent Dwight Martin, who had traveled with the army, “the people of P'yŏngyang cheered, waving South Korean flags, British flags, Chinese Nationalist flags

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<sup>6</sup> James A. Field, Jr., *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), 253.

<sup>7</sup> In the P'yŏngyang-Sinanju-Hŭngnam-Wŏnsan quadrilateral, the axial range was low because the mountains rarely rose above 3000 feet. It had also the best transverse communications in the entire peninsula. Moreover, the harbors on both coasts were useful to forces sustained by sea, and that area's industrial towns were linked by a road net of considerable density in Korean terms. Thus, it was easy to defend and important to keep. See *ibid.*, 253.

and improvised U.N. flags, which had been designed from hearsay.”<sup>8</sup> He described the scene as “the most spontaneous demonstration seen in any Asiatic city since the World War II liberation of Shanghai from the Japanese.”<sup>9</sup> Many citizens in P’yŏngyang cried out at the tops of their voices, “*Chayu (Jayu) Haebong Mansei! Chayu (Jayu) Haebang Mansei!*” (“Hurrah for our freedom and our independence!”)<sup>10</sup>

It was strange that Dwight Martin did not mention the waving of American flags. Perhaps he forgot or perhaps it was just too obvious to list. Everywhere in the north, North Korean citizens made their own American flags, and waved them to welcome the American troops, not only in P’yŏngyang, but also in other cities as well.<sup>11</sup> Everywhere American soldiers went, they were joyfully welcomed by local citizens. Pfc. Leonard Korgie of G Company of the 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry wrote:

The civilians were so happy to see us. I was thrilled for them. They wanted to give us eggs and produce, not like the South Koreans, who tried to sell them to us. They lined the road in their villages, looking like they’d been relieved of a heavy burden – silent, happy, meek as lambs. I guess five years of Communist rule would do that to a people.<sup>12</sup>

The Underwood brothers also recorded how grateful the North Korean civilians were when they entered the North. In Hamhŭng, Lt. Richard Underwood told his aunt Grace Underwood about the atmosphere after the US soldiers entered Hamhŭng:

The entire atmosphere was one of thanksgiving that at last, after five years of Communist domination, they could laugh at jokes, visit their friends, go to church and come out from caves and holes where so many of the young men had been hiding to avoid the necessity of fighting for Reds.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> “Substantial Citizens,” *TIME*, 20 October 1950.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Chulho Awe, *Decision At Dawn: The Underground Christian Witness in Red Korea* (New York: Harper & Row, Publisher, 1965), 145.

<sup>11</sup> Michael R. Skerik, “Camouflage,” in *I Remember Korea: Veterans Tell Their Stories of the Korean War, 1950-53*, ed. Linda Granfield (New York: Clarion Books, 2003), 57. When Skerik saw a homemade flag flying in Wŏnsan, he asked for the flag and the Koreans gave it to him. It was a flag with only forty-nine stars by mistake.

<sup>12</sup> Pfc. Leonard Korgie’s recollection in Donald Knox, *The Korean War An Oral History: Pusan to Chosin* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publisher, 1985), 392.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Horace G. Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace: The Recollections of Horace G. Underwood*, ed. Michael J. Devine (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2001), 147-148.

Like Pfc. Korgie, Lt. Richard Underwood reported that the civilians offered American troops “their homes and their food (short as they were themselves).”<sup>14</sup> Some, according to Richard Underwood, were even willing to work for the UN for free.

Christians were particularly cheerful because they had just survived a month of the most intensive anti-Christian persecution since the Communists took power. Between the Inch’ön Landing on September 15 and the fall of P’yöngyang on October 19, a reign of terror had claimed many innocent lives as the retreating North Korean authorities sought to eradicate anyone they suspected might collaborate with the UN. The Catholic Church in the North lost one hundred percent of its priests (the actual number was sixty in total),<sup>15</sup> while more than one hundred fifty Korean Protestant pastors disappeared – not including elders, deacons, and prominent laymen.<sup>16</sup> Communists also executed many doctors, teachers, and skilled technicians.<sup>17</sup> Upon entering the city, UN troops discovered hundreds of fresh bodies in open fields, basements, and shallow mass-graves.<sup>18</sup> The ROK and the X Corps uncovered similar atrocities in every major city they captured, including Wönsan, Hüngnam, and Hamhüng.<sup>19</sup>

The violence did not stop with the Northern retreat, however. Communist guerrillas in the mountains and countryside threatened to punish anyone who collaborated

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>15</sup> “Vatican Delegation’s Mission in North Korea: No Priests Left and No Data on Number of Catholics,” Information provided by the Immaculate Conception Chapel in Seoul.

<sup>16</sup> According to Chulho Awe, a resident and an underground anti-Communist in P’yöngyang, Christian leaders were arrested and executed prior to the fall of P’yöngyang. Many of the underground anti-Communists in the North were Christians. Ibid., 82-85, 141. See also Donald N. Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience 1900-1950* (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2003), 387.

<sup>17</sup> A confidential letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 29 October 1950, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, ed. Kim Heung Soo (Seoul: The Institute for Korean Church History, 2003), 146.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 147. See also Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 387.

<sup>19</sup> For the case of Wönsan, see Richard Underwood, “Memories and Thoughts,” (Unpublished Manuscripts, 2002), 84-85. For the case of Hüngnam, see Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 148. For the case of Hamhüng, see letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 15 November 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15.

with the UN. These localized power struggles raised tensions and hampered the occupation government. To root out Communist influence, ROK armies brought with them South Korean police and rightist youth groups. Some of them were originally refugees from the North. These ROK supporters doled out their own brand of wartime justice, further escalating the tensions between the pro-Communist and the anti-Communist residents. UN troops watched helplessly, with no means of controlling the violence erupting from intense hatred, retaliation, and deep ideological conflicts.<sup>20</sup>

### *Missionaries Going “Home”*

From October to November, missionaries returned to Korea from Japan and the United States under the sponsorship of the American embassy in Pusan. The victory of Inch’ŏn and the recapture of Seoul encouraged Ambassador John J. Muccio to support the missionaries’ return. Medical missionaries received top priority, given the great need for medical and relief workers. Dr. George Rue, the Director of the Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital, returned on October 15 with his wife Grace, flying with Muccio on General MacArthur’s plane *Bataan*.<sup>21</sup> Others followed, including trained nurses. Among those sent by Presbyterian Boards were Rev. Earle J. Woodberry, who used to be a missionary to China, Mr. James M. Phillips and Mr. Raymond C. Provost.<sup>22</sup> The Methodists sent back Rev. Charles A. Sauer, Mr. Donald Payne, and Dr. Fred Manget, who would take charge of the Severance Hospital.<sup>23</sup> The exact number of returnees was unclear because most of them returned through different channels and it was hard to track all of them

<sup>20</sup> See Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 388.

<sup>21</sup> Penny Young Sook Kim and Charles Milles, *Though Bombs May Fall: The Extraordinary Story of George Rue, Missionary Doctor to Korea* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2003), 83.

<sup>22</sup> “The One Hundred and Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America,” Presented to the General Assembly, May 1951 (New York) – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>23</sup> “Korea News Letter Number 3,” 2 November 1950, *Missionary* Vol.4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

down. Perhaps no less than twenty had returned from overseas and served either in their own mission stations or in various relief organizations.

Following the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force's northward advancement, Lt. (Doctor) Howard Moffett was the first missionary to arrive in P'yŏngyang City, his birthplace. The Commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force, Lieutenant General Earle E. Partridge, had sent Lt. Moffett ahead to secure a suitable base to serve as their headquarters within the city, because the lieutenant "[knew] every inch of that terrain."<sup>24</sup> To the first group of civilians that he found, he asked whether they were Christians. One of them said that he was, and then asked the lieutenant whether he knew "Ma-Moksa" – the Korean title of Dr. Moffett's father, Rev. Samuel A. Moffett, the most famous and well-respected missionary in North Korea. As soon as the Korean found out that Lt. Moffett was the son of Ma-Moksa, he insisted on going with him into the city. Soon, fifteen more Christians were following along, "excitedly talking."<sup>25</sup> It was a kind of welcome that even Lt. Moffett himself did not expect. Once inside the city, Lt. Moffett surveyed the Capitol building of the North Korean government, which was built on a Presbyterian Mission compound, and took a nap inside Kim Il-sung's office. During the UN occupation of P'yŏngyang, the building became the headquarters of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army and the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force.

A few days later, Lt. Richard Underwood, Rev. Harold Voelkel (Civilian Chaplain), and Rev. William Shaw (Civilian Chaplain), also arrived with the UN troops. The two Reverends were former missionaries to P'yŏngyang, who spoke Korean with a strong P'yŏngyang accent. Next, other civilian missionaries came, including Rev. Edward Adams, Rev. Harry Hills, Rev. Archibald Campbell, and Rev. Francis Kinsler,

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<sup>24</sup> Letter from Howard Moffett, 30 October 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

and brought with them five Korean refugee pastors, Rev. Yun Ha-yŏng, Rev. Han Kyŏng-jik, Rev. Yi In-sik, Rev. Kim Yŏng-sŏn, and Rev. Yu Hwa-jun.<sup>26</sup>

These missionaries and Korean pastors met with surviving pastors and church elders, hearing, again and again, similar stories of life under Communism. “From all we learn,” Chaplain Voelkel wrote, “the method of liquidation was to march them along stretches from day to day northward until wearied and then in their exhaustion, unable to trudge along any longer, they were shot.”<sup>27</sup> Because of what they saw and heard from their Christian friends, these missionaries were convinced that “the Reds conducted a systematic, apparently a fine-tooth-combed extermination of the leadership of North Korea.”<sup>28</sup> Voelkel’s report on the loss of the North Korean leadership was published by *Presbyterian Life* on December 9, 1950, and also later by *Time Magazine* on April 2, 1951.

The visit of the missionaries and refugee church leaders brought hope to North Korean Christians. A special service was held on October 29 at the Sŏmun (West Gate) Presbyterian Church. For the first time since the 1945 liberation, North Korean Christians received Gospels and New Testaments.<sup>29</sup> During the service, Rev. Han Kyŏng-jik gave a sermon on Isaiah 60:1: “Arise and shine for the light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” In his message to Korean Christians, Rev. Han “challenged the people to get to work, not to lean on America or the United Nations as

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<sup>26</sup> A confidential letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 29 October 1950, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 146-147.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Chaplain Voelkel brought boxes of religious supplies with him from Seoul for distribution in P’yŏngyang. *Ibid.*

great and generous as their help might be.”<sup>30</sup> Revival meetings were held in different locations with the support of the US Chaplain Office.<sup>31</sup>

According to Lt. Howard Moffett, the response to the coming of these missionaries and refugee pastors was enthusiastic. “People were packed in like sardines [in the church] and thousands turned away,” due to a lack of room.<sup>32</sup> Many American soldiers and their chaplains were surprised to see that the streets in P’yöngyang “were covered with people carrying Bibles and hymnbooks” on Sunday.<sup>33</sup> Some soldiers invited Lt. Moffett “over to supper so as to talk about it.”<sup>34</sup> Lt. Moffett was delighted at the opportunity “to give them a good insight into Christian work” in P’yöngyang and North Korea. As a result, many soldiers mistook him as “Chaplain Moffett.”<sup>35</sup> Often, UN soldiers were invited by missionaries to churches, and participated in worship side-by-side with Korean natives.

Since they knew more about North Korea and North Koreans than anyone else, missionaries enjoyed good publicity as the foreign press flooded into P’yöngyang. *Time* reporters, *Life* photographers, and *American Broadcasting Company* writers all asked missionaries for information to conduct their reports. Religious journalists, such as the

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<sup>30</sup> A confidential letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 29 October 1950, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 146.

<sup>31</sup> Awe, *Decision At Dawn*, 159.

<sup>32</sup> Letter from Howard Moffett, 30 October 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>33</sup> Lt. Howard Moffett mentioned the reaction of American soldiers in his letter and Rev. Ned Adams reported the same kind of response to the Board published by the *Presbyterian Life*. See “The Church in Korea: Slow but Sure,” *Presbyterian Life*, 9 December 1950, 15.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 5 November 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

Editor of *Presbyterian Life*, Robert J. Cadigan, also visited P'yŏngyang. He regarded his visit as "one of the greatest ambitions of [his] life."<sup>36</sup>

Most of these correspondents recognized the contribution of American missionaries and wrote positive reports on the influence of Christian churches in North Korea. For example, *Time Magazine* presented a story by Dwight Martin on the Russian occupation of North Korea which was based entirely on an interview with Na Sŏng-dŏk (La Sung-duk), a 59-year-old elder in the P'yŏngyang's Sŏmun Presbyterian Church. Martin outlined Communist persecution of the Christian churches and the disappearance of various key church leaders. Although about thirty to forty percent of the Christian population passively collaborated with the Communist authorities, Martin recognized the Christian population as the strongest anti-Communist force in North Korea.<sup>37</sup> Other journalists also shared Martin's pro-Christian attitude as well. According to a *United Press* report from P'yŏngyang, North Korean authorities "suffered a severe propaganda defeat during the control of North Korea by trying to discredit American missionaries."<sup>38</sup> The main reason for such a defeat, the report explained, was that the citizens in P'yŏngyang "knew them to be kind, honest, and magnificent people."<sup>39</sup> Therefore, "when the Russians painted them as lying, thieving scoundrels," most of the people recognized the general dishonesty of Communist propaganda, and as a result, refused to take any Communist reports at their face value.<sup>40</sup>

*The Christian Century* was particularly interested in the development of Christianity in Korea. This non-denominational journal urged cooperation between the

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<sup>36</sup> "The World Scene: From Hope to Snowy Death," *Presbyterian Life*, 6 January 1951, 15.

<sup>37</sup> "Carrots and Radishes," *TIME*, 13 November 1950.

<sup>38</sup> "The Church in Korea: All the News Is Not Bad," *Presbyterian Life*, 11 November 1950, 15.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

Presbyterians and Methodists for the reconstruction of Korean churches.<sup>41</sup> Its editor pointed out that the Western church had a moral obligation to provide for the families of those who had been killed by the North Korean authorities because Communist leaders feared that they were undercover agents working for UN forces.<sup>42</sup> The losses of the Korean churches, the editor argued, would “give to Christianity a new power and moral status in its approach to the Korean people.”<sup>43</sup>

In early November, Major Alfred D. Simenski, who had just been elected to Congress from Newark, New Jersey, paid an important political visit to North Korea. Major Simenski’s job was to investigate Communist atrocities for the Department of Public Information. Chaplain Voelkel invited Major Simenski, in addition to several chaplains, including a Jewish chaplain, to attend a church meeting in Hamhŭng (see Map 8). Lt. Richard Underwood served as their interpreter. The Korean Christians “prepared a statement of thanks which was read [to express their] gratitude to America for deliverance from oppression.”<sup>44</sup> In response, Major Simenski promised to report their gratitude in his first speech before Congress on January 3, 1951. The Jewish chaplain also spoke and told the Korean Christians, “I bring you greetings from Jews everywhere.”<sup>45</sup> “It was heartening to the Koreans to know that they had so many friends who were anxious to help them in their time of need,” Chaplain Voelkel explained, “and it did the visitors good to see such a crowd of ardent Korean Christians.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Garland Evans Hopkins, “Korea’s Effect – Plus and Minus” (editorial correspondence), *The Christian Century* LXVII (15 November 1950): 352-353.

<sup>42</sup> “Korea Lengthens Roll of Christian Martyrs,” *The Christian Century* LXVII (29 November 1950): 1412.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 19 November 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

By building relationships with American politicians and publicizing Korean Christianity, US religious and secular journalists fostered an increased awareness and interest in Korea among the American public. Although the excitement over the successes of the occupation period was to be short-lived, it paved the way for an enthusiastic outpouring of American support for the relief efforts that would soon be needed, once the Chinese Communists entered the war and turned the tables again.

### *Missionary Activities in the Occupied Areas*

Since the Communists had purged the educated class before fleeing, the US Army had difficulty finding natives who were qualified to run the government.<sup>47</sup> Colonel Archibald W. Melchior, a civil-affairs officer who was responsible for organizing a provisional city council, could not identify the leading citizens in the city.<sup>48</sup> His initial method was to find a well-dressed Korean and ask him to “round up some substantial citizens.”<sup>49</sup> Of course, the loyalty of these recruits, as well as their training, was very questionable. Without experienced administrators or qualified interpreters, American civilian affairs officers faced a severe challenge. In some areas, the search was so desperate that some US officials wanted to reinstate the Communist government in order to prevent a state of anarchy. By doing so, of course, the troops offended the local anti-Communists, and created confusion and misunderstanding between the occupation forces and the Korean civilians.

With such challenges, the US Army welcomed the help of missionaries and Korean Christians in the administration of the occupied regions. Lt. Moffett and

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<sup>47</sup> Letter from Edward Adams to John C. Smith, 12 November 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 14 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>48</sup> “Substantial Citizens,” *TIME*, 30 October 1950.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

Chaplain Voelkel sought help from various Christian communities to locate anti-Communists to work for the UN. Christians in P'yŏngyang proved eager and supportive; while in some other less-Christianized cities, such as Wŏnsan, many feared retribution for collaborating should the Communists return.<sup>50</sup> Frequent guerilla attacks also led local people to shy away from Americans. Still, according to the missionaries, the Christian community in the North remained the most loyal supporter of the UN occupation.

As missionaries served the UN military government, they also provided materials and protection to the Christian community. One example of material support occurred when missionaries learned of an abandoned Communist grain stockpile in the countryside; they secured "free passage" for two Christian youth organizations to bring the grain to P'yŏngyang for relief.<sup>51</sup>

An example of the protection was the missionaries' efforts to free Christians mistakenly imprisoned by UN forces. Because of active Communist guerilla movements, many North Korean civilians had been arrested as suspected Communists. Chaplain Voelkel's position in the POW administration enabled him to release those he knew were falsely imprisoned. For instance, in Anju, eighteen Christians were mistaken for guerrillas because they possessed several Soviet weapons. The elder of the church found Chaplain Voelkel and explained that these men belonged to a local defense force for security against guerrillas. Voelkel immediately went to the POW camp and arranged for their release.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Letter from Chaplain Voelkel, 19 November 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15. See also Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 387, 390.

<sup>51</sup> Letter from Edward Adams to John C. Smith, 12 November 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 14 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>52</sup> Letter from Chaplain Voelkel, 5 November 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

Since the occupation period was short, missionaries in fact could do very little for the North Korean Christian community. Instead, their brief visits caused serious problems for the Korean Christians. Communist supporters blacklisted those who collaborated with the UN forces and waited for revenge when the Communist authorities returned. Christians were identified as traitors because of their close relationship with the occupation troops. Although missionaries did make some contributions to assist the military in governing the occupied areas, their real impact would be felt during the impending evacuation of hundreds of thousands of refugees, following the Chinese intervention in late 1950 that quickly changed the tide of the Korean War.

#### *MISSIONARIES AND OPERATION HEARTBREAK*

On October 18, the day before UN troops captured P'yŏngyang, Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) had secretly crossed the Yalu River. The Chinese had warned the UN several times in late September and early October against any violation of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel through the Indian Ambassador to the People's Republic of China (PRC), Sardar K. M. Panikkar. Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai told Panikkar plainly that the Chinese would tolerate the presence of South Korean forces in the North, but that an "American intrusion into North Korea would encounter Chinese resistance."<sup>53</sup> The State Department received this warning through London on the same day.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless,

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<sup>53</sup> Quote in Priscilla Roberts, "Panikkar, Sardar K. M.," in *Encyclopedia of the Korean War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, ed. Spencer C. Tucker (New York: Checkmark Books, 2002): 510.

<sup>54</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States 1950*, Vol. VII Korea, 839.

Washington seems to have underestimated the significance of Zhou's warning and thereby caused one of the worst military disasters in US history.<sup>55</sup>

### *China Enters the Korean War*

Mao Zedong's decision to send troops to save North Korea quickly changed the direction of the Korean War. Historian Chen Jian argued that China entered the war because of Chinese Communist "leaders' perception of China's security interests and their judgment of to what extent and in which ways such interests had been challenged during the Korean crisis."<sup>56</sup> Truman's decision to send the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait had upset Mao's plan to invade Taiwan in August 1950. The US had interfered in what they considered to be a domestic affair. And now US troops (under a UN label) were marching towards China's North Korean border. Chinese Communist leaders were initially divided over how to respond. Mao won the debate, however, by arguing that China should reassert its historical influence over East Asia and also protect itself by resisting foreign encroachment around its borders. Therefore, the Chinese government

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<sup>55</sup> The puzzling part of this phase of UN operations was that even though the United States might not have halted its attack against the North, the Far Eastern Command in Tokyo should have exercised caution in directing the troops' movements in North Korea. Military historians generally attributed such failure to General MacArthur's arrogance and the lack of coordination between the 8<sup>th</sup> Army and X Corps. See Shelby L. Stanton, *The Ten Corps in Korea, 1950* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1996) and Stanley Weintraub, *MacArthur's War: Korea and the Undoing of an American Hero* (New York: The Free Press, 2000).

<sup>56</sup> Jian Chen, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 4.

clearly warned that China would intervene if US troops crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel.<sup>57</sup>

It was not that the US turned a deaf ear to such threats. From August 1950, the Truman administration took actions that suggested they considered Chinese intervention as a serious possibility. The State Department and the intelligence agencies examined and re-examined the Chinese warning. The President later disclosed that he had flown on October 15 to Wake Island for a meeting with General MacArthur to discuss the possibility of Chinese intervention. But if this is all true, then why did the US army not exercise more caution as it advanced toward the Yalu River?

Two primary reasons for America's miscalculation were poor communication with China and pride in US military strength. The United States had refused to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC) after it was established on October 1, 1949, so there were no direct official communication channels between the two governments. Such indirect diplomacy as existed was less effective than direct communication, helping to breed mutual misunderstanding of the other's intentions. In addition, the amazing success of MacArthur's gamble at the In'chŏn Landing likely clouded American leaders' judgment. Few were willing to challenge General MacArthur's confidence that the Chinese Communists would not intervene or that the UN forces would be able to defeat them even if they did.

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<sup>57</sup> The reasons they chose India as their channel of communication instead of other Western nations continues to be investigated. A possible explanation is that, because of the resentment against Western imperialists and the new sense of Asia's ascent to power and influence, the Chinese chose a recently independent Asian country as their spokesperson rather than a neutral Western state. An even more plausible explanation involves matters of diplomatic and military maneuvering. Mao Zedong chose to fight the United States in Korea instead of in Taiwan because of the relative advantage of "human-wave" tactics in ground assaults. China would be at a disadvantage in naval and air warfare. He did not expect the United States to back off and give up its military objectives even if China delivered its ultimatum loud and clear. Sending his messages through India would keep the Americans in suspense, while at the same time giving the Chinese soldiers more time to sneak through the China-Korean border for a surprise attack. Mao, as a matter of fact, did not want to confront the United States openly. Therefore, he never declared war against the United States. Instead, he sent "volunteers," so that the United States would not have an excuse to attack the Chinese mainland.

And yet, ironically, the Chinese Communists secretly entered North Korea on the same day that General MacArthur was on Wake Island offering assurances to President Truman. The Chinese strategy was specifically designed to take advantage of MacArthur's north-bound movement. From October 15 to November 25, Chinese "volunteers" traveled by night along the ridge of Nangnim Sanmaek, taking up positions surrounding the isolated UN units. Prior to their major offensive, China only sent a few regiments to test the strength of the UN troops along the Chinese-Korean border, thereby misrepresenting their actual strength and concealing their infiltration behind the UN defenses. MacArthur took the bait when both the 8<sup>th</sup> Army and the X Corps marched north toward the Yalu River.

*"Missionary Kids" in US Intelligence Units*

As the US failed to take the Communist threat seriously and continued to march toward the border between China and North Korea, frontline soldiers began to encounter periodic attacks from the Chinese "volunteers." There were also additional warnings and signs of the possibility of Chinese intervention when UN troops entered P'yŏngyang. Before the North Korean Communists left the city, they threatened P'yŏngyang residents that they would return with the Chinese army, and that any person collaborating with the UN forces would certainly be punished. In late October, locals informed ROK soldiers that Chinese troops had been spotted in the northern mountains. These rumors were confirmed when the ROK's 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment captured the first Chinese prisoner on October 28. Prior to that day, UN troops near the Yalu River had already captured eleven Chinese. Both Lt. Richard Underwood with the X Corps in the east and Captain Charles Bernheisel with the 8<sup>th</sup> Army in the west, because of their language skills, had

interrogated these prisoners and concluded that the Chinese forces had entered the war. They sent their reports to the UN Command headquarters in Tokyo.

Nevertheless, US intelligence analysts in Tokyo dismissed these Chinese prisoners as Korean-Chinese who fought with the Chinese Communists in Manchuria during the Chinese civil war. Because of the headquarters' refusal to accept their field reports, Lt. Richard Underwood was "furious" and "often ranted to the X-Corps G-2 (Intelligence Unit) about it."<sup>58</sup> But his superiors refused to do anything to pressure Tokyo, leaving Lt. Underwood frustrated and fearing for the safety of the UN forces.

Captain Charles Bernheisel was with the 8<sup>th</sup> Army at the frontline. In early November, with his superiors refusing to acknowledge the Chinese intervention, he loaded several Chinese POWs in a vehicle from the frontline, and drove them several hours south to the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Headquarters in P'yŏngyang in order to warn the commander of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army. Recognizing the seriousness of the situation, General Walker immediately recalled his probing columns and formed his army up along the south bank of the Ch'ŏngch'ŏn River. Before moving his troops further north, he waited for the logistical deficiencies of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army to be resolved by the reopening of Chinnamp'o, a vital seaport for logistic support on the west coast (see Map 8).<sup>59</sup>

General Walker's caution merited praise and a military fiasco could have been avoided if MacArthur had slowed down his advance and established defenses between Sinanju and Hŭngnam. But General MacArthur, commanding from Tokyo, pursued an aggressive policy built around a desire to end the war quickly and an underestimation of the numerical strength of the Chinese troops. When the port was finally opened on

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<sup>58</sup> Underwood, "Memories and Thoughts," 88.

<sup>59</sup> James A. Field, Jr., *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea* (Washington, D.C.: Naval History, 1962), 256.

November 20, 40,000 tons of supplies were unloaded for the 8<sup>th</sup> Army. On November 24, in spite of confirmation that the Chinese were intervening, MacArthur ordered a new offensive, because he considered the UN forces to be strong enough to repulse the Chinese Army.<sup>60</sup> In reality, the UN defensive line was stretched too thin, especially since the rugged terrain hamstrung communications between the 8<sup>th</sup> Army and the X Corps. The competitive spirit between the two commanding generals did not help communications and coordination. The divided and isolated UN divisions, moving into rough, unfamiliar terrain under unfavorable weather conditions, were waiting to be slaughtered.

This new offensive sent the UN troops straight into a Chinese ambush. After four days of fierce battle, to MacArthur's surprise, the fronts of both the ROK Army and the X Corps collapsed. The Chinese used the tactic of "human sea waves" to terrorize UN forces. They sent hundreds, or sometimes thousands, of troops in waves, screaming and yelling in the face of the UN's withering firepower. Some troops in the following waves were unarmed because they were expected to find rifles on the ground as they advanced among their fallen comrades.<sup>61</sup> Many UN soldiers were shocked and demoralized by the brutality of war and this massive loss of life. The Marines in the Ch'angjin (Chosin) Reservoir were particularly hard hit and fighting for their lives. Casualties among ROK and US Marines were high. Even though the UN had stronger firepower and enjoyed almost unchallenged air superiority, the troops were overwhelmed by the number of the enemy and frustrated by the malfunctioning of their weapons in the cold weather.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 240.

<sup>61</sup> Stephen E. Pease, *Psywar: Psychological Warfare in Korea, 1950-1953* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1992): 86.

On November 28, General Walker and General Almond were summoned to Tokyo for a conference with General MacArthur. The truth of the strength of the Chinese offensive was finally revealed. Beijing had sent 30 divisions, totaling 250,000 men, to Korea. United with the 180,000 North Korean new recruits, the enemy was considered too strong for the current UN forces. In order to preserve the strength of UN troops, the Commander authorized both the 8<sup>th</sup> Army and the X Corps to withdraw immediately. On December 3, the 8<sup>th</sup> Army began a full retreat from P'yŏngyang, and the X Corps from Hamhŭng.

### *Evacuation from P'yŏngyang*

The sudden reversal of the Korean War disappointed many pro-American and anti-Communist Koreans, especially those who had actively collaborated with the United Nations. The Christian population was particularly at risk since they had worked closely with UN occupation forces. American missionaries feared for their Christian friends. They immediately arranged transportation for them. They organized what they called, "Operation Heartbreak," an attempt to evacuate Christian leaders to the south.<sup>62</sup> Trucks loaded with Christian leaders and their families were sent southward.<sup>63</sup>

In order to make their way southward, refugees had to find a means to cross the Taedong River because the bridge was destroyed by Communist agents. Many risked their lives by crawling over the broken bridge. Along the Taedong River, UN soldiers constructed temporary pontoon bridges to allow only tanks and army vehicles to cross; refugees were not allowed to use these bridges. Missionaries wrote each of the Korean drivers a note declaring that the passengers were Christians, and asking UN troops to

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<sup>62</sup> "The World Scene: From Hope to Snowy Death," *Presbyterian Life*, 6 January 1950, 15.

<sup>63</sup> Letter from Rev. Edward Adams to Dr. John Smith, 1 January 1951, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 197, Box 1, Folder 3 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

assist their escape. Most of these trucks were able to cross the pontoon bridges and pass the UN checkpoints unchallenged.<sup>64</sup>

Lt. Moffett could have left the city with Ambassador Muccio earlier when the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force abandoned P'yöngyang, but he decided to stay on a little longer in order to assist the refugees. Luckily, he had requisitioned a 1939 Plymouth in P'yöngyang. The car had once belonged to his missionary neighbors. His uniform allowed him to use the car to start ferrying carloads of Koreans on the pontoon bridge across the Taedong River before the city fell into the hands of the Communists on December 5. He did not count how many people he had helped, but he tried to assist as many as he could before the troops destroyed the bridge. His final carload included the family of a long-time Presbyterian Mission employee. They all jammed into the car for the seventeen-hour ride to Seoul. There exists no data on how many people left P'yöngyang, or how many Christians the missionaries evacuated, but the estimated number of all refugees on the road to the South was more than one million.<sup>65</sup>

#### *A Small Miracle in Chinnamp'o*

Refugees who could not cross the Taedong River turned westward toward Chinnamp'o, hoping to find luck in crossing the river or catching a boat to the South. On December 5, Lt. Jim Lampe, a Korean-born missionary child who had participated in the Inch'ön Landing earlier, was with the Navy at the port of Chinnamp'o. His job was to direct the evacuation of troops and materials. Having spent his high school years in P'yöngyang attending Pyeng Yang Foreign School, Lt. Lampe's heart was bitter about

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<sup>64</sup> Awe, *Decision at Dawn*, 163-164,168.

<sup>65</sup> Gertrude Samuels, "Korea's Refugees – Misery on the March," *New York Times*, 11 February 1951, 156.

the deterioration of the war situation and the decision to retreat from North Korea. Nevertheless, there was very little he could do.

The situation at the dock was disorganized and chaotic. The naval units that had already anchored at the port were: the Destroyer *Foss*, under Lieutenant Commander Henry J. Ereckson which was providing the city with electric power; a small Korean naval base command with three motor launches; and a minesweeping group at the mouth of the Taedong River.<sup>66</sup> Waiting for evacuation at the port were about 1,700 American soldiers belonging to the port logistics group and roughly 6,000 Koreans, including wounded soldiers, government workers, military and political prisoners, police and boy scouts.<sup>67</sup> But in addition to these people, who had an official claim for transportation, there were also 50,000 refugees.

At the time, no officers knew exactly how many transport ships were coming or whether the Navy could evacuate these panic-stricken refugees. All that the South Korean Navy could offer was one hundred sailboats. Taking 50,000 people on boats to Pusan would be impossible, but an effort was made to transport 20,000 across the river so that they could move southward on foot.<sup>68</sup> Lt. Lampe worked anxiously to evacuate as many Korean civilians as possible before the Americans abandoned the port.

Time was running out, however. By noon December 5, Lt. Lampe's ship had already loaded the most valuable supplies on the landing craft and the captain wanted to be under way. Lt. Lampe struggled to postpone the pullout while he directed local sampans and junks to fill with refugees. He used the power craft to pull them to the other side of the River so that they could proceed southward to Seoul. More people were

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<sup>66</sup> Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea*, 271-272.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

flooding into the dock even at the last minute. Eventually, Lt. Lampe had to leave with his ship, lamenting his failure to save them all.<sup>69</sup>

Nevertheless, his sincere attempt to save the refugees probably enlightened other Naval officers too. What Lt. Lampe did not know after his departure was that a US navy transportation ship, *Bexar*, which had failed to receive notice of its diversion to a safer destination, arrived at the port unexpectedly. The Naval officers sent all the remaining three thousand latecomers at the docks onboard before they destroyed the oil storage, harbor cranes, and railway equipment at the port.<sup>70</sup> Those rescued considered it a small miracle.

### *A Great Disappointment in Wönsan*

While the Navy was destroying Chinnamp'o, another military evacuation was under way in Wönsan. The decision was made earlier on December 2. Chaplain Voelkel was in Wönsan visiting churches when the evacuation command was issued. Wönsan was his wife's birthplace. Being the son-in-law of "Sö-al-lun Moksa" (Rev. William L. Swallen), Voelkel was warmly welcomed by the Christian community in Wönsan. Originally, he had planned to stay for a week, but the news of a full scale Chinese intervention and the order of evacuation disrupted his plans. He could not even attend a union service of all the Presbyterian churches on Sunday afternoon because the Army ordered all civilian personnel to move out and proceed northward to Hüngnam by air.

His sudden departure disappointed many church leaders. Chaplain Voelkel, however, could not tell them the details of the military situation since it was "restricted

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<sup>69</sup> Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 389-390.

<sup>70</sup> Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea*, 273.

information.”<sup>71</sup> As he was leaving, the officers showed him the direction where an estimated seven-thousand Communist guerrillas were about to attack the city. The inability to assist his fellow friends in Wönsan depressed the missionary, but he refused to quit the Chaplain Corps in the midst of this crisis. He remained in the war zone in order to find a way to minister to ROK troops, POWs, and the Christian community in Hamhüng and Hüngnam, the last beachhead the UN forces were holding in North Korea.<sup>72</sup>

The defense of the Wönsan port perimeter was conducted by one US Army battalion and two battalions of Korean Marines. The destroyers *Saint Paul*, *Zellars*, *Hank*, and *Sperry* were standing by offshore, firing missiles against any enemy troop concentrations.<sup>73</sup> Hearing the sound of gunfire and facing attack by Communist guerrillas, refugees followed the retreating troops into the perimeter. By December 7, except for one ROK Marine Battalion which was assigned to cover the removal of the last pile of equipment, all UN forces were evacuated.

Meanwhile, the number of refugees at the dock had increased rapidly from December 7 to December 9. Since the Navy did not expect such a huge influx of refugees to the perimeter, there was only one transport ship available. About 7,000 jammed onboard, a total far above the normal capacity of the ship.<sup>74</sup> Many, however, had to be left behind. Some of them proceeded to Hüngnam on foot along the coast. By December 9, the Navy had evacuated 3,800 troops, 1,146 vehicles, and 10,000 tons of cargo – exceeding the total amount of military equipment and personnel removed from

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<sup>71</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 6 December 1950 (from Hüngnam), Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea*, 286.

<sup>74</sup> It was not clear whether or not the Navy left any more refugees onshore.

Chinnamp'o.<sup>75</sup> Vice Admiral James H. Doyle, who was in charge of the Wönsan evacuation, was shocked to discover so many people wanting to depart North Korea. With the lesson he learned from Wönsan, Admiral Doyle planned to take 25,000 refugees with him in his next operation in Hüngnam.<sup>76</sup>

### *The Hüngnam Perimeter*

About ten miles from Hüngnam was Hamhüng, another major political and industrial center in North Korea where the Headquarters of the X Corps had been established in late October. Hamhüng was the capital of Hamgyöng Province and one of the most Westernized cities in North Korea. It had a population of around 100,000 people. The Canadian Presbyterian Mission had its Korean headquarters there. Americans had been enthusiastically welcomed by many Hamhüng residents. Lt. Richard Underwood spent most of his time with POWs and intelligence units in Hamhüng. Chaplain Voelkel was also stationed there with the Chaplain Corps to minister to ROK troops and POWs. A Korean Christian, Dr. Hyön Pong-hak (Hyun Bong-hak),<sup>77</sup> who had grown up in Hamhüng and later escaped to South Korea in 1945,

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<sup>75</sup> Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea*, 286-287.

<sup>76</sup> James H. Doyle and Arthur J. Mayer, "December 1950 at Hüngnam," *The U.S. Naval Institute* (April 1949): 4.

<sup>77</sup> Born in Hamhüng, Dr. Hyön Pong-hak was the son of an influential Presbyterian minister and educator. His family fled from Hamhüng to Seoul in December 1945. Sponsored by the Presbyterian Missions in Seoul, Hyön received his medical degree from Severance Union Medical College and spent two years studying pathology at the Medical College of Virginia. During the Korean War, he joined the ROK Marines. Because the Marines needed interpreters more than doctors at that point, he became a civilian interpreter for General Hyun Joon Shin, the Commanding General, and Colonel Sung Eun Kim, the Chief of Staff. When General Almond visited the ROK Marines in mid-October, he was particularly impressed by Hyön's fluency in English. After learning that he had studied in Virginia, Almond's home state, and that he was from Hamhüng, which would be the Headquarters of the X Corps, General Almond arranged for Hyön's transfer to X Corps as his Civil Affairs Advisor. Later, Dr. Hyön became a professor of pathology and hematology at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia. See Bong Hak Hyun, "Christmas Cargo: A Civilian Remembers The Hüngnam Evacuation," *Korean and Korean American Studies Bulletin* 8 (Spring/Summer 1997): 33.

was General Almond's civil affairs advisor. His responsibility was to check the credentials of local politicians who wanted to participate in the military government.<sup>78</sup>

In early December, General Almond, the Commander of the X Corps, established Hŭngnam harbor as the final base of evacuation for the remaining UN Units in North Korea. The troops up north in the Ch'āngjin (Chosin) Reservoir area had to break the Chinese encirclement and fight their way back to the Hŭngnam Perimeter if they wanted to evacuate back to the South. With the support of several hundred Navy and Marine aircraft operated from the airfield and from the ships of Task Force 77, the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, and the ROK I Corps all managed to fight their way out of the frozen hills, making their way to Hŭngnam.

General Almond planned to clear Hŭngnam harbor by December 25, bringing a total of 400,000 tons of military equipment with him. He did not want to let any supplies or equipment be destroyed or left behind. In order to do so, the general estimated that he would need to mobilize 75 cargo vessels, 15 troop ships, and 40 Tank landing ships (LST's ships). He would also want the air force to lift 500 tons of men and equipment from December 14 to 18. There was no precedent for this daring evacuation plan, but the general was determined to get the job done.

### *Pressure from Christians in Hamhŭng*

In early December, as the retreat of the UN troops became obvious to Hamhŭng residents, many of them panicked. Christians, local military government officials, and those who had cooperated with UN forces were certain that they would be executed when the Communists returned.<sup>79</sup> Members of the Christian community first approached

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

Chaplain Voelkel in tears on December 5, asking him to “secure permission from the Army authorities to provide the Christians of [Hamhŭng], 3000 of them, transportation in the event of an evacuation.”<sup>80</sup> Although he understood their desperation and wanted to offer his help, it was difficult for Voelkel to give them any assurance. At that point, all Voelkel could think of was to give the Christian refugees letters asking the American officers to assist them if room was available for them to evacuate.<sup>81</sup>

Seeing that Voelkel had made no commitment to guarantee their evacuation, the Christian leaders turned to Dr. Hyŏn. Like Voelkel, Hyŏn initially had no confidence about getting such a guarantee either, because his boss, Lt. Colonel Moore, chief of the Civil Affair Section, had earlier refused to help, claiming that the army had no plan and no room to evacuate the civilians.<sup>82</sup> Hyŏn, however, received support from Colonel Edward Forney, one of Almond’s able assistants, who directed the operation of Hŭngnam evacuation. Both of them petitioned their requests to the general together. Their argument was that both pro-American local leaders and Christians would be massacred if the US Army turned its back on them.

### *Military Priority over Civilian Concern*

General Almond understood their plea but was hesitant for four reasons. First, the general did not know whether he had enough transportation for even his own troops. Second, port facilities would not be able to support both military and civilian evacuation. Third, he was concerned about Communist infiltration among the refugees that might jeopardize the position of the UN forces. Fourth, he needed Tokyo’s approval. Even so,

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<sup>80</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 6 December 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Hyun, “Christmas Cargo: A Civilian Remembers The Hŭngnam Evacuation,” 34.

Almond was sympathetic to Hyön's plea for the Christians in Hamhŭng, and promised to contact Headquarters and discuss the issue with General MacArthur.<sup>83</sup>

On December 9, any hope of a civilian evacuation seemed lost when the US Army announced that it would not be able to evacuate even its Korean civilian employees, because the Navy did not have enough ships for them.<sup>84</sup> The official date for the final pullout from Hamhŭng was December 15. An order was given to clear the main roads between Hamhŭng and Hŭngnam for military transportation. US troops set up road blocks to prevent refugees from traveling from Hamhŭng to Hŭngnam on foot.

According to Chaplain Voelkel, who drove frequently between Hamhŭng and Hŭngnam with his jeep, "great groups were held up at bridges and other check-points at the point of a gun and bayonet."<sup>85</sup> In some cases, when Christian groups pleaded that being Christians, they would be a priority target for the Communists, some sympathetic soldiers furnished trucks and took them to Hŭngnam.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, such tactics did not work for everyone. Most refugees were turned back. By December 15, even the most sympathetic US officers could do nothing to help the refugees because most of the vehicles had been transported to Hŭngnam, waiting for evacuation. Chaplain Voelkel thus advised Christians to keep off the main road, traveling on back ones so that they could get to Hŭngnam before it was cut off. Whenever he saw people stopped at a checkpoint, he tried to direct them to back roads and comfort them through prayer.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>85</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 6 December 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

### *A Change of Policy*

Meanwhile, Dr. Hyön did not sit idly by. Together with Father Patrick Cleary, a Maryknoll missionary to Korea assigned as a Catholic Chaplain to the X Corps, Hyön approached the ROK Marines, hoping to secure boats for Christians. Because of their pressure, Colonel Sin Chun-hyön (Shin Jun Hyun), the Commander of 1<sup>st</sup> ROK Marines, informed Dr. Hyön the next day that he would allow refugees to board the two ships, *Landing Ship* and *Tank*, that were assigned to move out the ROK Marines' equipment the following day.<sup>88</sup> More good news came on December 15, the last day of the Hamhŭng evacuation. General Almond finally announced that he would evacuate four to five thousand civilians from Hamhŭng to Hŭngnam by train that night.<sup>89</sup> One thousand spaces in particular would be reserved for Korean Christians, but he could not guarantee their passage to South Korea because no ship was available at that time.<sup>90</sup>

While Father Cleary was responsible for gathering the Catholics, Dr. Hyön and Voelkel went to inform the Protestants with the help of a local Christian, Ch'ae Ch'ung-muk (Chai Chung-muk). On arriving at Hamhŭng, they spread the word to the local UN employees, who had already given up any hope of being able to leave. The news revived and mobilized them to proceed to the railroad station. When Dr. Hyön and Ch'ae heard the report that some Christian refugees had been arrested by American military police the day before, they insisted on stopping by the prison. According to Chaplain Voelkel, they found out that in addition to local Christians they knew, some Christian refugees from Paech'ön were there also. One of them was so overjoyed that he broke out and cried,

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<sup>88</sup> Hyun, "Christmas Cargo: A Civilian Remembers The Hŭngnam Evacuation," 36.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 6 December 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

“Jesus, Jesus,” in his gratitude. Chaplain Voelkel, Dr. Hyön, and Ch’ae cleared about thirty of them with the officer-in-charge.<sup>91</sup> They sent them home to get ready for evacuation.

Then they drove to all the Protestant churches in the city, telling them the good news. The plan was for each congregation to gather at its church before eight o’clock instead of going to the station on its own. The main reason was that UN authorities had imposed a curfew in Hamhŭng City from six o’clock at night to six o’clock in the morning in order to control potential Communist infiltration. Chaplain Voelkel went to the Provost Marshall at Hamhŭng City Hall and found Colonel Hammond, who was in charge of the Military Police (M.P.) and informed him of their plan to evacuate Christians to Hŭngnam. Colonel Hammond was very sympathetic toward the Christian cause because his sister, who was a missionary in Africa, had been martyred only a year before. He immediately instructed his M.P. officers not to fire at people until after eight. For double safety, he also sent two M.P. officers to escort each congregation to the railroad station.<sup>92</sup>

By midnight, there were about 50,000 people crowded at the station, ten times more than General Almond had promised to transport. Many people wanted to leave the city because they were afraid of the Chinese “volunteers.” This created a huge moral dilemma for the officers, given the limited capacity of the train. In the end, the precious spaces were offered to those who faced certain of death when the Communists returned.

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid. See also Hyun, “Christmas Cargo: A Civilian Remembers The Hŭngnam Evacuation,” 36. There are a few small discrepancies between Voelkel’s letter and Hyön’s recollection of the event. After careful examination of the two documents, Voelkel’s description is probably closer to the truth because it was written two days after the event while Hyön’s was a recollection decades later.

<sup>92</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 6 December 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

The majority had to be turned away. Colonel Hammond and his M.P. (Military Police) officers were in charge of screening the refugees. It took four hours for his men to locate all Christians at the station and put them on board.<sup>93</sup> The exact number of refugees who were eventually transported by the last train to Hŭngnam was not clear, but the way to the harbor was not completely blocked. Some who were not able to get on the train tried to cross by walking through frozen rice fields and mountain roads; about half of them made it to the seashore.<sup>94</sup> Some single men were so desperate that they even pretended to be Communist soldiers so that the M.P. officers would take them to the South as POWs. According to Lt. Richard Underwood, at least one individual did so successfully.

### *The Evacuation of Civilians by Boats*

The next day there were about one hundred-thousand refugees crowded at Hŭngnam. The majority were from Hamhŭng, with some from Wŏnsan, while others had followed the troops from the north.<sup>95</sup> Their numbers hampered the military evacuation. General Almond set the priorities clearly, but they were not irreversible. Military personnel came first, then vehicles, equipment, supplies, and, last of all, refugees.<sup>96</sup> No one could be sure whether there would be boats left for the refugees. The temperature dropped rapidly overnight to -10 degrees. It was so cold that a cup of boiling water would be covered with ice within a few minutes.<sup>97</sup> How to take care of these refugees became a big problem for the Civilian Affairs officers. They distributed flour, barley, and rice for the hungry refugees, and directed some of them to Sŏhojin, a suburb of Hŭngnam.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Hyun, "Christmas Cargo: A Civilian Remembers The Hŭngnam Evacuation," 36

<sup>95</sup> Doyle and Mayer, "December 1950 at Hŭngnam," 4,

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Underwood, "Memories and Thoughts," 89.

General Almond and his young aide-de-camp Lt. Alexander M. Haig, Jr., who would later become a four-star general and eventually Secretary of State, flew over the chaotic scene at Hŭngnam in two light liaison planes (L-19). Seeing the masses of refugees “carrying their meager belongings had intermingled with [their] troops,” the general told his young lieutenant through the radio, “We can’t leave those people. Take care of that, Haig.”<sup>98</sup> It was an impossible task, but for a young lieutenant the word of the general was absolute for him to follow. When requesting the necessary number of ships from his senior officers, Lt. Haig spoke with authority by emphasizing the will of the commanding general. After hearing him, other senior officers found ships for the refugees.<sup>99</sup>

The boarding of refugees onto transport ships began on December 16, according to Chaplain Voelkel.<sup>100</sup> The process was difficult because it was hard for the officers to keep 100,000 frantic people in line. Sometimes, officers on the ship needed to fire their guns in order to stop people from climbing onto an already overcrowded boat.<sup>101</sup> Each day, the Navy continued to move out tens of thousands of refugees. Most of the LST’s ships expanded their capacities to four to five times higher than usual. The *LST 668* took 10,500, and *Virginia Victory* carried 14,500. On average, other ships that carried equipment had about 5,000 refugees on board. The *SS Meredith Victory*, which was already loaded with jet fuel before its arrival, was the last refugee ship to depart from

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<sup>98</sup> Bill Gilbert, *Ship of Miracles: 14,000 Lives and One Miraculous Voyage* (Chicago: Triumph Books, 2001), 94.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>100</sup> In Hyŏn’s account, he said it was December 19. But, Voelkel’s letter was written on December 17 while he was on his way to Pusan, and before he left Hŭngnam. He witnessed how many refugees crowded on the LST’s ships. His account should be more accurate than Hyŏn’s recollection. Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 17 December 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>101</sup> Dwight Martin, “Like a Fire Drill,” *TIME*, 25 December 1950.

Hüngnam. It carried the last 14,000 refugees to Pusan on December 23. According to General Haig, “they all got out” before the US Navy destroyed the dock facilities.<sup>102</sup> Haig’s words were also confirmed by a warrant officer in the Third Infantry Division at Hüngnam, John Middlemas. By the time his division was evacuated, Middlemas said, “All the refugees were gone. The only thing left was what we were blowing up.”<sup>103</sup>

There were also other smaller-scale evacuations along the eastern coast while the X-Corps was leaving.<sup>104</sup> Söhunbong (Suh Hun Pong), a small fishing town near Hüngnam, had about 3,600 refugees waiting for a boat to go south. On December 16, shortly before he left on *Hunter Victory* for Pusan, he visited the Christians in the area. Knowing that there was no boat for these refugees, he immediately contacted naval officers to ensure that these refugees were not forgotten. The officers promised to help, but the people had to wait.<sup>105</sup> After Voelkel left, the refugees waited four more days in cold and hunger until the arrival of a LST boat, taking all of them to Kōje Island, off Masan (see Map 4). One baby was born onboard. Chaplain Voelkel found the refugees later through Colonel Hammond, who had been given the new responsibility of taking care of the 70,000 refugees on Kōje Island.<sup>106</sup>

All the refugees transported by sea from North Korea to Pusan were screened by the Eighth Army’s Logistical Command. Those refugees who were determined to be

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<sup>102</sup> Gilbert, *Ship of Miracles*, 113.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 118-120.

<sup>104</sup> For the Iwon, Chaplain Harold Voelkel mentioned the event in his letter, 17 December 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15. In the case of Songjin, a South Korean transport, *BM 501*, carried 4,300 people. See Stanton, *The Ten Corps in Korea 1950*, 314. Data for other cases were unavailable. Nevertheless, under President Rhee’s direction, ROK troops facilitated many of their resources to bring out numerous North Korean refugees. They depended mainly on private fishing boats. For a huge evacuation like Hüngnam, they had to depend very much on the United States.

<sup>105</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 17 December 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>106</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 25 December 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

Communists residing north of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel would be detained in POW Enclosure 1 in Tongnae, and Communists whose residence was south of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel would be turned over to local civil authorities. All non-Communist refugees would be released through civil assistance or ROK civilian channels. In late December, due to the overcrowding in the city of Pusan, the ROK government decided to divert refugee ships to Kōje Island or Cheju Island for relocation.<sup>107</sup> Among the total estimated 1,912,500 refugees from North Korea, 545,000 of them were lucky enough to find their slots in refugee camps by February 1951.<sup>108</sup> The rest had to camp out in the country, waiting for the ROK government and UN relief agencies to construct more refugee camps.

### *The Evacuation of Christians from Seoul*

In South Korea, the shocking news of the Chinese intervention demoralized many citizens who had just settled back into Seoul. With the memory of the Communist occupation and the experience of being caught between two armies still fresh in their minds, many Seoul residents, especially Christians, wanted to evacuate immediately. Missionaries in Seoul called for an emergency inter-denominational meeting and decided to find means to evacuate all the Christian clergymen and their families from Seoul quickly.

Through their political connections with top South Korean officials, missionaries were able to obtain a refugee center. The governor of South Kyōngsang Province, Yang Sōng-bong, designated “a place six miles north of Pusan in a quiet country place as a refuge for the pastors’ families.”<sup>109</sup> The main difficulty was getting there. It was

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<sup>107</sup> “The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War,” 8-5.1A AA.K (Military History Office: Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G3 Headquarters, United States Army, Pacific, June 1960): 8.

<sup>108</sup> Samuels, “Korea’s Refugees – Misery on the March,” 156.

<sup>109</sup> Letter from Rev. Edward Adams to Dr. John Smith, 1 January 1951, Presbyterian Church Archives,

hundreds of miles away from Seoul and the Han River bridges had been destroyed since the onset of the war. Although an army pontoon bridge had been built, it was reserved for military purposes. Pedestrians were not permitted to cross it. Only mission trucks driven by American missionaries were allowed onto the bridge.<sup>110</sup>

With two trucks in their possession, the Presbyterian missionaries ran a “truck service” between Seoul and Taegu so that the refugees could take other public transportation to the Christian refugee camp in the designated area. Instead of using only Korean drivers, at least one missionary had to escort the group because the ROK Army would seize any privately owned vehicles. The Methodist Mission, due to a shortage of missionaries, had already lost two of their precious trucks when they sent Korean drivers on the road alone.<sup>111</sup> In other words, truck evacuations were possible because of the missionaries, and only the Presbyterian Missions had the missionary manpower to do so.

Presbyterian missionaries started their evacuation operation sometime in mid-December, a week earlier than the ROK government. The first trip used “two large mission trucks, 2-½ and 3-½ tons, which were packed to the limit with some of [their] most important pastors and their families and baggage,” a total of eighty people.<sup>112</sup> Rev. Francis Kinsler was the driver for one truck, and Ray Provost another. It was a rough and dangerous ten-hour journey because they had to pass guerilla patrolled areas. Altogether, more than two hundred people, mostly Christian pastors and their families, were evacuated in three trips.

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Record Group 197, Box 1, Folder 3 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>110</sup> Harry A. Rhodes and Archibald Campbell, *History of the Korean Mission: Presbyterian Church in the USA*, Vol. 2 1935-1959 (New York: Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, The United Presbyterian Church in the USA, 1964), 44.

<sup>111</sup> Letter from James Philip to his Dad, 25 December 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

Meanwhile, through an inter-denominational effort to appeal to the ROK government, missionaries also succeeded in getting several boxes on a train to Pusan.<sup>113</sup> In this way, more than seven-hundred Christian pastors and their families were evacuated, except for sons between the ages of eighteen to thirty-seven – since these were subject to a mandatory draft. The Church World Service (CWS) also had a freight box for its relief supplies. An additional one-hundred men rode on top of it.<sup>114</sup> Before they departed, the Presbyterian missionaries gave each pastor relief money – about US\$20 – the equivalent of one month’s income. A total of US\$1,800 was distributed on that day alone.<sup>115</sup> Although no such expenditure was provided for in the Mission budget, the Presbyterian Mission Board in New York gave its Korea Mission a great degree of freedom. A wire from the Board, written by Rev. John C. Smith, the Secretary for Korea and Japan, promised the missionaries, “IF YOU NEED FUNDS SPEND IT PERIOD WE WILL FIND THE MONEY SOMEHOW.”<sup>116</sup> Later in February 11, 1951, twenty-two denominational groups of the American Protestant Church under the banner of the United Appeal for Christian Services called for special money offerings for Korea and paid for part of these cash advances.<sup>117</sup>

Chaplain William Shaw and Father George M. Carroll were the most helpful in arranging sea transportation for Christians, through the US and ROK Navy at Inch’ŏn. According to Rev. Harry Rhodes and Rev. Archibald Campbell, the ROK government allowed Christian refugees to join the government-organized evacuation program,

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Letter from Rev. Edward Adams to Dr. John Smith, 1 January 1951, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 197, Box 1, Folder 3 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>115</sup> Letter from James Philip to his Dad, 25 December 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia. See also Rhodes and Campbell, *History of the Korean Mission*, 44.

<sup>116</sup> Rhodes and Campbell, *History of the Korean Mission*, 45.

<sup>117</sup> “US Church Mission Help Korean Homeless,” *The Sunday Messenger*, 11 February 1951.

because of the Communists' hatred for Christianity. They departed on December 24. Each denomination was given a quota to distribute among its individual churches. Since baggage took space that people could fill, evacuees were allowed to bring only a large bundle of bedding per family, one suitcase for each adult, and half a suitcase for each child. They also needed to prepare enough food for about a week. Just like their brethren in the North, these families were "leaving behind everything else in the way of worldly goods and chattel."<sup>118</sup>

Nevertheless, a major difference was that their passage was secure and the evacuation process was orderly and peaceful. On the dock, there were seventy orphans from the Yōngnak Orphanage with only six women to care for them. If they had been in Hūngnam, they would have perished because of the crowds and the cold weather. But in Inch'ōn, people on the dock – refugees, Korean navy men, police, missionaries and bystanders of all sorts – were patient enough to "[form] a human chain stretching from the place where the orphans were encamped on the pier to the loading platform."<sup>119</sup> Compared to other mass evacuations, according to James Philips, it was "the finest example of self-restraint."<sup>120</sup> More than one thousand Christians were evacuated on that day, including the last group of pastors and their families, and Catholic priests and nuns.

From that point on, missionaries began to evacuate church "elders, school workers, deacons, and lay people of all walks of life,"<sup>121</sup> including tired and weary Christian refugees from North Korea. Evacuation continued on a daily basis through Inch'ōn. On January 1, however, there were no more boats and about fifteen hundred

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<sup>118</sup> Letter from James Philip to his Dad, 25 December 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

Christians faced the danger of being left behind. The next day, missionaries received information that since “a section of government families had been overlooked,” high officials secured another boat and carried the fifteen hundred Christians with them.<sup>122</sup> Before the Han River Bridge was closed on January 3, all missionaries, together with the remaining Christian refugees, evacuated safely to Taegu.<sup>123</sup>

### *IMPACT OF MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES DURING THE EVACUATION*

The evacuation of Hŭngnam was not only a successful military operation that brought out 105,000 troops, 17,500 vehicles, and 350,000 tons of bulk cargo, but also the biggest humanitarian evacuation of civilians ever in American military history.<sup>124</sup> In eight days, a total of 98,000 refugees, not including babies carried on their mother’s backs, were shipped out by the US Navy. The real victory was not how many tons of equipment were saved. For those who were there, it was the saving of so many refugees that stuck in their hearts. According to the memory of Lt. J. Robert Lunney, a crewman on the *Meredith Victory*, the refugees’ willingness to endure severe pain and suffering in order to leave North Korea showed him “what it must be to live under Communist rule.”<sup>125</sup> When he looked back, Lunney realized how happy his captain and other fellow crew members felt after they brought the refugees to Pusan. It was because they “had rescued these people and they would live in freedom,” an idea that “was extremely

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<sup>122</sup> Edward Adams, “The Church Met a Need in Korea,” *Presbyterian Survey*, August 1951, 17.

<sup>123</sup> Rhodes and Campbell, *History of the Korean Mission*, 47.

<sup>124</sup> James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War: Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, US Army, 1972), 304.

<sup>125</sup> Quoted in Gilbert, *Ship of Miracles*, 154.

important to everyone in those years,” when people feared for “the growing communist influence throughout the world.”<sup>126</sup>

### *Obtaining a Psychological Victory*

Focused on military objectives, the US Army initially had no plans to evacuate civilians, not even those who had worked for them. The winning of Colonel Forney’s support for civilian evacuations through Dr. Hyön was a major breakthrough. According to Admiral Doyle, the key to the evacuation’s success was Forney’s don’t-take-no-for-an-answer management style which achieved the impossible: allowing all refugees to be rescued without compromising his military objectives.<sup>127</sup>

The evacuation of civilians from North Korea gave the brief UN operation above the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel a new meaning and purpose. Although UN troops had to withdraw back to the South due to Chinese intervention, many people believed that the United Nations had won a psychological victory. In the words of Joseph R. Owen, a young US Marine lieutenant and a survivor of Ch’ängjin (Chosin) Reservoir withdrawal as well as author of the book *Colder Than Hell* published by the Naval Institute, “If that was their participation in a civil war, they showed what side they were on with their feet. They did not leave their homes and come out at the point of a bayonet.” He then added, “It made me realize that we were doing the right thing in Korea, and I’m proud to have been a part of it.”<sup>128</sup> A similar sentiment was also expressed by Admiral Arleigh Burke, one of the Navy’s most fabled officers, “I remember the thousands of weebegone Koreans who were hungry, destitute, and fearful, but who at the same time had that strong desire for

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>127</sup> Doyle and Mayer, “December 1950 at Hüngnam,” 4-7.

<sup>128</sup> Quoted in Gilbert, *Ship of Miracles*, 104.

freedom and the willingness to make sacrifices for freedom.”<sup>129</sup> The successful saving of hundreds of thousands of civilians lifted the morale of the retreating army. President Truman, hearing of the successful evacuation of Hŭngnam, called the operation “the best Christmas present I’ve ever had.”<sup>130</sup>

The South Korean government was delighted by the efforts of the US Navy, not only because they also cared about the fate of their northern countrymen, but also because it gave a psychological and political boost to Rhee’s regime. When Admiral Doyle later arrived at Pusan, President Rhee sent several high-ranking South Korean officials to congratulate Admiral Doyle on his achievement. These officials wept, according to Doyle, as they thanked him for the number of refugees that he had helped to rescue. Honors and medals were given to General Almond and Admiral Doyle for their contributions in evacuating 98,000 refugees.<sup>131</sup>

The evacuations at Hŭngnam and other locations along the coasts of North Korea also caused many American political leaders in Washington to confront the dilemma of upholding moral and humanitarian principles in the midst of a total war. On the one hand, the evacuation of refugees gave a moral and psychological boost to the UN war efforts, but on the other hand, moral and humanitarian principles imposed limits on the choice of weapons and the military tactics that could be used against the enemy. Securing a total victory by any means became politically difficult under the potential objections of some religious and humanitarian groups in the United States and Europe because of their high moral principles.

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<sup>129</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 105.

<sup>130</sup> Quoted in Robert Leckie, *Conflict: The History of the Korean War, 1950-1953* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1962), 228.

<sup>131</sup> Doyle and Mayer, “December 1950 at Hŭngnam,” 7. See also “Presidential Unit Citation” given by the Republic of Korea on 16 August 1951, Record Group 38, Box 4, Folder 4, MacArthur Archives, Norfolk.

### *The Preservation and Expansion of Christian Influence*

Missionary efforts helped preserve the influence of the church in Korea, saving Christians in both North and South from the retribution of the Communist armies. The road from Seoul to Pusan was a trail of tears in the merciless Korean winter. The refugees were frequently harassed and driven off the roads by retreating soldiers.<sup>132</sup> Many died, especially women and children. While the majority of these South Korean refugees had to fend largely for themselves, church leaders received special assistance from missionaries under government backing. No other group, except government officials and their families, received the same level of professional help. Christians were, in many ways, specially provided for and protected by missionaries, a privilege that often made the difference between life and death.<sup>133</sup>

More than that, once Christian refugees arrived in Pusan, they received donations from American churches,<sup>134</sup> helping them to not only survive but also to build churches, orphanages, temporary schools, technical institutes, shelters for widows, and clinics. In the end, these social services benefited all Korean refugees, and strengthened the church's positive public image. Dr. Thoburn T. Brumbaugh, the Secretary of the Methodist Board of Foreign Missions (Far East), reported that the United Methodist Church in the United States – the largest Protestant denomination in America – wanted to mobilize every resource at its disposal to “[make] Christianity a vital and constructive force” in Korea, especially “among all those who have been driven out of the routine course of daily

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<sup>132</sup> Russell Spurr, *Enter The Dragon: China's Undeclared War Against the U.S. in Korea, 1950-51* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1988), 280-282.

<sup>133</sup> For a graphic description of the refugees' flight from Seoul, see Spurr, *Enter the Dragon*, 281-282.

<sup>134</sup> Letter from Dr. John Smith to Rev. Edward Adams, 3 January 1951, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

living.”<sup>135</sup> The two Presbyterian boards, and the American Catholic Church, all of which had major interests in Korea, did the same. Therefore, the efforts of missionaries were crucial not only to the survival of the Christian Community in Korea, but also to the future expansion of Christian influence in South Korea.

There is no solid data available on how many Christians actually were evacuated from North Korea. However, judging from the cases in P’yöngyang and Hamhŭng, perhaps fifty percent of the Christian population within the UN-occupied areas had fled south. The biggest and most famous refugee church, the Yöngnak Church, reported that, following the fall of P’yöngyang, an average of about one thousand new Christian refugees arrived and sought their help each day.<sup>136</sup> In the south, North Korean Christians clustered together and established their own congregations in Pusan, Kōje Island, and Cheju Island.

As the war developed, Christians became an even more prominent political force in South Korea. By early 1951, a total of five million North Koreans were living in the South, having arrived as refugees either before the war or during the evacuations described above. Countless more had died along the road; North Korea was missing nearly half of its population. These refugees in the South accounted for about twenty percent of the total South Korean population. They eagerly supported Syngman Rhee’s policy to “advance northward and achieve unification” (*pukchin t’ongil*) because they all wanted to return to their homeland.

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<sup>135</sup> Letter from Dr. Thoburn T. Brumbaugh to “Dear Korea friends,” 3 March 1951, *Missionary* Vol.4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

<sup>136</sup> Harold Voelkel, *Open Door to Korea* (Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 50-60.

The Church community, in particular, stood firmly behind Rhee because of his pro-Christian attitude. In the 1952 presidential election, Christians set up the Korean Church Committee for Election, which was based in some 3,500 churches with 700,000 adherents, mobilizing their resources to support Rhee's re-election.<sup>137</sup> Preachers presented Rhee as the "Moses of Korea" and his running mate, Yi Ki-bung, as "Joshua." They defined the election as a religious battle between Christians and anti-Christians.<sup>138</sup> Two days before the election, 3,500 churches held prayer meetings and intensified their final effort to boost Rhee's support. Despite charges of electoral fraud, Rhee received about five million votes, while his three rivals received under two million.<sup>139</sup>

The influence of the religious factor was also shown in the vice-presidential campaign. According to the new Korean Constitution, the President and the Vice-President were to be elected separately. Many people calculated that if Rhee died in office, the Vice-President would become the President of South Korea. Fraud charges were less serious in this case and therefore, reflected general public sentiment. Although Yi Ki-bung was Rhee's official running mate two weeks before the election, Rhee gave his endorsement to another Vice-Presidential candidate, Ham T'ae-yŏng, a senior Presbyterian minister from the North who had been a judge in the Late Chosŏn Dynasty. If Ham wanted to win, he had to defeat not only Yi Ki-bung, but also Yi Pŏm-sŏk (Rhee's ex-home minister, who assisted Rhee in undertaking the coup against the National Assembly), Yim Yŏng-sin (Louise Yim) (a well-known Christian woman

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<sup>137</sup> Chung-shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2003), 179.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> Priscilla Roberts, "Syngman Rhee (1875-1965)," in *Encyclopedia of The Korean War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, ed. Spencer C. Tucker (New York: Checkmark Books, 2002), 627.

educator),<sup>140</sup> and six other competitors. Being both a political novice and older than Rhee himself, Ham was an unlikely victor.<sup>141</sup>

Nevertheless, quite unexpectedly, Ham T'ae-yōng received about 3 million votes, Yi Pōm-sōk got only 1.8 million, and seven other candidates split the rest of the 7.1 million votes.<sup>142</sup> Perhaps Ham attracted not only Christian votes, but also votes from the North Korean refugees. A religious interpretation of the election did not hinder the non-Christian population from casting their support behind Rhee and Ham. The 1952 election marked the beginning of a church-government partnership in the First Republic of Korea.<sup>143</sup>

### *The Witnesses of Atrocities*

During the brief period when the UN occupied North Korea, missionaries not only saw evidence of Communist atrocities against rightists, but they also witnessed cases of UN brutality against Northerners. For instance, Chaplain Voelkel reported that “the discipline of both American and Korean troops [was] bad.”<sup>144</sup> “The looting and robbing by the South Korean troops is terrible,” he wrote. One of his Christian friends, Elder Yun Chang-no, was beaten by South Korean soldiers mercilessly at night in his own house when they tried to rob him.<sup>145</sup>

Rape was a common crime committed by UN troops in the North. On one occasion, as Rev. Harry Hill and Rev. Francis Kinsler passed by McMurtrie's house (a

<sup>140</sup> Hakjoon Kim, “Yim, Louise (Im Yong-sin 1899-1977),” *ibid.*, 541.

<sup>141</sup> Edward C. Keefer, “South Korean Presidential Elections of 1952,” in *Historical Dictionary of the Korean War*, ed. James I. Matray (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 431.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 431-432.

<sup>143</sup> Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 179. Syngman Rhee's regime was known as the First Republic. Chang Myun's regime was the Second Republic and Pak Jong-hi's military government was the Third Republic.

<sup>144</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 12 November 1950, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

former missionary) in P'yŏngyang, they heard a girl's scream coming from inside the house. An armed American G.I. was standing outside the building, so they rushed over to him. He refused to allow them to enter the house, so they rushed off, and were fortunate to find an American officer nearby, who agreed to intervene. Inside the house, they discovered an American G.I. and a Korean soldier attempting to rape a Korean girl, the daughter of a former missionary's helper. The victim had been on her way to a prayer meeting that afternoon with her mother.<sup>146</sup> According to Chaplain Voelkel, similar events happened in other UN controlled areas as well. When missionaries witnessed or discovered such crimes they brought them before the military authorities, but many more probably occurred and went unreported. Young women suffered immensely because Korean society showed no mercy to any woman who had sexual relations with a foreigner, regardless of whether this was voluntary or by force.<sup>147</sup>

### *The Demand for Chaplains for US troops*

Although most of these incidents were random, individual, criminal acts, it was a serious matter. If American soldiers did not behave morally in the eyes of the Korean people, they would eventually jeopardize the UN's mission in Korea, the missionary work, and Korean public opinion of America. Missionaries felt a personal obligation to combat immorality and ignorance among US and Korean troops, particularly since it caused so much anguish to their Korean friends. Since the UN Command was unenthusiastic about investigating atrocities committed by UN and ROK soldiers,<sup>148</sup> the missionaries were left with few options. They could not reveal these incidents to the

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Elizabeth Kim, *Ten Thousand Sorrows: The Extraordinary Journey of a Korean War Orphan* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 20.

<sup>148</sup> Allan R. Millett, *Their War for Korea: American, Asian, and European Combatants and Civilians 1945-1953* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2002), 232.

press without sabotaging the war effort, so missionaries instead reported these incidents to their own boards, in addition to the military police. They hoped that their church leaders back home might pressure the US military to improve the moral quality of American soldiers. From their perspective, the solution was to provide US troops with more chaplains so that they could resist the temptations and corruptions caused by the lonesome and often dangerous military life.

Ironically, the lack of chaplains was something that the churches had as much control over as did the US military. The army understood the benefits of religious guidance for the troops, but they could not find enough candidates to fill the need.<sup>149</sup> Since the beginning of the Cold War, the American government had already carried out steps to expand the Chaplains' Corps to match the needs of a large peace-time army, but the deployment in Korea had been too rapid and extensive for the Corps to keep pace.<sup>150</sup> Even though the military recalled all their chaplains on reserve, they still could not meet the rising authorized ceiling.<sup>151</sup> The overworked chaplains in Korea frequently enlisted the help of missionaries in offering religious services for the troops. Some American G.I.s even joined local church gatherings at the invitation of missionaries and Korean pastors.

The missionaries' reports of atrocities helped to mobilize their home boards in the United States. These boards encouraged more ordained ministers to join the Chaplain Corps as early as possible; the response from church leadership was tremendous.

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<sup>149</sup> "Best Soldiers Are Religious Soldiers," *The United Presbyterian*, 4 June 1951, 5.

<sup>150</sup> See "Chaplaincy Needs Are Revealed," *The United Presbyterian*, 6 November 1950, 7. See also "Chaplains' Corps to be Increased," *Presbyterian Life*, September 2, 1950, 13.

<sup>151</sup> From June 1950 to June 1951, US Army chaplain strength rose from 706 to 1,208, but it was still below the 1,331 authorized quota. See Rodger R. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace: The United States Army Chaplaincy 1945-1975* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), 5:72.

Seminaries gradually modified their programs to train more students for the Chaplain Corps.<sup>152</sup> Stories of the chaplains' heroism were reported widely in both religious and secular journals so as to attract potential candidates.<sup>153</sup> Many religious groups in the United States made "valiant and sacrificial efforts" to help encourage their members to go to Korea.<sup>154</sup>

In the end, more chaplains were sent to serve the troops in Korea. They helped not only American soldiers, but also Korean churches, prisoners, and ROK soldiers because they were allowed to use their extra time to assist civilians.<sup>155</sup> Chaplains served as intermediaries between the troops and the civilians. Under the leadership of chaplains in their regiments, US soldiers made offerings to support local relief programs organized by local churches that helped to alleviate the suffering among orphans and widows.<sup>156</sup>

### *The Formation of a Christian ROK Chaplain Corps*

Missionaries and Korean pastors were involved in the formation of the ROK Chaplain Corps even before the outbreak of the Korean War. Rev. Archibald Campbell and Rev. Cha Chey-wha took the first steps by obtaining permission from the Korea Military Advisory Group of the U.S. Army (KMAG), to work among the ROK trainees in Taegu. The first organized Christian service was held in May 1949. About 400 Korean soldiers and officers attended.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> "Protestant Seminaries Setting Up Chaplaincy Training Programs," *Presbyterian Survey*, December 1953, 61.

<sup>153</sup> "Six Korea Chaplains Commended For Heroism," *The United Presbyterian*, 1 January 1951, 14. See also "Chaplains Courageous," *TIME*, 1 December 1952. The number of recruits was gradually improving. In September 1951, they had 1,398 while the quota was 1,464. A month later, the number increased to 1,448, coming very close to the authorized ceiling. See Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace*, 5:72.

<sup>154</sup> Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace*, 5:73.

<sup>155</sup> John H. Muller, *Wearing the Cross in Korea* (Redlands, CA: Arthur Commercial Press, 1954), 18.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-62.

<sup>157</sup> Rhodes and Campbell, *History of the Korean Mission*, 344-345.

Christian leaders believed that the morale of South Korean troops suffered due to a lack of moral guidance. The solution was to form a ROK Chaplain Corps. Missionaries and Korean church leaders, therefore, pressed for the establishment of a Chaplain Corps based on the US model in the ROK Army. As early as July 1950, Rev. Edward Adams and Rev. Campbell had approached officers of the KMAG, urging them to formally establish a chaplain service for the ROK army forces. In order to facilitate the process, Rev. Campbell translated the U.S. Army regulations concerning Chaplains into Korean and modified them to include representatives of other traditional religions. To temporarily supply the needs of the ROK troops, Rev. William Shaw and Monsignor George M. Carroll were hired by the US Army to minister to Korean soldiers in August 1950.<sup>158</sup>

When Rev. Campbell visited Japan in September, he met with Chaplain (Colonel) Ivan H. Bennett, Chief of Chaplains, SCAP, who was later to be promoted to Major General, Chief of Chaplains, U.S.A., and urged him to assist in the forming of a ROK Chaplain Corps. Chaplain Bennett took a strong interest in the plan and asked for support from General MacArthur.<sup>159</sup>

In Korea, meanwhile, Rev. William Shaw, who was serving as a civilian Chaplain among the ROK troops, approached President Rhee on the subject. He found that Rhee was similarly concerned about the morale of the army. Rhee thought that Christianity would produce better soldiers. Nevertheless, instead of seeking to form an army-

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<sup>158</sup> Letter from Adeline H. Shaw, 14 September 1950, *Missionary* Vol.4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

<sup>159</sup> Rhodes and Campbell, *History of the Korean Mission*, 345.

controlled Chaplain Corps, Rhee favored a *civilian, Christian* Chaplain Corps.<sup>160</sup> He had three reasons. First, Rhee did not think the army could afford to pay for a Chaplain Corps. Second, Rhee wanted the corps to be predominantly Christian. He feared that, if he asked for funds from the National Assembly, they would push him to form a non-Christian Chaplain Corps, since most Korean soldiers were not Christian.<sup>161</sup> Third, traditional Korean religious groups did not have or might not be willing to supply chaplains to the Corps because the idea was alien to them. Therefore, the requirement that other religions participate might delay the process of the formation of the Corps.

Since the ROK government could not or would not run the sort of program that Rhee envisioned, he instead sought a civilian solution, using funding from non-government sources to avoid political controversy.<sup>162</sup> It would be a significant undertaking. To succeed, he needed the help of missionaries, Korean clergymen, and American churches to finance and provide workers for this civilian Christian Chaplain Corps.<sup>163</sup> Missionaries were delighted to hear Rhee's plan, and were confident that many ROK troops would become Christian if they had "a Christian Chaplaincy leadership."<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Letter from Rev. William Shaw to T. T. Brumbaugh, 24 October 1950, *Missionary* Vol.4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

<sup>161</sup> About 1.6% of Korean soldiers were Confucianists, 1.2% Buddhists, 4.6% Christians (mostly Presbyterians), and 92.6% were without any religious affiliation at all. See "Chaplains for the ROK," *TIME*, 1 July 1953.

<sup>162</sup> "Interview between Robert Cadigan and Chaplain William Shaw in Korea," 21 November 1950, *Missionary* Vol.4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

<sup>163</sup> As an old time Methodist missionary to Korea since 1921, Rev. William Shaw was well respected within the missionary community and among Korean leaders. He had a very close friendship with President Rhee and many high-ranking Korean officials. Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, the Director of The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, a non-governmental agency holding consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, was impressed with Rev. Shaw's credentials. See Nolde's report on his trip to Korea, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, ed. Heung Soo Kim (Seoul: Institute for Korean Church History, 2003), 369-370.

<sup>164</sup> Letter from Rev. William Shaw to T. T. Brumbaugh, 24 October 1950, *Missionary* Vol.4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

After seeing the poor discipline of the Korean troops from July to November, the missionary community – in particular Chaplain Shaw and Chaplain Voelkel – wholeheartedly supported the plan. They believed that it was a golden opportunity to evangelize Korean youth, and to extend the influence of Christianity. The Director of the Korea Church World Service, Dr. Henry Appenzeller, also fully endorsed the idea, arguing that “to miss this opportunity [might] mean the loss of a section of the youth of Korea.”<sup>165</sup> While the missionaries organized Korean churches and seminaries to supply qualified evangelists for the cause, they also labored endlessly to persuade their own boards in the United States to fund the project.

American Protestant denominations were, however, initially skeptical of the plan. They feared that if American churches and mission agencies threw their “influence and finances” behind such a program, it would send a confusing signal to the world that “Americans [were] willing to use even [their] religion to take Korea into [their] camp.”<sup>166</sup> The idea of the separation of church and state kept them from giving their endorsement. Only the Catholics and the Presbyterians agreed to support the plan.<sup>167</sup>

Pressure from missionaries in both Korea and Japan bore fruit in January 1951. Both Chaplain Shaw and Father Carroll received orders to start a chaplains’ school in Taegu. Thirty-nine Korean Christian pastors received training and graduated in February. Initially, they had only civilian chaplain status. Yet, when the Assembly finally did approve a Chaplain Corps, they were all commissioned. On April 11, 1951,

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<sup>165</sup> Letter from Henry Appenzeller to T. T. Brumbaugh, 31 January 1951, *Missionary* Vol.4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

<sup>166</sup> From T. T. Brumbaugh to Chaplain William Shaw, 16 October 1950, *Missionary* Vol.4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

<sup>167</sup> From Chaplain William Shaw to T. T. Brumbaugh, 24 October 1950, *Missionary* Vol.4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey. See also Shaw’s letter to T. T. Brumbaugh, 10 February 1951, *Missionary* Vol.4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

following the model of the United States, the ROK government provided a small amount of funds for a formal military corps to replace the civilian organization.

To the delight of Rhee and the missionaries, the ROK Army was willing to maintain the Christian nature of the Chaplain Corps. It called for 77 Christian clergymen to fill its ranks. At first, no other religions were represented.<sup>168</sup> Chaplain Shaw and Chaplain Carroll continued to be responsible for recruiting and training these Korean Chaplains. Another forty-three trainees graduated in April 1951.<sup>169</sup> By June 1953, the training school in Taegu had graduated a total of 113 trainees that year.<sup>170</sup> The Corps expanded gradually to include other religions by a decade or two later. Buddhist monks, for example, entered the Corps in 1968. Nevertheless, Christian clergymen remained the vast majority of the Chaplain Corps members.

Initially, since the ROK government paid these chaplains barely enough to survive, they had nothing to send back home to support their families. This discouraged qualified clergymen from applying. To show their support for the Chaplain Corps, American missionaries decided to provide for these chaplains' families.<sup>171</sup> This new project, unlike the original plan, won the support of all major Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church in the United States, because American religious leaders

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<sup>168</sup> The quota for each Christian group was: 32 Presbyterian, 17 Methodist, 20 Catholic, 7 Holiness, and 1 Salvation Army. Letter from Chaplain William Shaw to T. T. Brumbaugh, 19 March 1951, *Missionary*, Vol.4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey. The same letter was also found in the Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 39 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>169</sup> The breakdown here was: 15 Presbyterians, 11 Catholics, 7 Methodists, 4 Holiness. The second class graduated on April 13. There were 6 Catholics, 2 Methodists, and 1 Holiness. See "Excerpts from letters from Chaplain William E. Shaw," Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 39 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>170</sup> "Chaplains for ROK," *TIME*, 1 June 1953.

<sup>171</sup> Letter from Rev. Ned Adams to Dr. John C. Smith, 24 April 1951, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 193, Box 1, Folder 3 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

recognized that the establishment of a Christian-dominated Chaplain Corps had become “so vital a part of the present evangelistic program of Christianity in Korea.”<sup>172</sup>

In the end, this project was a milestone for Christianity in Korea. Not only did hundreds of thousands of Korean soldiers encounter the Christian faith through their chaplains during the war, but also Christianity became more firmly entrenched within the Korean ruling class.<sup>173</sup> Regardless of whether or not these young men would remain in the military after the war, they would be the backbone of Korean society in the decades to come. And the Corps definitely led many soldiers to join churches. Just before the end of the War, the Chief of ROK Chaplains, told a graduating class at the Chaplain Training School in Taegu, “The War has given us a spiritual revival.”<sup>174</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Although missionaries were relatively few in number, they contributed significantly to overall relief efforts. Church leaders and religious networks in the United States helped to publicize the needs of Korea. In collaboration, religious and non-religious groups in the United States as well as other Western countries sent hundreds of thousands of tons of relief materials to Korea. It marked the biggest relief effort in American history.

Missionaries in the North were a valuable asset to the occupation forces. Missionary chaplains served as a link both between the native population and the troops, and between the American public and the Korean people. Through the press, they

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<sup>172</sup> Letter from T. T. Brumbaugh to Chaplain William Shaw, 23 April 1951, *Missionary* Vol.4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

<sup>173</sup> Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 175-183.

<sup>174</sup> Quoted in Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace*, 78.

provided information, pictures, and commentary to audiences on the American home-front. They collected evidence of Communist atrocities against Christians and UN soldiers, while also witnessing (but not necessarily publicizing) UN atrocities against North Koreans. They demanded justice and change through religious means.

The Christian community, in particular, benefited the most from the labor of missionaries. Christians received priority in the evacuation process, and sometimes gained access to special refugee facilities. With the support of American churches, Christian influence reached into the ROK Army through the newly established Chaplain Corps. Just as the missionaries had hoped, not only was Christianity preserved, but the church also rose in political influence and power in South Korea.

## CHAPTER 8 The Truce Talks and POW Controversy

### *INTRODUCTION*

The Chinese intervention entirely altered the nature and development of the Korean War. Not only did the Chinese push back UN and South Korean forces, but the US government also faced challenges from other quarters, both abroad and at home. Within the United States, a major political debate erupted over what the war strategy should be. Some believed that a larger conflict would be more winnable, so they wished to allow the field commander in the Far East to “strike wherever military necessity dictates, behind the Yalu River, or anywhere else.”<sup>1</sup> Many pressured the Truman administration to use Chinese Nationalist forces in Korea. While there was domestic political pressure on the President to pursue victory aggressively, international opinion was very different. European leaders, in particular, feared that an escalation of the war might cause it to spread to Europe, and they demanded accountability for US military actions in Korea. By June 1951, both sides agreed to sit down and negotiate a truce, but the process lasted for two more years.

The major question that held up the negotiation was the dispute over the POW issue. The United States government insisted on the principle of voluntary repatriation, whereas the Communist side demanded the repatriation of all prisoners. Why did the United States insist on voluntary repatriation, taking a great risk to prolong the war?

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<sup>1</sup> It was the opinion of Senator Harry Cain of Washington. Quoted in William W. Stueck, Jr., *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 131.

American missionaries were active among the prisoners. Could there have been a religious angle to this debate?

### *THE PATH TO THE TRUCE TABLE*

According to a Gallup Poll report on December 6, 1950, fifty-five percent of interviewees felt that the United States was fighting a World War III in Korea.<sup>2</sup> Another poll around that time showed that fifty percent thought that the United States government had done a poor job in Korea.<sup>3</sup> Fear and discontent swept across the country. Critics accused the government of failing both in Korea and in China.<sup>4</sup> Although President Truman faced strong political pressure to expand the war, public opinion remained cautious because the poll showed that more people wanted to limit the war in Korea.<sup>5</sup> The strongest support for a limited war strategy was from mainstream Protestant religious organizations, especially leaders in the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC).

#### *The Influence of National Council of Churches*

The National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC) came into official existence on November 29, 1950 at a constitutional convention in Cleveland, Ohio. Delegates from 29 Protestant denominations and 3 Eastern Orthodox churches attended the conference. The NCCC also consisted of eight interdenominational agencies, which by their official actions transferred their functions and responsibilities to the NCCC. These eight

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<sup>2</sup> George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971* Vol.2, 1949-1958 (New York: Random House, 1972), 951.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 953.

<sup>4</sup> The initial "loss" of China accusation has been discussed in Chapter 4. The military setback caused by Chinese intervention further frustrated US public opinion on Truman's China policy. The administration's inability to predict or deter Chinese entry into the Korean War aroused strong criticism of the President and caused a serious loss of confidence in Truman's ability to lead the nation to victory in Korea.

<sup>5</sup> The Gallup Poll reported on December 4 that 46% of the interviewees thought that the UN should restrict the fighting to Korea while only 39% favored crossing the border and extending the war to Chinese territory. (The other 15% had no opinion.) See *ibid.*, 951.

agencies were: Federal Council of Churches of Christ (FCCC), Foreign Missions Conference of North America (FMC), Home Missions Council of North America (HMC), International Council of Religious Education (ICRE), Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, National Protestant Council on Higher Education, United Council of Church Women, and United Stewardship Council. Shortly afterward, four more agencies decided to merge their interests in the NCCC: Church World Service (CWS), Inter-Seminary Committee, Protestant File Commission, and Protestant Radio Commission.

The NCCC was both a replacement for and an expansion of the FCCC. According to a statement in the December 1950 issue of the Federal Council Bulletin, the NCCC would continue all the work of the FCCC and expect that “the program [would] be enlarged as the new organization gains increased support.”<sup>6</sup> While the FCCC claimed to have about 28,000,000 members in 1949, the NCCC reported 30,629,225 members in 1951 (see Table 8.1), a gain of two million in new members. The agglomeration of these twelve organizations made the NCCC the most powerful inter-church agency in American history because it had access not only to mainstream domestic churches, but also to missionary organizations and various overseas relief agencies. This giant organization could effectively mobilize religious public opinion, and distribute religious propaganda throughout the United States and Canada.<sup>7</sup>

John Foster Dulles viewed the NCCC as an unprecedented Christian organization that could exert influence over domestic and foreign affairs through public appeal and

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<sup>6</sup> Quote in Edgar C. Bundy, *Collectivism in the Churches: A Documented Account of the Political Activities of the Federal, National, and World Councils of Churches* (Wheaton, IL: The Church League of America, 1960), 49.

<sup>7</sup> “National Council,” *TIME*, 11 December 1950.

effective lobbying.<sup>8</sup> The NCCC had the resources and manpower to conduct systematic religious, social, and political campaigns. Its close connections with major denominations and various missionary organizations positioned the NCCC to present a unified Protestant voice to the US public and policy makers. Rev. Richard M. Fagley, Director of the Department of International Justice and Goodwill of the NCCC, the same position that Dulles had held earlier, explained the role of NCCC in foreign affairs:

In the search for a fully responsible foreign policy and for the strong, unwavering support it requires, our churches have a major function to perform. It is through them and them alone that the well-springs of the faith that sustains American life and the moral vitality of our society can be renewed. It is through our churches, challenging the pretensions of national power and upholding the principle that power is a trust, that the moral foundations of policy can be undergirded. It is through our churches that individual citizens can gain a new sense of their own responsibility for national policy.<sup>9</sup>

Rev. Fagley saw that partnership between churches and state as essential to establishing long-term foreign policy objectives in the Cold War. Churches should not shy from their responsibility, and the government should also consult the churches for moral support.

Therefore, since its birth, the NCCC had set its aim clearly: to influence the direction of US foreign policy. An active lobbying machine was established in the nation's capital. Politicians and government officials were routinely invited to NCCC meetings and conferences. For example, the main speaker at the Constitutional Convention of the NCCC in November 1950 was Secretary of State Dean Acheson. The presence of Acheson generated great interest and intense discussion on the direction of US foreign policy in facing the crisis in East Asia. Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, Director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), presented "A Christian View on the International Crisis." He urged the American people to guard themselves

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<sup>8</sup> John Foster Dulles' speech on November 27, 1950, Seeley Mudd Library, John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 302, Folder: Speech Federal Council of Churches, NY.

<sup>9</sup> Richard M. Fagley, "Responsibility and Foreign Policy," *Christianity and Crisis* 5 (22 January 1951): 189.

against hysteria, self-righteousness and hatred, unilateral action, false pride and face-saving tendencies, complacency, prejudice, impatience, and making the US economy dependent on military production.<sup>10</sup> The NCCC and its supporters stood against the use of the atomic bomb against China, and ruled out the justification of any “preventive war” because both were morally wrong.<sup>11</sup>

When President Truman voiced his frustration with the Chinese and hinted at the possibility of using atomic weapons in the Korean War, the NCCC was alarmed. Telegrams by individual clergymen were sent to the President, urging him to consider Dr. Nolde’s position.<sup>12</sup> On December 7, 1950, the President received a special telegram from Dr. Henry Sherrill, the President of the NCCC. Dr. Sherrill warned against not only the use of atomic weapons, but also “false pride and face-saving tendencies.” He advised the President “to guard against unilateral action” and “to manifest consistent readiness to negotiation.”<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, the NCCC also launched a nationwide campaign against the use of atomic weapons. Religious publications emphasized the need for “restraint.” The Presbyterians published Dr. Nolde’s speech in the December 11, 1950 issue of *The United Presbyterian*.<sup>14</sup> Two days later, *The Christian Century* and *Christianity and Crisis* reprinted an old report by a commission of theologians and church leaders in the FCCC which had been published several months earlier, “The Christian Conscience and

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10 O. Frederick Nolde, “A Christian View on the International Crisis,” *The United Presbyterian*, 11 December 1950, 10-12.

11 “Preventive War Morally Wrong,” *The United Presbyterian*, 26 March 1951, 6.

12 Paul C. Payne and G. Merrill Lenox sent separate telegrams to the President. See Box 1360 of the Papers of Harry S. Truman (Official File), Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Mo.

13 Dr. Henry Sherrill, President of the NCCC, telegram to the President, 7 December 1950; NCCCA Files #5573, Truman Library.

14 Nolde, “A Christian View on the International Crisis,” 10-12.

Weapons of Mass Destruction.”<sup>15</sup> The leaders of mainstream Protestantism rejected the call for “total war.” Protestant leaders wished to set not only geographical boundaries on the Korean War, but also boundaries on the kinds of weapons and tactics that the United States should employ. The report also “condemned any potential killing of prisoners,” “the massacre of civilian populations, especially of women and children,” and “the bombardment of ‘undefended’ towns.”<sup>16</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr regarded the attempt of the NCCC as “the most effective religious protest against the hysteria which [had] engulfed the country.”<sup>17</sup> In February 1951, a Gallup Poll survey concluded that 77 percent thought that the US should not start an all-out war with China. A month later, another survey reported that 56 percent of the people wanted the US government to try harder to reach an agreement with Communist China on Korea, and 73 percent of them thought that the UN forces should stop at the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel if the Chinese agreed to stop fighting.<sup>18</sup>

Since the NCCC believed that the contest between Communism and democracy would not end with Korea and a real victory would not be secured by bombs, it advocated a humanitarian approach to foreign affairs, by injecting ideas of morality and religious principles into US foreign policy.<sup>19</sup> A victory over Communism could only be achieved through a peace crusade of relief efforts, education, technical and financial assistance,

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<sup>15</sup> “The Christian Conscience and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Report of a Commission Appointed by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America,” *The Christian Century* 50 (13 December 1950): 1489.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, “The Church Speaks to the Nation,” *Christianity and Crisis* XIII (30 November 1953): 153.

<sup>18</sup> *The Gallup Poll*, 668-669.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Calvin Payne, “Editorial Comment,” *Presbyterian Life*, 17 March 1951, 7. Payne was the vice-president representing the division of Christian Education in the NCCC.

and support for human rights.<sup>20</sup> The NCCC was particularly interested in Truman's Point IV Program, a new program of technical assistance for underdeveloped areas.

There were two major reasons why they were interested. First, NCCC leaders thought that the program was "a promising pointer in the direction of a coherent long-range policy."<sup>21</sup> Second, Christian groups had extensive missionary works in these areas, meaning church-state collaboration was beneficial to both. When the government asked for the religious organizations' assistance for the Point IV Program, the NCCC responded positively.<sup>22</sup>

### *Truman's Response to Religious Public Opinion*

President Truman tried to maintain good relations with mainstream religious groups throughout his administration. His hope to enlist the support of religious leaders against Communism, and his interest in the ecumenical movement, drew Truman closer to the NCCC. His idea that the social gospel was an effective answer to counteract the growth of Communism aligned him with mainstream Protestant opinion, especially among the "Social Gospellers." "The menace of Communism," Truman pointed out, "lies in areas of American life where the promise of democracy remains unfulfilled."<sup>23</sup> He referred to the exciting social problems of slums in inner cities, wage differences, lack of medical care, unemployment, price fluctuations caused by uncontrolled inflation, and human rights abuses. His Point IV Program was an extension to foreign policy of his liberal view on social affairs. His willingness to adopt a humanitarian and moral

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<sup>20</sup> Payne, "Editorial Comment," 7. See also Nolde, "A Christian View On the International Crisis," 12; and "The Christian Conscience and Weapons of Mass Destruction," 1491. See also "The Churches and Point IV," *The Christian Century* 68 (9 May 1951): 581.

<sup>21</sup> Fagley, "Responsibility and Foreign Policy," 187.

<sup>22</sup> "The Churches and Point IV," *The Christian Century* 68 (9 May 1951): 581.

<sup>23</sup> "Speech to the Swedish Pioneer Centennial Association, Chicago Stadium," 4 June 1948, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S Truman*, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php>.

approach to foreign issues earned him support from some liberal religious leaders and the Catholic Church.<sup>24</sup>

Truman's decision to limit the war in Korea also satisfied the position of the NCCC. In meeting with a group of Methodist ministers on February 7, 1951, he told them that his foreign policy objectives were to prevent the outbreak of a third world war, and restore peace. "We do not want to see the conflict in Korea extended," the President explained.<sup>25</sup> "The best way to do that," he insisted, "is to make it plain that we and the other free countries will continue to resist the attack."<sup>26</sup> He ruled out suggestions both to bomb mainland China and to use Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist forces in Korea because he wanted to minimize the risk of starting a general war. By doing so, President Truman was hoping to find a peaceful settlement in Korea.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to his effort to gain support from the NCCC, the President also sought means to mobilize religious public opinion on his Korea policy. Since the missionary organization had vast interests in Korea, Truman continued to define the Korean War as a battle for religious freedom. Speaking at the Presbyterian Church on New York Avenue

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<sup>24</sup> For example, in September 1951, Dr. John L. Peter, a professor of religion at Oklahoma City University, preached a sermon at St. Luke's Methodist Church on the importance of sending out missionaries as an effective means to combat the spread of Communism. In response, the Christian community in Oklahoma City was so aroused that they mobilized a city-wide effort to lobby Congress to support the Point IV program of sending out Christian technicians, educators, and other skilled workers as missionaries to the underdeveloped world. See Drew Pearson, "The Washington Merry-Go-Round," *Northwest Arkansas Times*, 5 October 1951, 4. The President also tried to enlist the Pope's support by expressing his desire to select General Mark Clark, the field commander of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army in Korea at that time, to be ambassador to the Roman Catholic Church because he felt, according to a White House Statement, that the "purposes of diplomacy and humanitarianism [would] be served" and that "direct relations with the Vatican [would] help coordinate a common fight against Communism. See "Wave of Protest Against Appointment of Clark to Vatican Post Rolls Across U.S.," *The Ada Weekly*, 25 October 1951, 4.

<sup>25</sup> "Remarks to a Group of Methodist Ministers," 7 February 1951, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman*, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php>.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> "Radio Report to the American People on Korea and on U.S. Policy in the Far East," 11 April 1951, *Public Papers of the President: Harry S. Truman*, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php>.

in Washington D.C. on April 3, 1951, he appealed for moral support from religious leaders:

There has never been a cause which had a stronger moral claim on all of us. We are defending the religious principles upon which our Nation and our whole way of life are founded. We are defending the right to worship God – each as he sees fit according to his own conscience. We are defending the right to follow the precepts and the example which God has set for us. We are defending the right of people to gather together, all across our land, in churches such as this one. For the danger that threatens us in the world today is utterly and totally opposed to all these things. The international Communist movement is based on a fierce and terrible fanaticism. It denies the existence of God and, wherever it can, it stamps out the worship of God. Our religious faith gives us the answer to the false beliefs of communism. Our faith shows us the way to create a society where man can find his greatest happiness under God. Surely, we can follow that faith with the same devotion and determination the Communists give to their godless creed.<sup>28</sup>

Religious freedom was an important principle in Truman's mind because it was also a principle shared by all religious groups in the United States and other Western countries. Therefore, the administration began to increase the use of religious materials in radio programs, pamphlets, and motion pictures in its propaganda campaign against Communism.<sup>29</sup> By April 1951, Truman wanted to make peace, but he made it very clear that he would not compromise American principles.

### *General Ridgway and the Stabilization of the Front*

US forces suffered a major setback when General Walton H. Walker, field commander of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army, was killed in a car accident on December 23, 1950, while visiting to American units in the vicinity of Ŭijŏngbu. The sudden death of General Walker caused serious confusion and widespread fatalism among US and ROK troops. Washington immediately sent General Matthew B. Ridgway, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Administration in the Department of Army, to replace Walker.

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<sup>28</sup> "Address at the Cornerstone Laying of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church," 3 April 1951, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman*, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php>.

<sup>29</sup> In July 1951, the State Department formed a religious advisory panel to counsel Assistant Secretary of State Edward W. Barrett, who was in charge of the "Voice of America," on the religious content of their programs. See "Religion Panel on Voice of U.S.," *Religion Today and Tomorrow*, 14 July 1951, 1.

Ridgway proved to be the right man for the job due to his knowledge of the Korean War, and his previous war experience in China and the Philippines. As soon as he arrived, General MacArthur authorized him to command both the 8<sup>th</sup> Army and the X Corps. It was a vital change that strengthened Ridgway's position in conducting a new war strategy in Korea.

To lift the morale of UN troops, Ridgway first encouraged the ROK Army by making it clear that he had come to Korea to stay. He ordered his divisional commanders to hold their line by seizing high ground north of Taejŏn, abandoning Walker's "road-bound" approach. In February, the UN side eventually launched a major counter-offensive, Operation KILLER, taking advantage of their superior firepower to inflict maximum damage on the enemy.<sup>30</sup> A month later, UN forces retook Seoul and pushed the Chinese back to the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel where the battle lines began to stabilize.

### *The Recall of General MacArthur*

Increasingly disturbed by the military stalemate along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel and the military restrictions imposed by Washington, General MacArthur grew restless and impatient with the Truman administration. Washington wanted a limited war, but MacArthur sought to expand the war and bring in the Chinese Nationalists. After the Joint Chiefs rejected MacArthur's demand to attack the North Korean electrical installation in Najin, a harbor near Soviet territory, MacArthur became more vocal in his criticism of the administration. In defiance of his commander in chief, he constantly embarrassed the President, especially by discussing his plans to secure a total victory by any means. MacArthur pushed Truman too far when he endorsed House Minority

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<sup>30</sup> Russell Spurr, *Enter the Dragon: China's Undeclared War Against the US in Korea 1950-51* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1988), 277.

Leader Joseph Martin's call to open a second front in China, and when he mocked the idea of limited warfare, declaring, "there is no substitute for victory."<sup>31</sup> After consulting Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Secretary of Defense George Marshall, General Omar Bradley, and W. Averell Harriman, then special assistant to the President for national security affairs, the President relieved MacArthur of his command on April 11.

US public reaction to MacArthur's recall was extremely emotional and confused. The Republican Party manipulated the popularity of the five-star general to turn public sentiment into an anti-Truman campaign. Many Americans were as frustrated as MacArthur over the handling of the war, feeling that Truman did not have the strength to win the war or stop the fighting. The nation was deeply divided. Even the press was split over this controversy. The Hearst, McCormick, and Scripps-Howard news chains attacked Truman as a scoundrel, while the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Atlanta Journal* supported the President.

The religious opinion in the United States was similarly divided over this controversy. While fundamentalist Christians and the Catholic Church supported MacArthur, most liberals favored the President. The opinion of the NCCC and many liberal Protestant church leaders sided with the President and supported his stand on limited warfare. An editorial by *The Christian Century* praised the President, and denounced MacArthur's ideas on the use of the atomic bomb and the expansion of the war into Communist China.<sup>32</sup> John C. Bennett, an editor of *Christianity and Crisis*, regarded a large-scale war in Asia as "a momentous blunder, a blunder based upon

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<sup>31</sup> Quote in Stanley Weintraub, *MacArthur's War: Korea and the Undoing of An American Hero* (New York: The Free Press, 2000), 330.

<sup>32</sup> "MacArthur," *The Christian Century* 68 (25 April 1951): 519. See also "Peace Hopes Rise at U.N.: Editorial Correspondence," *The Christian Century* 68 (2 May 1951): 551.

blindness to the real sources of Communist strength in Asia and upon blindness to the need of broad international support for effective police action against Communism.”<sup>33</sup> The editor of *United Presbyterian*, who had been highly pro-MacArthur, made it clear that the President of the United States had the “legal right to relieve any military officer of his command and turn his authority over to another.”<sup>34</sup> Support from these religious leaders strengthened the position of the President.

Differing from the position of their denominations, missionaries tended to support MacArthur’s tough stance. They feared that Korea might go the way of China. In the three years that Communists had controlled China, the number of American missionaries had plummeted from 2,986 (2,536 Protestant and 450 Catholics) to only 193.<sup>35</sup> Missionaries expelled from China were vocal within the religious community. Some were staunch supporters of the China Lobby, a pro-Nationalist political lobby in Washington.<sup>36</sup> China’s entry into the Korean War further damaged mission enterprises in China. With the exception of the Catholic Church, missionaries began to be recalled or advised to return.<sup>37</sup> From late 1950 through the end of 1951, many of those who tried to stay in China and continue their work were arrested. It was regarded as “the worst mass persecution of American missionaries in [US] history.”<sup>38</sup> This persecution hardened the opinions of many ex-China missionaries. Some of them would be among those who wanted the US government to allow Chiang Kai-shek to send his troops to Korea. While

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<sup>33</sup> John C. Bennett, “The MacArthur Controversy,” *Christianity and Crisis* 11 (14 May 1951): 58.

<sup>34</sup> Henry W. Temple, “The MacArthur Affair,” *The United Presbyterian*, 23 April 1951, 6.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> George E. Sokolsky, “The China Lobby,” *The Portsmouth Times*, 13 June 1951, 4.

<sup>37</sup> “Exit,” *TIME*, 15 January 1951.

<sup>38</sup> The NCCC reported that 32 American missionaries were in prison, 25 under house arrest, and 136 restricted in their movements. They were prevented from leaving China and subjected to criminal accusations and attacks. See George Cornell, “Cite Peril to Ministers Overseas: Call Treatment of Missionaries Worst in History,” *Austin Daily Herald*, 8 May 1952, 1.

US church leaders wanted to achieve peace and prevent an expansion of war, there were individual missionaries who wanted a firm policy to achieve a military victory.

Many of the missionaries to Korea shared the philosophy of their Chinese missionary counterparts. And like the Chinese missionaries, they also found themselves at odds with their denominational leaders on the idea of peace. Missionaries in the war zone had personally witnessed Communist hostility against Christianity. Hoping to liberate the North, many appreciated MacArthur's tough stance against compromise. When MacArthur was recalled, therefore, missionaries and Korean Christians alike were devastated and angered by Washington's decision. Rev. William C. Kerr, a Korean missionary who was in Japan working with the US military for the re-orientation program of Communist prisoners of war, wrote of his great disappointment to Dr. John C. Smith, the Secretary of the Board of Presbyterian Foreign Mission (USA):

We are stunned this evening by the news of Gen. MacArthur being superseded. If an awful howl does not immediately follow this action I shall be surprised. If the person who made this decision had handed in his own resignation I should have been much better pleased. But let some people with more authority than I have be the ones to speak up.<sup>39</sup>

Such frustration was common among missionaries in Korea. They sympathized with the South Korean desire to unify the country, even though prolonging the war would cost more lives. At the same time, however, most were amenable to a peace settlement, so long as the United States made a clear commitment to protect the security of South Korea.

Among US allies, however, the firing of MacArthur was welcome news. They had grown weary of MacArthur's insubordination. Unlike the American public, who generally disapproved of Truman's decision to fire MacArthur, 55 percent of the British

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<sup>39</sup> Letter from Rev. William C. Kerr to Dr. John C. Smith, 11 April 1951, Presbyterian Church Archive, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 14 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

favored his decision.<sup>40</sup> As public emotions began to cool down and arguments from both sides were reexamined by Congress, Truman regained his support among the elite and those well-informed on foreign affairs. In May 1951, a Gallup Poll conducted among people listed in *Who's Who in America* found that 51 percent favored the president's action. Among educators on the list, 64 percent supported the president.<sup>41</sup> The public's anti-Truman sentiment also decreased from 66 percent disapproving his action in May, to 56 percent a month later.<sup>42</sup> People started to recognize the danger of MacArthur's aggressive strategy and had to concede the wisdom of Truman's approach, though it hurt their pride to seek a truce instead of victory.

### *The Road to the Truce Talks*

Following General Ridgway's successful operations in the spring of 1951, UN forces were in a better bargaining position for a truce. President Truman sent US diplomat George Kennan to contact Russian UN Ambassador Jacob Malik about Korea in May. Malik's response during their second meeting in early June was encouraging. The Russians suggested that the United States negotiate directly with the North Koreans and the Chinese. The door to talks negotiations was gradually opened. Public sentiment in the United States also favored negotiations. A survey by the Gallup Poll in early July showed that 51 percent approved the UN call for a truce at the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel.<sup>43</sup> Christian churches also supported the call for negotiations. For example, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, the Methodist Church, urged the UN "to secure a thorough-going ceasefire negotiation in Korea" and cautioned against "militarism which

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<sup>40</sup> *The Gallup Poll*, 21 May 1951, 984.

<sup>41</sup> *The Gallup Poll*, 16 May 1951, 983.

<sup>42</sup> *The Gallup Poll*, 3 May 1951, 981, and 8 June 1951, 988.

<sup>43</sup> *The Gallup Poll*, July 2, 1951, 993.

[promoted] war as the solution of world problems.”<sup>44</sup> Catholics also called upon US leaders “to exert every effort to reach a settlement of [the] international problems in harmony with Christian principles.”<sup>45</sup>

After receiving instructions from Washington, General Ridgway announced that the United Nations Command (UNC) was willing to negotiate an armistice. The Communist side suggested Kaesŏng as the conference site, and a preliminary meeting by liaison officers was scheduled on July 8, 1951. Formal truce talks began two days later. The UNC chief negotiator was Vice Admiral Charles Turner Joy, Commander of U.S. Naval Forces (Far East). The Republic of Korea sent Major General Paek Sŏn-yŏp as an observer. The Communist side was led by General Nam Il, the Korean People’s Army (KPA) chief of staff and vice foreign minister of North Korea. The Chinese sent Lt. General Deng Hua, the Chinese People’s Volunteers’ Army (CPVA) Deputy Commander.

On the first day, both sides presented their positions. The UNC wanted the negotiations to be limited only to Korea-related military matters. Admiral Joy requested the Communists to allow the International Red Cross to inspect the prisoner of war (POW) camps, and suggested a joint supervisory mechanism to inspect both sides’ observance of the armistice. The Communist side asked for an immediate ceasefire, the establishment of a demilitarized zone (DMZ) along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, and the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea.

The negotiations, however, had a rocky start because of the Communist attempt to control Kaesŏng and score a propaganda victory. After US troops withdrew from

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<sup>44</sup> See “Methodists Call for Peace But Without Appeasement,” *Religion Today and Tomorrow*, 14 July 1951, 1.

<sup>45</sup> “Catholic Women Want Peace With Christian Principles,” *Religion Today and Tomorrow*, 14 July 1951, 1.

Kaesŏng to honor the pledge to keep the city a neutral zone, the Communists moved in and completely took over the city. According to historian Rosemary Foot, the Communists were trying to “bolster their negotiating position” due to their weaker military position.<sup>46</sup> The original goal of the Communist side – to unify Korea – was dashed by the UNC counter-offensive in June. In order to cover their weakness before their domestic and foreign audiences, the North Koreans and the Chinese tried to manipulate the press and radio to give a false sense of its success on the battlefield. Since Kaesŏng was located south of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, they could claim a clear victory by taking over the ancient city of Korea. More than that, UN forces agreed to reduce their attacks at the beginning of the truce talks, providing a critical breathing period for the Communist side to dig in and consolidate their military position along the front. The Kaesŏng period of the truce talks made very little progress and eventually Admiral Joy insisted on a new negotiation site at P’anmunjŏm if the Communists wished to continue the negotiations.

#### *The Underwood Brothers as Interpreters for the UNC*

There were many obstacles for the two sides to overcome. One of them was language interpretation. Good interpreters in the military were hard to find. Candidates needed not only excellent language skills, but also a security clearance for such a top secret responsibility. Because the negotiations involved both Koreans and Chinese, a trilingual interpretation was needed. Thus, missionary kids in the military would become important to the peace process. Lt. Richard Underwood and Warrant Officer Kenneth Wu were called separately to duty in Kaesŏng. Every sentence had to be translated twice,

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<sup>46</sup> Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory: The Politics of Peacemaking At the Korean Armistice Talks* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 44.

first in Korean by Underwood and then in Chinese by Wu. Interpreting a formal military negotiation was not easy because if they made mistakes in translation, the negotiations would suffer. On the first day, both Officer Wu and Lt. Underwood were overwhelmed by the difficulties of their job. “Suffice it to say that I sweat blood,” Lt. Underwood recalled, “died of humiliation, and did a very poor job that day.”<sup>47</sup>

Nevertheless, there were good reasons for the poor performance of the interpreters at the initial stage. First of all, UN negotiators did not appreciate the importance of interpreters. For the opening session, Admiral Joy and his team worked hours to “polish and sharpen their words to mean exactly what they wanted to say,” but no one bothered to give Lt. Underwood or Officer Wu a copy of the prepared speech. As a result, they had a hard time not just interpreting correctly, but also recalling exactly what the Admiral had said. Second, US military personnel were not familiar with the process of interpretation at the negotiation table. The admiral spoke too fast and sometimes too long, making it impossible for his interpreters to catch up. Third, as a missionary kid, Lt. Underwood was fluent in Korean only in terms of basic, daily conversation, but the vocabulary of the negotiations was strange to him.<sup>48</sup> Although he was assigned as a language specialist in the US Army at the beginning of the Korean War, he had never received any formal training in Korean linguistics.

To address these problems, Underwood and Wu made three key suggestions to the UN negotiators. First, they asked that Lt. Horace G. Underwood be brought to Kaesŏng. Being ten years older than his brother Richard Underwood, and having received formal Japanese language training in the Navy, Horace Underwood was better

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<sup>47</sup> Richard F. Underwood, “Memoirs and Thoughts,” (Unpublished Manuscript, 2002) 93.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

prepared for the job. Knowledge of Chinese characters was absolutely necessary to translate many technical terms from English into Korean, since the Korean language, like the Japanese, uses many Chinese characters. Second, they asked for advance copies of all “position papers” so they could translate them beforehand. Third, they requested that each delegate learn how and when to pause for interpretation.<sup>49</sup>

Admiral Joy immediately arranged the transfer of Lt. Horace Underwood to Kaesŏng to be the Chief UN Interpreter.<sup>50</sup> He assigned Horace Underwood as the primary interpreter for all plenary sessions, while Richard Underwood took responsibility for sub-committees and liaison, or investigative, missions. The admiral also allowed the three interpreters “to sit in on the staff work sessions in which the speeches were hammered out.”<sup>51</sup> In this way, all interpreters were able to understand fully the background thinking for each speech and proposal. In addition, the interpreters were also invited to participate in policy discussions to offer insights into Korean or Chinese thinking. The negotiation team also valued the interpreters’ comments on broader issues, treating them with respect in spite of their low rank.<sup>52</sup> Horace Underwood’s background as an educator and missionary in Seoul and Richard Underwood’s experience as an intelligence officer working with POWs in Tongnae and Hamhŭng perhaps enabled them to advise the UN delegates informally on a variety of issues.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Harry A. Rhodes and Archibald Campbell, eds., *History of the Korean Mission: Presbyterian Church in the USA Volume II: 1935-1959* (New York: The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1964), 59.

<sup>51</sup> Underwood, “Memoirs and Thoughts,” 94.

<sup>52</sup> Horace G. Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace: The Recollections of Horace G. Underwood*, ed. Michael J. Devine (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2001), 161.

The workload for these three interpreters was exhausting when the truce talks were in session, even though they had a small staff of assistants to help them.<sup>53</sup> Each night after the staff meetings, the interpreters and their assistants had to “start the long but necessary task of going through each paper” given by the delegates.<sup>54</sup> They added notes, made vocabulary reminders, and sometimes rephrased words into Korean on the margins in order to make sure that they translated “the meaning and flavor of our delegate’s statements, not just the words.”<sup>55</sup> After staying up late, they would then get up early in the morning, because the support staff had to travel by jeep, while the negotiators flew to the negotiation site later in the day. (Only later in P’anmunjŏm, when more helicopters became available, could the staff officers and interpreters fly to the negotiation site.)<sup>56</sup>

During the negotiations, interpreters had to stay alert because they needed not only to interpret for the UN side, but also keep a close check on the interpretation done by the other side, making sure that the Communist interpreters were interpreting exactly what their delegates had said. On several occasions, the UN interpreters had to step in and make corrections when the interpreters on the other side made mistakes. In one case, the Communist interpreter spoke so poorly and incorrectly that Lt. Richard Underwood had to inform the North Korean liaison officer, and the interpreter was fired on the spot. The North Korean colonel asked him to take over interpretation for the Communist side for the rest of the day.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> There were two typists, one Chinese-character typist and one Korean-language typist. They also depended heavily on Colonel Lee Su-yong, the senior Korean liaison officer, for assistance with the Korean language. See *ibid.*, 163.

<sup>54</sup> Underwood, “Memoirs and Thoughts,” 94.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* See also Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 171.

<sup>57</sup> Underwood, “Memoirs and Thoughts,” 94.

After the truce meeting concluded on day, UN interpreters had to hurry back to the review meeting, assisting the UN delegates and other liaison officers to fully understand what had been said. When dinner was over, they would begin the routine again for the next day with another evening planning session followed by more late-night translation work. Sometimes, in the middle of the night, they were called to attend special “investigation” meetings with Communist liaison officers.<sup>58</sup> Many times, they had to refute Communist allegations of UN bombings in the neutral zone. On one occasion while the negotiation site was still in Kaesŏng, they documented a case of germ warfare that the Communists had staged to embarrass UN negotiators.

The negotiation process was made even more difficult by Communist attempts to “twist and exploit every possible word or admission.”<sup>59</sup> This left the interpreters with no margin for error. Under such difficult conditions, the Underwood brothers served with distinction. Their performance was praised by Admiral Joy in his memoirs.<sup>60</sup> After serving for about a year in P’anmunjŏm, Lt Richard Underwood chose not to reenlist because he wanted to continue his college education and get married. The Army rewarded his services with a Bronze Star medal with oak leaf cluster (the equivalent of a second Bronze Star), and promoted him to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant.<sup>61</sup>

Lt. Horace Underwood also wanted to resign so that he could resume his missionary work, but the Navy was reluctant to release him because he was probably “the only officer in the U.S. Navy who [knew] Korean.”<sup>62</sup> He served not only as interpreter

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 181.

<sup>60</sup> Admiral C. Turner Joy, *How Communists Negotiate* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1955), 26.

<sup>61</sup> Underwood, “Memoirs and Thoughts,” 101.

<sup>62</sup> Letter from Horace G. Underwood to Dr. John C. Smith, 18 August 1952, Presbyterian Church Archives, RG 140, Box 18, Folder 17 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

for the truce talks, but also as Aide, Staff Officer, and Interpreter to Admiral H. B. Hanlon, Deputy Chief of Staff for Civil Affairs, Far East Command.<sup>63</sup> He also attended many meetings in dealing with issues concerning the South Korean government throughout the war. In the end, Horace Underwood stayed until a few days before the conclusion of the armistice.<sup>64</sup> For his contribution at P'anmunjöm, the US Army rewarded him with the Legion of Merit, which was rarely given to lower ranks.<sup>65</sup> Altogether, he received four medals for his services in Korea and served longer than most of the American military personnel in the Korean War.

### *RELIGIOUS FACTORS IN THE POW ISSUE*

Initially, no one on the UN side expected that the truce negotiations would be so grueling and prolonged. It took fourteen days for both sides to agree to a five-point agenda. (Item 1 was the adoption of the agenda. Item 2 was about fixing a military demarcation line and the establishment of a demilitarized zone. Item 3 dealt with concrete arrangements for a cease-fire, an armistice, and a supervisory organization. Item 4 concerned arrangements for prisoners of war. Item 5 was the submission of recommendations to the governments of the countries concerned on both sides). It took another four months for both sides to agree on Item 2. By March 1952, they had resolved the question of a supervisory organization in Item 3, and submitted their recommendations in Item 5. The negotiations, however, had reached deadlock over the question of voluntary repatriation in Item 4.

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<sup>63</sup> Rhodes and Campbell, *History of the Korean Mission*, Vol.2, 60.

<sup>64</sup> He chose to leave earlier to dissociate himself from it, fearing that the unpopular truce might jeopardize his missionary work in Korea. See Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 180.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

The desire for non-repatriation was nothing a new. After the end of World War II, repatriation issues created serious difficulties for the Allied Forces, because numerous Russian troops and civilians, who had deserted to the Germans and been captured by the allies, refused to be repatriated. Many committed suicide when the Allies decided to send them back.<sup>66</sup> The legacy of this incident affected the consciences of many American leaders and shaped their strong views on the principle of voluntary repatriation.

### *Capturing North Korean Prisoners*

During the early stages of the Korean War, the POW administration was extremely disorganized and confusing. UN authorities had no systematic procedures to handle their North Korean prisoners of war. In August 1950, when the number of prisoners increased to about a thousand, the UN side set up a permanent POW camp (known as Enclosure 1) in Tongnae, a town 10 miles north of Pusan.<sup>67</sup> Due to insufficient manpower, Americans used ROK troops under close supervision by US Army personnel to guard the prisoners. All UN forces were ordered to send their prisoners to Tongnae for interrogation and imprisonment as quickly as possible.

Prisoners of war were “the best source of intelligence information” throughout the Korean War, but qualified military personnel who could obtain this information were essential.<sup>68</sup> In the US military, Korean linguists were almost non-existent in the Far Eastern Command. In the first three months of the war, only fourteen of the 158 Korean linguists had security clearances. Even among these fourteen, only seven were fluent

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<sup>66</sup> Dean Acheson, *The Korean War* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1971), 130.

<sup>67</sup> “The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War,” 8-5.1A AA.K (Military History Office: Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G3 Headquarters, United States Army, Pacific, June 1960): 3-5.

<sup>68</sup> Being told of possible death and torture by Communist authorities, most North Koreans POWs tended to tell lies instead of truth when they were captured. See “Intelligence and Counterintelligence Problems during the Korean conflict,” 8-5.1A AA.G (US Army Center of Military History): 6-7.

enough to be usable in all situations,<sup>69</sup> and headquarters had retained most of these for the Inch'ŏn Landing operation. Therefore, at the beginning, interrogations were mainly conducted by South Korean or Japanese interpreters.

South Korean interrogators were mostly stern anti-Communists. They followed the ROK Army to the front and conducted interrogations on the spot. If the prisoners were determined to be South Koreans, the ROK army would release them immediately. If they proved cooperative, the ROK treated them well and learned information through “soft” means. If the prisoners were found to be hard-core Communists (mostly KPA officers), more coercive means were employed. No statistics exist today on exactly how many prisoners were simply released or how many were tortured to death by the ROK. No formal investigation was ever conducted. Because “of the tendency of ROK forces to mistreat or kill [prisoners] with even slight provocation,” the US Army decided to assume full responsibility for taking care of POWs as early as August 1950, asking the ROK units to transfer all their POWs to US custody immediately.<sup>70</sup>

Lacking interpreters during the first two months of the war, US troops depended heavily on the voluntary services of missionaries, who took refuge in Taegu and Pusan. Rev. Harry Hill, who had worked in North Korea before World War II, gave valuable help to American officers. They invited him to check on information given by the prisoners and verify their stories. By doing so, Rev. Hill had the privilege not only to talk with POWs, but also to preach to them as well. “Most of them give excellent attention,”

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>70</sup> “The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War,” 5. According to Dr. Woo Jun Hong, who worked for the ROK army to distinguish Communists from non-Communists, the South Korean Army had the policy of killing Communists and releasing the South Koreans during the early stage of the war. See Donald B. Sheley, *Beggar At the Banquet*, ed. by David Esterline (San Bruno, CA: Church of the Highlands, 1979), 73.

Hill recalled, because “atheism [had] not satisfied their hearts, and they [were] eager to receive copies of the gospels.”<sup>71</sup> Therefore, evangelism among the POWs was ongoing from the very start of the war.

In Pusan, UN troops invited Rev. Francis Kinsler and Rev. William Linton to provide assistance. Army chaplains asked the missionaries to preach to the POWs in Tongnae (about a thousand inmates at that time). Rev. Linton observed that they seemed to be merely “uneducated, country boys,” not the kind of hardcore Communists that people had expected. He also discovered that “a good many [were] from Christian families.”<sup>72</sup> In fact, the North Korean government’s distrust of Christians was reasonable because the number of defections among North Korean Christians to the UN side was quite high. Some Christian parents even instructed their children who were conscripted into the North Korean Army not to return to North Korea if they had a chance to stay in the South.<sup>73</sup>

### *A Rapid Numerical Growth of Prisoners in UN Custody*

Many more North Koreans surrendered after UN troops captured Seoul, because the X Corps blocked the retreat of half of the KPA. By the end of September, Enclosure 1 in Tongnae contained 10,829 prisoners, an increase of approximately 9,000 over the previous thirty days. Prisoners were brought in so rapidly that facilities were not ready for them. Because shelter, food, and water were all in short supply, approximately 1,100

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<sup>71</sup> Since Rev. Harry Hill was neither an army officer nor a chaplain, his work in the POW camp was not recorded in any of the military documents. At that time, the politically oriented education program had not started yet. Missionaries were offered “a free hand” and almost “free access” to their POWs. See letter from Rev. Harry Hill, 22 August 1950, Presbyterian Church Archive, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 14 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>72</sup> Letter from Mrs. (Charlotte) Linton, 28 August 1950, in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Department of History, Montreat, North Carolina.

<sup>73</sup> Jeong Chung-seop’s parents urged him not to return to the North. Therefore, he and his cousin, who was a Presbyterian elder, refused to be repatriated. Interview with Jeong Chun-Seop, an ex-North Korean POW who resided in South Korea, 18 May 2004, College Park, Maryland.

had to be placed in compounds without shelter.<sup>74</sup> Still, thousands were coming each day. By November 1950, there were more than one hundred thousand prisoners in UN custody (33,478 were in Inch'ön enclosures, 62,697 at Pusan, and 20,647 at P'yöngyang).<sup>75</sup> The total number of prisoners reached 146,135 by December 3, 1950.<sup>76</sup>

The changing tide of the war in December 1950 forced UN authorities to move all the prisoners first to Pusan, and then to Kōje Island, an island twenty miles southwest of the port of Pusan. Kōje Island contained a total 28 compounds. They were divided among 4 huge enclosures: Enclosure 6 was in the Central Valley, and Enclosures 7, 8, and 9 were in the East Valley. These compounds were severely overcrowded. Sanitation was poor and food at first inadequate. There were about 8,000 POWs in each compound with around 500 people in each tent or barrack. Only 4,000 US and ROK troops were stationed in Kōje Island, about one to every five hundred prisoners. It was difficult for UN authorities to maintain effective control. Since the 8<sup>th</sup> Army could not spare more forces to guard these camps, management of these prison compounds relied on the prisoners' cooperation. Each compound elected its own representatives to be responsible for discipline, supplies distribution, and communication with the camp commanders.

As a result, some compounds fell into the control of anti-Communists, and others into the hands of hardcore Communists. US guards rarely entered POW enclosures due to a lack of experience and manpower. The situation was peaceful initially, but deteriorated rapidly when truce talks began in Kaesöng. From June 1951 to May 1952, the Kōje camps became a new battlefield of the Korean War, and emerged as a key issue

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<sup>74</sup> "The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War," 8-5.1A AA.K (Military History Office: Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G3 Headquarters, United States Army, Pacific, June 1960): 6.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>76</sup> Outgoing message from CINCFE Tokyo, Japan to CG Army Eight Korea, 4 December 1950, Record Group 9, Box 37, Folder: "Army 8 – out, Dec 50", MacArthur Archives, Norfolk.

during the truce talks. The battles in these prison compounds were a constant embarrassment for the UN negotiators and the source of tension between both sides. To understand the nature of the POW controversy, it is important to analyze the origins of the problem accurately. There were five major factors that contributed to the polarization of the POW camps and the controversy over the repatriation issue.

*(1) US Political Indoctrination of Communist Prisoners*

General MacArthur believed that freedom was the antithesis of Communism because Communism gained control through terrorism, subversion, and deceit. If an open atmosphere were allowed, Communism would lose its power over its converts.<sup>77</sup> Communist prisoners would be the best testing subjects for MacArthur's assumption. Plans were made to re-educate POWs by feeding them with new information and religious services. The Far Eastern Command hired Dr. William C. Kerr and Dr. Dexter Lutz, both missionaries from the Presbyterian Mission (USA), to organize a program for the reorientation of POWs. The preparation work for this program began in Tokyo.<sup>78</sup>

As early as October 1950, the 8<sup>th</sup> Army started a pilot program at Yöngdöng-p'o (near Seoul) to test the possibility of changing the attitude of the prisoners, making them receptive to Western values, and correcting their distorted ideas about Western democracy. Five hundred North Korean inmates were selected for the study. Class attendance was voluntary. Participants heard daily propaganda news releases and commentaries from the radio, read weekly United States Information Service (USIS) translations of news releases, and watched USIS film releases that had been used

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<sup>77</sup> From MacArthur to Mr. George Djamgaroff, Chairman Organizational Committee of the 4<sup>th</sup> Anti-Communist Convention, 22 February 1951, Record Group 16a, Box 4, Folder 7, MacArthur Archives, Norfolk.

<sup>78</sup> Letter from William C. Kerr to Dr. John C. Smith, 11 April 1951, Presbyterian Church Archive, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 17 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

previously in Japan to explain the democratic process. In addition, Protestant and Roman Catholic religious services were held by missionary chaplains (Rev. William Shaw and Father George M. Carroll). ROK government officials and businessmen were invited to explain ROK accomplishments under democracy. The full impact of the pilot program, however, remained unclear because the experiment was cut short when Chinese intervention forced the evacuation of Seoul. However, it did lay down the premise for a new re-education program later on Kōje Island.<sup>79</sup>

As soon as the prisoners settled down on Kōje Island, prison authorities began a comprehensive education program known as “CI&E” (Civilian Information and Education). The CI&E was responsible for political and educational programs, while the US Chaplain Corps was responsible for religious services. The new system was designed “to develop ... an understanding and appreciation of the political, social, and economic objectives of the United Nations and to assist [the prisoners] in various other ways so that they may become better citizens in their country.”<sup>80</sup> The CI&E section operated independently of the camp command in carrying out its assigned mission, communicating directly with the high command in Tokyo, instead. Religion played a major role in the programs of the CI&E. Not only was there a specifically stated religious component to the indoctrination program, but even the “political and educational” component was to be run by civilian missionaries. While Dr. Kerr “[supervised] the preparation of materials”

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<sup>79</sup> “The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War,” 102-103.

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in William C. Bradbury, “The Political Behavior of Korean and Chinese Prisoners of War in the Korean Conflict: A Historical Analysis,” *Mass Behavior In Battle and Captivity: The Communist Soldier in the Korean War* (Chicago IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), 219.

for the CI&E program from Tokyo,<sup>81</sup> Dr. Lutz ran the agricultural program in Korea.<sup>82</sup>

The program began on June 1 in Compound 63 with 7,500 prisoners and gradually extended to all compounds. Prisoners were invited to attend a minimum of four hours of orientation on a weekly basis. Although the orientation was not a religious service, "it [was]," according to Dr. Kerr, "closely allied to one, and immediately [impressed] one with its importance."<sup>83</sup> The goal of the program was to inculcate in the prisoners a more favorable attitude toward Western and democratic ways, and instill a distrust of Communist ideology. Some qualified teachers were hired from South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, but most were selected from among POWs. They led discussions on six major topics: the background of the war, democracy and totalitarianism, the lives of people of the free world, Korea/China and the world, the reconstruction of Korea/China, and developing leadership and skills in group action.<sup>84</sup>

Roughly sixty to ninety percent of the prisoners (depending on the compound) chose to attend the orientation classes. The classes also provided other educational programs such as literacy and vocational training to prepare prisoners for life after internment (see Table 8.5). Various recreational activities were also introduced in the compounds. Among them, reading groups, literacy classes, and agricultural classes were the most popular. Compounds that had detained more Communists had the lowest attendance because the Communists were very resistant. No CI&E programs were conducted in compounds that were firmly controlled by the Communists. To reach them,

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<sup>81</sup> Letter from the General Headquarters Supreme Commander from the Allied Powers to Dr. John Coventry Smith, 23 April 1951, Presbyterian Church Archive, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 17 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>82</sup> Letter from William Kerr to John Smith, 17 May 1951, Presbyterian Church Archive, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 17 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>83</sup> Letter from William Kerr to John Smith, 11 April 1951, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 17 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>84</sup> "The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War," 102.

camp authorities depended on daily broadcasts of music programs, news reports, and announcements. In the end, the CI&E section had only a modest effect, mainly among non-Communists, the illiterate, and youths.

The impact of the CI&E programs was hard to measure, but it did generate some degree of anti-Communist sentiment among those POWs who were not party members. The Communist side accused some Chinese CI&E instructors of being spies for Chiang Kai-shek's regime. According to the memoirs of the non-repatriates, Taiwanese teachers did encourage them to go to Taiwan, and assured them of support from Chiang Kai-shek. Some of them served as messengers between the Taiwanese government and Nationalist leaders in the POW camps.<sup>85</sup> The United States initially had no plan to send prisoners to Taiwan, but because of the secret work of these Taiwanese teachers, the confidence and the cause of the pro-Chiang prisoners was strengthened.

In the Communist-controlled compounds, where the CI&E section was not effectively enacted, Communist leaders set up their own political indoctrination program. They emphasized the importance of loyalty to their fatherland. They organized singing and drama teams, and offered literacy classes to the illiterate. Those who knew foreign languages gave classes in Russian and English. Politically indoctrinated Communist agents were sent out by the "Underground Communist Party" to organize pro-Communist prisoners to challenge prison authorities and punish traitors. An ideological war was fought between the Communists and the anti-Communists to win the loyalty of the prisoners.

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<sup>85</sup> Min-jin Guo, *Hanzhanyiwang: Yuxue Rensheng Huarenquan* 韓戰憶往：浴血餘生話人權 (Memoir of the Korean War: Human Rights of the POWs in the Contest of Bloody Survival) (Taiwan: Shangzhi Minhwa Shiyi Ltd., 2000), 160-162.

***(2) US Religious Indoctrination of Prisoners***

As early as August 1950, the Far Eastern Command in Tokyo began formally enlisting the help of missionaries. Rev. William Shaw and Rev. Harold Voelkel, both of whom had been in North Korea before World War II, were hired as liaison civilian chaplains and assigned to minister to Korean troops and prisoners of war. As soon as Rev. Shaw arrived at Pusan in late August, he was sent to a POW camp to inspect and interrogate 175 inmates with Swiss International Red Cross officials.<sup>86</sup>

Chaplain Voelkel was sent to Inch'ŏn. When he met the inmates there, he discovered that "there [were] many Christians among them." These Christian prisoners insisted that "they had been forced into bearing arms."<sup>87</sup> Chaplain Voelkel was popular among these inmates. His North Korean accent and religious preaching helped to pacify many prisoners who because of Communist propaganda feared torture or death at American hands. Voelkel preached to hundreds or sometimes thousands of prisoners. He usually began by asking some questions about North Korea to win their attention, and then went on to contrast Communism with the Gospel and urging them to turn to Christ to be forgiven and saved.<sup>88</sup> His message was one of comfort, but it was also one of anti-Communism, constantly "reminding them of the evil of godless Communism."<sup>89</sup> He found his listeners eager to participate and ready to accept. The officer in charge of the

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<sup>86</sup> Letter from Adeline H. Shaw, 4 September 1950, Missionary Vol.4, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

<sup>87</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel to Dr. Decker, 13 October 1950, Presbyterian Church Archive, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>88</sup> Chaplain Harold Voelkel's letter #6, 21 October 1950, *Documents of the WCC [World Council of Church] Library: The Korean War*, ed. Heung Soo Kim (Seoul: The Institute for Korean Church History, 2003), 138.

<sup>89</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 9 October 1950, Presbyterian Church Archive, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

prisoners at P'yŏngyang even specifically requested that Voelkel be transferred there.<sup>90</sup> Rev. Shaw continued to stay in Seoul and frequently visited the POWs in Inch'ŏn prison.

In Pusan, one of the North Korean inmates was Pastor Im Han-sang, who was mistaken by American soldiers for a Communist fugitive and taken prisoner. Once UN authorities determined his real identity, he was not only re-classified as a Civilian Internee (CI), but also offered a tent to use as a chapel for worship services and Bible studies within the Pusan POW camp. American officers nicknamed him "The Chaplain." On December 25, 1950, even before the arrival of Voelkel at Pusan, Pastor Im's Christmas service attracted 4,000 POW attendants, including many non-believers. US authorities and missionaries provided Pastor Im with Bibles, scripture portions, hymn books, and tracts. His ministry inside the POW camps grew continuously.<sup>91</sup>

The success stories of both Chaplain Voelkel and Pastor Im motivated UN authorities to implement an evangelical program in all their prison camps on Kōje Island. From March 1951 to June 1952, Chaplain Voelkel took full responsibility for organizing religious activities in the Kōje Island POW compounds. Chaplain Rev. John E. Talmage and Chaplain Rev. Bruce A. Cumming, who were missionaries in the Chōlla provinces, were transferred to minister to the prisoners in Kōje as well.<sup>92</sup> At that time, there were only about three thousand Protestants and around a thousand Catholics among the 147,000 Korean POWs. A church tent was set up in each Kōje compound.<sup>93</sup> The Protestants elected deacons and elders, held dawn prayer meetings, and engaged in

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<sup>90</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 5 November 1950, Presbyterian Church Archive, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 15 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>91</sup> Harold Voelkel, *Behind Barbed Wire in Korea* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1953), 11-13.

<sup>92</sup> George Thompson Brown, *Mission to Korea* (USA: Board of World Missions, Presbyterian Church U.S., 1962), 198.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

personal evangelism. Chaplains were responsible for organizing mass meetings from compound to compound, and attendance was always voluntary. Usually hundreds, and on some occasions thousands, of POWs would come.

Since the prisoners responded to religious services enthusiastically, Chaplain Voelkel and Pastor Im saw the need to train new Christian leadership among these prisoners. They decided to organize Bible institutes in the various compounds in addition to weekly worship services and prayer gatherings. With limited resources, the first Bible academy began with thirty-eight prisoners, but by 1953 gradually expanded to reach 3,883 prisoners per week in fifteen institutes. The daily schedule of these institutes consisted of four classes: the Bible, hymns, English, and calisthenics. The curriculum improved when more civilian Korean pastors and missionaries joined the staff of chaplains inside the POW camps. Among those who had participated in the program, a total of 642 expressed interest in going to seminary after their release.<sup>94</sup> One of them was a Buddhist priest who converted to Christianity during his internment.<sup>95</sup> These POWs later became part of a new generation of Christian pastors and prominent laymen in postwar South Korea.

In about a year, a total of 2,266 Korean POWs were baptized (see Tables 8.6 and 8.7). More than 1,500 more became catechumens (people who finished their doctrinal instructional courses and waited to be baptized) and 11,000 were preparing for the catechumenate (see Table 8.7). Overall whole, nearly 20,000 Korean POWs regularly participated in religious services. Using private donations from the United States, Dr. Bob Pierce, the president of World Vision, Inc., supplied Chaplain Voelkel with a new

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<sup>94</sup> Voelkel, *Behind Barbed Wire in Korea*, 15-16.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-27.

jeep (costing about US\$2,500) so that the chaplain could drive around to visit different prison compounds in Kōje Island with his Korean assistants.<sup>96</sup>

The initial success of religious activities among North Korean POWs during the early stage of the Korean War encouraged US Commanders to introduce a similar religious program for the Chinese camps, in addition to the CI&E programs – although, unlike the case of the North Koreans, there were actually very few Christians among the prisoners. The 8<sup>th</sup> Army requested Rev. Earle Woodberry and Father Thomas O’Sullivan to be chaplains for the Chinese POWs. Both had been missionaries to China for decades, and were completely fluent in Chinese.

American churches took special interest in the conversion of Chinese prisoners. When Rev. Woodberry accepted the position as chaplain for the Chinese POWs, the Presbyterian Board Secretary, Dr. John C. Smith, specifically requested that he inform them “about the experiences” and “the attitude of some of these Chinese” prisoners, because the American people had great interest in his ministry among Chinese POWs. The secretary promised Woodberry that his stories “[would] be given wide publicity” in the United States.<sup>97</sup>

In March 1951, Chaplain Woodberry began his work among prisoners in Pusan and then proceeded to Kōje Island. He obtained invaluable help from two Korean pastors. One of them was Rev. Lee Tae-yōng, a Korean ex-missionary to China. At first, the average attendance at their meetings was between 1,500 and 2,000. During the first month of their ministry, Woodberry reported that about six hundred Chinese soldiers came forward to “[receive] Christ as their Savior,” and among them, 75 were officers.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>97</sup> Letter from John Smith to Chaplain Earle Woodberry, 18 April 1951, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 197, Box 1, Folder 3 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

Three months later, 493 more officers had joined the group of believers. The average worship attendance increased to six or seven thousand per gathering. At least six thousand of them expressed “a purpose to believe in Christ,” and some even wanted to be baptized.<sup>98</sup> The growth was so rapid that Chaplain Woodberry and his staff had to “hold them back from recording their decisions in order to be sure they were genuine.”<sup>99</sup>

About a year later, in June 1952, the chaplain and his Korean staff held between eight and twelve worship services per month (2 to 3 on each Sunday in different compounds), and had an average attendance of more than 4,000 each.<sup>100</sup> Even after the Chinese prison camps moved from Kōje Island to Cheju Island, the number in attendance in the non-repatriated camp (#3) did not drop.<sup>101</sup> Chaplain Woodberry and his fellow American officers were “astounded at the spontaneous outburst of Christian evangelism” among the prisoners, especially when they knew for sure that the services were conducted on a voluntary basis.<sup>102</sup> The chaplain immediately saw the political value and psychological effect of these conversion stories.<sup>103</sup>

Communist prisoners frequently condemned the chaplains as spies of the US imperialists. Wu Chuen-sang, a Chinese Communist prisoner in Compound 86,

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<sup>98</sup> Letter from Rev. Earle Woodberry to “Dear Praying Friends,” undated, received on July 10, 1952, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 360, Folder Earle Woodberry – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>99</sup> “Six Months in the Chinese POW Camps” (Resume#1 – Abridged), Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 360, Folder Earle Woodberry – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>100</sup> “Copies of EJW’s reports for April, May, and June, 1952,” received on November 19, 1952, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 17 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>101</sup> Memo from Dr. Wysham to the Secretary Council, 29 June 1953, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 360, Folder: Earle J. Woodberry – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>102</sup> “Six Months in the Chinese POW Camps” (Resume#1 – Abridged), Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 360, Folder Earle Woodberry – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>103</sup> Letter from Rev. Earle Woodberry to “Dear Praying Friends,” undated, received on July 10, 1952, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 360, Folder Earle Woodberry – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

described how the American authorities sent Chaplain Woodberry to weaken Communist control by empowering the pro-Nationalist elements in each compound:

This old fox [Woodberry] was very crafty. He was very alert when he came in and out of the prison compound. I remembered that when he first came to preach, there were only a few prisoners surrounding him. Some of them even spoke cold words against him. Nevertheless, he was neither upset nor discouraged, but continued to perform his drama of sincerity before the "Lord of Heaven." As days went by, I was surprised that some people were converted into Christianity. ... "Chaplain" Woodberry came more and more often, and more and more people listened to him. The "principal" Qin Li-ren [a CI&E teacher] did not do any formal work, but was busy in establishing "Anti-Communist and Anti-Russian Alliances" among "converts"... Meanwhile, a mysterious person, Zhou Yen-da, came to be the Police Chief of Compound 86... Soon after, people from the "Anti-Communist and Anti-Russian Alliance" completely controlled the police force of the compound. As a result, the CI&E School added "political lessons." The Prison Police forced every person to attend the reactionary lessons.<sup>104</sup> (Quotation originally in Chinese)

Of course, US authorities did not send Woodberry to take control of Compound 86, but religious services did boost the influence of anti-Communists there. The large number of conversions alarmed the Communists in the compound and caused them to fight back. In the eyes of the Communists, religious activities were a real threat. Therefore, they constantly sought to "ban chaplains from preaching in the compounds."<sup>105</sup>

As the missionary chaplains continued to visit the camps, Communist prisoners vented their frustration and hatred of the missionaries and religion by attacking Christian prisoners. Many victims were faithful attendees at Voelkel's services and Bible classes.<sup>106</sup> In August, a deacon of a POW church congregation returning to his tent from a prayer meeting was stoned to death. His death stirred up more confrontations. Prisoners began taking sides and ganging up on each other. On September 17, in Compound 85, Communist prisoners staged a coup and took power by killing all the non-

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<sup>104</sup> Testimony by Wu Chuen-sang in Zhe-shi Zhang, ed., *Meijun Jizhongying Qinli Ji* 美軍集中營親歷記 (Personal Records in the American Prison Camps) (Beijing: Chinese Archives Press, 1996), 134-136.

<sup>105</sup> This request was listed as one of the demands submitted by Communist prisoners in Pusan Enclosure 11. See *ibid.*, 110.

<sup>106</sup> Rodger R. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace: The United States Army Chaplaincy 1945-1975* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), 5:94.

Communist leadership. Seventeen non-Communists were brutally murdered.<sup>107</sup> Among them, six were Christians, two of whom were also deacons in the prison congregation.<sup>108</sup>

In response to the incident, Christians in Compound 85 drew up a petition, and signed it in their own blood, proclaiming that they would rather die than return to North Korea. This petition was entrusted to Chaplain Voelkel and brought to the camp authorities (see pictures). Within days, Christians in every compound of North Korean POWs had written blood petitions, asking to be put to death rather than return to Communist control.<sup>109</sup> These blood petitions, according to a newspaper report, “eventually became the mightiest propaganda weapon in the peace talks.”<sup>110</sup> Christians became active leaders among the non-repatriated POWs, organizing anti-Communist protests against repatriation.<sup>111</sup>

### *(3) A Mixture of Different Kinds of Prisoners*

The POW controversy was further complicated by the existence of different kinds of prisoners in UN custody. Prisoners constituted a representative cross section of the Chinese and Koreans, Communist and non-Communist. Some groups were strongly against repatriation for personal reasons. The first group consisted of South Korean citizens and soldiers who were impressed into the North Korean Army. On October 12, 1950, General Headquarters of Far Eastern Command in Tokyo sent a direction to the 8<sup>th</sup> Army, instructing it to prepare for the possible release of these prisoners. Headquarters wanted each prisoner to prepare a statement on his impressment in the North Korean

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<sup>107</sup> The exact number varied. Meyers and Bradbury recorded it as seventeen, but Chaplain Voelkel said it was sixteen. The actual number I believe should be seventeen because Meyers and Bradbury’s historical account should be more accurate than Voelkel’s data. See Meyers and Bradbury, “The Political Behavior of Korean and Chinese Prisoners of War in the Korean Conflict: A Historical Analysis,” 262.

<sup>108</sup> Voelkel, *Behind Barbed Wire in Korea*, 28-29.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> “Missionary Tells of Red Brutality in War Camp,” *The Post-Standard*, 15 October 1953.

<sup>111</sup> Voelkel, *Behind Barbed Wire in Korea*, 29.

army. The 8<sup>th</sup> Army would investigate each case and verify the testimony of each South Korean prisoner.<sup>112</sup> By mid 1951, about 37,000 South Korean civilians and 10,216 ex-ROK soldiers were in UN custody (see Table 8.9). UN authorities removed the name of the South Korean civilians from the list, and later released them to the South Korean government. 10,216 ex-ROK soldiers remained in UN custody until June 1953. Nevertheless, repatriation of these two kinds of prisoners eventually became less of an issue at the negotiating table, because in April 1952 the Communist side at P'anmunjŏm agreed to allow POWs of South Korean origins to stay in the south. The main controversy, therefore, was over North Korean and Chinese non-repatriates.

In the case of the Chinese, UN forces had 20,344 Chinese prisoners in custody in July 1953. 14,704, about 72 percent of the total number of Chinese prisoners, claimed that they did not want to be repatriated. The majority of these non-repatriates were ex-Nationalist soldiers who had surrendered to the Chinese Communists during the Chinese civil war. Most of them expressed their unwillingness to return to Communist China as soon as they were placed under UN custody.<sup>113</sup> At first, they were interned together with North Korean prisoners. Despite their anti-Communism, they were mistreated by both Korean POWs and South Korean guards simply because they were Chinese. The Chinese prisoners therefore petitioned for a separate Chinese unit, and their request was granted. As the number of Chinese prisoners continued to increase in spring 1951, they were housed in two compounds on Kŏje Island, completely separate from the Korean inmates.

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<sup>112</sup> Outgoing message (confidential) from CINCFE to CG Army Eight Korea, 12 October 1950, Record Group 38, Folder: "Army 8 – out, Oct 50," MacArthur Archives, Norfolk.

<sup>113</sup> Meyers and Bradbury, "The Political Behavior of Korean and Chinese Prisoners of War in the Korean Conflict: A Historical Analysis," 252-253.

There were about 16,000 Chinese POWs at that time. An ex-Nationalist officer named Ching was the unofficial leader of the anti-Communist inmates.<sup>114</sup>

There were also non-Nationalist prisoners who refused repatriation. Some of them were even Chinese Communist Party members. They wanted to go to Taiwan not because they liked Chiang Kai-shek, but because they were horrified by human-wave tactics, and disillusioned over the dictatorship of the Chinese Communists.<sup>115</sup> The element of fear was also at work. According to the Communist Party Code, a party member should fight the enemy unto death. Surrender was not an option, and thus anyone taken prisoner was guilty of treason. Therefore, some party members did not want to return for fear of punishment and out of distrust of the Communist government.<sup>116</sup> To address this problem, both the Chinese and North Korean governments declared an amnesty to guarantee that the prisoners would be pardoned for their violation of the party code, but the impact of this amnesty was marginal. Due partly to the general distrust of the Communist government, and partly to tight control by Nationalist leaders, the number of Chinese non-repatriate prisoners remained rather stable (compared Tables 8.4, 8.11, and 8.13a).

In the case of North Korean prisoners (excluding prisoners of South Korean origin), of 104,024 prisoners, 33,462 refused to be repatriated. This was about 32 percent of the total number of North Korean prisoners. There was no clear description of these non-repatriates. More than 10,000 of them were Christians, or newly converted Christians. Others were pro-Rhee rightists, but their loyalty to Rhee differed from that of

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 253-254.

<sup>115</sup> Jian-guo Wang, *Renhai Da Beiju* 人海大悲劇 (The Tragedy of Human-wave Tactics) (Hong Kong: Asian Press, 1955), 221.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 210.

the pro-Chiang Nationalists. Very few had a direct relationship with Rhee. According to Lt. Horace Underwood, who was sent by Admiral Joy to investigate the situation, during the initial screening, the number of North Korean non-repatriates was actually higher.<sup>117</sup> It decreased afterwards due to effective Communist infiltration and re-indoctrination. Although the final percentage of the North Korean non-repatriates was lower than among the Chinese, the actual number of non-repatriated North Koreans was more twice as high as the Chinese figure (see Table 8.4).

According to the testimony of Jeong Chun-seop, a prisoner in Compound 71, North Korean anti-Communist leaders did not use force to coerce prisoners to select repatriation because most of the North Korean Communists and anti-Communists were actually lived in separate compounds.<sup>118</sup> His story was also supported by reports from the missionary chaplains.<sup>119</sup> In the North Korean compounds, Communist prisoners were the ones who used excessive violence to resist screening or force prisoners to sign up for repatriation. Therefore, the decisions of these 33,462 North Korean non-repatriates had a more legitimate claim to represent the real defection of citizens from a Communist country to a non-Communist one.

The existence of different groups of prisoners in the POW camps revealed the complexity of the POW issue. A diverse set of prisoners from different backgrounds created the potential for conflict and trouble in each compound. Prisoners who desired repatriation were not necessarily Communists, but they usually collaborated with Communist leaders in their actions against the non-repatriates. When the Kaesŏng truce

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<sup>117</sup> Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 176.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Jeong Chung-seop on 17 December 2005, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>119</sup> "Missionary Tells of Red Brutality in War Camp," *The Post-Standard*, October 15, 1953.

talks began, the confrontation between two opposing ideological groups further aggravated the situation.

#### ***(4) Power Struggle between Communists and Anti-Communists***

A power struggle between Communists and anti-Communists began when the Communist side sent out trained agents to be captured so that they could organize the prisoners and stir up trouble in the camps. North Korean Communists were far better organized than Chinese Communists, because the North Koreans enjoyed an effective underground information network extending from P'yöngyang to Kōje Island. Orders were sent directly from the Korean Communist Party and carried by messengers to Kōje.

Inside the prison camps, the North Korean Communist leader was Pak Sang-hyön.<sup>120</sup> In order to wrest control of all prisoner compounds from the anti-Communists and strengthen the position of the Communist side at the negotiation table, Pak sent Communist agents to infiltrate each non-Communist controlled compound.<sup>121</sup> Their mission was to exterminate all traitors [anti-Communists and those who collaborated with their captors], resist screening, and initiate confrontations to embarrass UN authorities. The goal was to discredit the idea of voluntary repatriation and reduce the number of non-repatriates. To prepare for riots and confrontations with prison camp authorities, the Communists took advantage of the CI&E program, turning some vocational training workshops into weapon-making centers.<sup>122</sup> All kinds of lethal weapons – hatchets, spears, knives and flails tipped with barbed wire – were mass-produced.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Zhang, *Meijun Zizhongying Qinliji*, 56. See also Michael Hickey, *The Korean War: The West Confronts Communism* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1999), 354.

<sup>121</sup> "Missionary Tells of Red Brutality in War Camp," *The Post-Standard*, October 15, 1953.

<sup>122</sup> Hickey, *The Korean War*, 348-349.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 349.

For example, in Compound 62, where 9,000 civilian internees were kept, a small number of hardcore Communists overthrew anti-Communist control by beating or murdering non-Communists, including many Christians.<sup>124</sup> The anti-Communists were caught by surprise. Within a short period of time, Communist agents controlled all the key posts inside the compound, and subdued most of the core anti-Communists. A reign of terror began and the power of Communists expanded. Since the inmates were mostly civilians, the anti-Communist organization was weak and unable to repel the assault of the hardcore Communists. With the help of Chaplain Voelkel, some Christians were able to be transferred to “more congenial quarters.”<sup>125</sup>

Of course, the camp commander wanted to secure compound 62 and protect all the non-Communists. Before daybreak on February 18, screening personnel and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the US 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment approached the compound under the cover of darkness. The effort not only failed, however, but backfired, triggering a riot. In the end, 55 POWs were killed, 159 severely wounded, and 22 more died of their injuries later. Camp authorities lost one soldier, with another seriously wounded, and 22 more suffered minor injury.<sup>126</sup> Despite all these losses, compound 62 remained in Communist hands. Within days, the Communist side used this event to voice their complaints about the UN prison management, and news of the incident was widely reported in the world’s left-wing press.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> “The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War,” 24. See also Hickey, *The Korean War*, 349.

<sup>125</sup> Letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel, 29 February 1952, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 270. See also the letter from Chaplain Harold Voelkel to Chaplain (Colonel) Ivan L. Bennett, 22 Sept 1951, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 17 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>126</sup> “The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War,” 62-63.

<sup>127</sup> Hickey, *The Korean War*, 349.

The Communists also took full control of the POW medical center in Pusan (Enclosure 11). The infiltration was possible because the American staff depended heavily on the service of North Korean prisoners.<sup>128</sup> Anti-Communist patients were murdered in the wards by Communist agents at night when the American staff was gone. Since some Chinese had anti-Communist slogans tattooed on their bodies, they were the most vulnerable. When news of mass murders reached the ears of the pro-Nationalists, no one was willing to use the hospital.<sup>129</sup> From then on, Enclosure 11 became the meeting place for all Communist agents. Communist leaders pretended to be sick in order to go to Pusan, where they received directions from Pak's agents.<sup>130</sup> When the second screening was carried out in April 1952, Communists in the medical center forcefully prevented all patients from being re-screened. As a result, many sick patients died. Because of Pak's efforts, many North Koreans were forced to accept repatriation out of terror.<sup>131</sup>

In the case of the Chinese, the pro-Nationalist Chinese were influential because most of them had surrendered earlier and established good relationships with prison authorities. As a result, they took over leadership positions inside the prisoner camps. They also cultivated friendships with Chaplain Woodberry and gained his trust and support. Compound 72 in Kōje Island was under the complete domination of these anti-Communists. Nationalist leaders, such as Li Da-an, used their positions in the camp to organize other anti-Communist prisoners and build up their political support.<sup>132</sup> Very

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<sup>128</sup> Zhang, *Meijun Jizhongying Qinliji*, 86-96.

<sup>129</sup> Wang, *Renhai Da Beiju*, 224.

<sup>130</sup> Zhang, *Meijun Jizhongying Qinliji*, 54 and 62.

<sup>131</sup> Stanley Weintraub, *The War in the Wards: Korea's Unknown Battle in a Prisoner-of-War Hospital Camp* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), 28-38.

<sup>132</sup> Zhang, *Meijun Jizhongying Qinliji*, 136.

often, the Nationalists treated hardcore Communist party members very harshly once they discovered their true identity and intentions.

As soon as news of the truce talks reached the ears of the pro-Nationalists on July 28, 1951, they immediately stepped up their campaign against repatriation. Many prisoners in Compound 72 sent blood petitions to prison authorities, because they feared that the Americans would treat them as they had the non-repatriated Russians for the sake of recovering their own prisoners in Communist hands. The tattoo campaign began in the hope of gaining public sympathy. In some cases, ex-Nationalist officers forced prisoners who had wanted repatriation to change their minds and to tattoo anti-Communist slogans on their bodies. They believed that the larger the number of non-repatriates, the stronger their bargaining position would be.

According to an investigation conducted by US personnel, Lts. Wu and May, interpreters in the UN Negotiation Team whom Admiral Joy sent to observe the initial screening of Chinese POWs, pro-Nationalist Chinese used violence against those who wanted to be repatriated. They believed that if prisoners were left alone, the percentage of those who would choose repatriation would increase from 15 to 85 percent.<sup>133</sup> Their observation was also supported by other reports from State Department officials.<sup>134</sup> This was the basic reason why Admiral Joy insisted on re-screening the prisoners when the Communist side, especially the Chinese Communists, challenged the accuracy of the number of non-repatriates. Actually, the smaller the number, the better this would have been for both sides.

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<sup>133</sup> Allan E. Goodman, ed., *Negotiating While Fighting: The Diary of Admiral C. Turner Joy at the Korean Armistice Conference* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 355.

<sup>134</sup> Foot, *A Substitute for Victory*, 113.

However, the POW Camp Commander, General Francis T. Dodd, argued that the result of the first screening was accurate within 10 percent.<sup>135</sup> Lt. Aoa Meisling, one of the senior linguists handling the screening of Chinese POWs, estimated that the pro-Nationalists suppressed about 2,000 Chinese prisoners, preventing them from freely expressing their true will on repatriation. This was about 10 percent of the total number of prisoners.<sup>136</sup>

Chinese Communists fought back by spreading rumors about the war and threatening that anyone who sided with the traitors would be punished, and their family would suffer too.<sup>137</sup> They also formed underground Communist organizations to carry out their political indoctrination programs. Those who wanted to go home had to find ways not only to survive the pro-Nationalist control, but also to prove their loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party. Their only hope was to cause serious trouble in the POW camps to embarrass UN authorities. Their first strategy was to stir up riots and bloody confrontations between the prisoners and their UN guards.

The most serious effort was a collaborative effort by both Chinese and North Korean Communists to plot the abduction of General Dodd in May 1952. Dodd was held hostage by the prisoners for four days. The Communist side scored a major victory when both General Dodd and General Charles F. Colson, Dodd's successor, agreed to sign statements conceding that UN authorities had mistreated the prisoners and that they would stop the process of screening prisoners, allowing all prisoners to return home.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Goodman, *Negotiating While Fighting*, 356.

<sup>136</sup> Telegram from Muccio (Pusan) to Secretary of State, 12 May 1952, 695A.0024/7-1951 – 5-2825, Problem of POW's related international issue, 1951-1952/Acheson, Dean/ US Dept of State, Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to Korea: international political relations, 1950-1954, National Archives.

<sup>137</sup> Wang, *Renhai Da Beiju*, 223.

<sup>138</sup> Hickey, *The Korean War*, 350-352.

In order to halt the spread of violence and assume control over all the prison camps, UN authorities appointed Brigade General Haydon L. Boatner to take over the command of Kōje Island. General Boatner had lived in China for years and spoke fluent Chinese. He tackled the situation by subdividing the overcrowded compounds (Operation BREAKUP) and bringing in other UN troops to guard the Communists. While most of the Korean repatriates remained in Kōje Island, Boatner moved all the Chinese prisoners from Kōje Island to Cheju Island and separated the repatriates from non-repatriates. In this way, the violence between the Nationalists and the Communists ceased and UN authorities regained control over most of the Communist compounds.

***(5) President Truman's Firm Commitment to Voluntary Repatriation***

When the POW issue was first discussed among policy-makers in Washington, the Pentagon and the State Department disliked the idea of voluntary repatriation because the military feared that the Communists would use it to prevent US soldiers from coming home. In other words, US interests would be better served if the government could bring back all its soldiers as soon as possible.<sup>139</sup> The president, however, had strong personal opinions on the subject.<sup>140</sup> The experience of the Russian soldiers in 1945, who violently refused repatriation, had a deep impact on Truman and convinced him that it was morally wrong to send back prisoners who wanted freedom instead of slavery.<sup>141</sup> When Secretary of State Dean Acheson learned of the president's position, he changed his stance and supported voluntary repatriation for humanitarian reasons.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Acheson, *The Korean War*, 130-131. See also Foot, *A Substitute for Victory*, 88.

<sup>140</sup> Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1980), 250-251. See also Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman Vol.2 Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956), 460.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.* See also Foot, *A Substitute for Victory*, 89.

<sup>142</sup> Acheson, *The Korean War*, 131. See also Foot, *A Substitute for Victory*, 89.

Meanwhile, the army's chief of psychological warfare, General Robert McClure, offered a strong political argument to support voluntary repatriation, pointing out that voluntary repatriation would have positive effects upon future U.S. psychological warfare operations and give a boost to its Asian policies.<sup>143</sup> McClure's analysis appealed to many policymakers in Washington. In January 1952, the Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the State Department all agreed to stand fast in support of voluntary repatriation even though it might lead the Communists to break off armistice talks, and prolong the war.<sup>144</sup>

On May 7, the same day when General Dodd was abducted by Communist prisoners, President Truman gave a stern speech on the POW issue:

... [T]here shall not be a forced repatriation of prisoners of war – as the Communists have insisted. To agree to forced repatriation would be unthinkable. It would be repugnant to the fundamental moral and humanitarian principles which underlie our action in Korea. To return these prisoners of war in our hands by force would result in misery and bloodshed to the eternal dishonor of the United States and of the United Nations. We will not buy an armistice by turning over human beings for slaughter or slavery.<sup>145</sup>

Truman's position was supported by General Ridgway, Admiral Joy, and Secretary Acheson, showing the Communist side that the US government was united in its position on voluntary repatriation.<sup>146</sup> Truman's firm stance left little room for compromise. The United States was willing to continue fighting and suffering losses if the Communists refused to accept voluntary repatriation.

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<sup>143</sup> Foot, *A Substitute for Victory*, 87.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>145</sup> Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman Vol.2 Years of Trial and Hope*, 461.

<sup>146</sup> Grace B. Ruckh's reply to Mrs. Howard R. Pyfy's letter to Secretary Acheson, 5 June 1952, 695A.0024/7-1951 – 5-2825, Problem of POW's related international issue, 1951-1952/Acheson, Dean/ US Dept of State, Record of the U.S. Department of State relating to Korea: International political relations, 1950-1954, National Archives.

### *Public Support for Voluntary Repatriation*

President Truman's decision also reflected public opinion at that time. Although the war in Korea was no longer popular and many people regarded the American involvement as a mistake,<sup>147</sup> the general sentiment was that the United States should not withdraw without securing at least a symbolic victory. Public discourse over voluntary repatriation intensified from early 1952, when the truce talks boiled down to discussions over the POWs. There was a general fear that the United States might yield on the voluntary repatriation issue for the sake of an armistice. Many letters and telegrams from refugee groups, private relief agencies, and religious organizations that supported voluntary repatriation arrived at the State Department and the White House. The China Lobby and the Korea Lobby (a small group of Americans who were pro-Syngman-Rhee due to religious, military, or political interests) also strengthened their pressure in Washington. Both Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee's publicity men in Washington lobbied the U.S. government to take a firm stance on the POW issue. Because of the religious factor, their appeals for the principle of voluntary repatriation made a stronger case.

Through the National Council of Churches (NCCC), the three Presbyterian boards in the United States, the Methodist Board, Billy Graham Evangelical Association, and Rev. Robert Pierce's World Vision, the missionaries' ministry among POWs and the mass conversions within the camps became well-known to American churchgoers. Both religious and secular journals also reported the success of the POW ministry. The report of Voelkel's work among POWs appeared in *The United Presbyterian* on December 17, 1951. Local newspapers across the United States, such as *The Fredericksburg News*,

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<sup>147</sup> *The Gallup Poll*, 2 April 1952, 1053.

*Herald-Press* and *Panama City News Herald*, also reported on how missionaries converted Communist POWs.<sup>148</sup> On January 18, 1952, the *New York Times* ran a story on POW conversions. When Woodberry's wife visited the United States in February 1953, she was invited by churches to speak on her husband's work among Chinese Communist prisoners in Korea.<sup>149</sup>

It did not matter greatly to the American people exactly how many were converted or whether or not they were religiously sincere. For many, the point was not necessarily even Christian – it was the implication of this phenomenon. Drove of people who had lived under Communist influence and even fought under its banner were choosing the side of Christianity and the United States. This gave Americans a sense of righteousness and provided a boost to the moral case for US intervention. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake from the NCCC explained the arguments for voluntary repatriation:

These men who became Christians know that if they are returned or exchanged to North Korea, they will be men marked for death, because there are Communist informers in every POW Compound. (Ever since the truce talks began last August, commanders have been receiving petitions – written in blood – from North Korean and Chinese Christians pleading not to be sent back to Communist terror.) The most tremendous vote of confidence ever given by an Asiatic people to western democracy and Christianity is being given daily by these men, many of whom, impressed into the Communist army, allowed themselves to be captured at the first opportunity. The barbed-wire prayer meeting proves one thing more. Communism hasn't got a chance when faced with a vital, virile, trained Christian faith. Six months ago Communist leaders were beating up Christians and democrats in the compounds. Scores were killed. Now, after the Communist ringleaders have been segregated, there is freedom of religion in every one of the compounds and the Christian Church is active in every one. Here is one place, the last you might have expected it, where Communism is on the run.<sup>150</sup>

Based on Dr. Blake's line of reasoning, if the people behind the Iron Curtain were given religious freedom, they would no longer support Communism. Communism had

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<sup>148</sup> "Korean POWs Hold Service," *The Fredericksburg News* (November 8, 1951), "Some Are Converted: Missionaries Working With Red Prisoners and Internees," *Panama City News-Herald*, 8 Jan 1952); and "Missionaries Convert POW's: Christians Find Large Field For Work Among Reds," *The Herald-Press*, 8 Jan 1952).

<sup>149</sup> "Missionary Address Trinity Unit," *The Lima News*, 10 February 1953; and "Presbyterian Aid Society Has Program," *The Lima News*, 13 February 1953.

<sup>150</sup> Eugene Carson Blake, "Barbed-wire Prayer Meetings," *Presbyterian Life*, 2 February 1952, 27.

revealed its vulnerability. Religion proved an effective weapon to break the Communist chains on human minds. It also proved that the Communists were wise to seek the eradication of Christianity because it was, among all religions, the greatest threat to their ideology and power. Religion was critical to the ideological battle of the Cold War. Given that President Truman cherished religious freedom and had in mind forming a Western religious alliance to combat Communism, it was logical for the President to support the principle of voluntary repatriation, even if this delayed the armistice negotiations.

Religious factors also greatly increased America's moral obligation to the POWs. Initially, most prisoners (except for the pro-Nationalist Chinese and the Christians) would have faced no known persecution in going back home, if the United States had not initiated any religious or educational programs for them. But the US authorities not only designed educational programs to influence their political views, but also allowed missionaries to convert these POWs to the Christian faith (which was actually more successful than the educational programs). Once prisoners were exposed to Western ideas and converted to Christianity, Communist authorities would treat them with contempt. Lacking religious freedom in North Korea and China, Christians would face almost certain religious persecution or even death – and their blood would be on America's hands for giving them hope and then taking it away. It would, therefore, be unethical for the United States government to “buy an armistice by turning over human beings for slaughter or slavery,” to borrow President Truman's words. The sheer number of these North Korean and Chinese non-repatriates (see Table 8.9) was too large for the US government to overlook.

Truman's administration in fact explored the political value of religion in the POW controversy. In a telegram he sent to the US Ambassador in Pusan, Secretary Acheson reflected upon Dr. Blake's opinion, and instructed the US embassy to "corroborate and furnish [the State Department] enough [information] material for [a] pamphlet."<sup>151</sup> The administration took the religious interpretation of the POW issue seriously. Both the White House and State Department received many letters from relief organizations, political refugees' associations, religious groups, and individuals urging them not to compromise on this principle. Motivated by strong public support within the United States and major political gains on the issue, the administration was fully committed to voluntary repatriation.

According to a top-secret memo prepared by the State Department just prior to President Eisenhower's inauguration in January 1953, the free world's opinion on voluntary repatriation was "probably at its maximum point of unity on the question." Truman's administration sought support from the new administration "to obtain Allied agreement to, and carry out a unilateral release of non-repatriates."<sup>152</sup> However, President-elect Eisenhower refused to act upon Acheson's suggestion because he did not want to associate himself with Truman's policy. The plan for a unilateral release of all Chinese and North Korean non-repatriates before the conclusion of the truce was therefore dropped, and the fate of these POWs and the prospects for peace rested on the

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<sup>151</sup> Telegram from Acheson (Department of State) to US Embassy in Pusan, 7 April 1952, 695A.0024/7-1951 - 5-2825, Problem of POW's related international issue, 1951-1952/Acheson, Dean/ US Dept of State, Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to Korea: International political relations, 1950-1954, National Archives.

<sup>152</sup> Memo on Disposition of Anti-Communist POWs (Top-Secret Security Information, 695A.0024/10-2952 - 12-2952) "International Political Relations, 1950-1954/Acheson, Dean/ US Dept of State, Records of the US Dept of State relating to Korea: International political relations, 1950-1954, National Archives.

shoulders of the new administration. Eisenhower had to create new initiatives to bring the war to a quick end.

### *THE FINAL CONCLUSION OF THE ARMISTICE*

As Eisenhower entered the White House in January 1953, the war had drained US resources, overtaxed its economy, and over-extended its military capabilities. But it was not easy to bring the war to a close conclusively. For four months there was little progress, but Eisenhower and his outspoken secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, used patience and diplomatic skill to end the war by July 1953. Under the new administration, religious groups had an even more active role in foreign affairs.

#### *Dulles' New Foreign Policy Approach*

Truman's commitment to the idea of limited warfare and his unwillingness to use the atomic bomb in Korea had caused serious handicaps in the conduct of foreign affairs. In Dulles' eyes, US policy in Korea had become too timid and predictable by the enemy, ineffective, and lacking initiative to deal with the Communist bloc. The leverage of atomic weapons had been lost since the United States had taken them off the table. Therefore, during the presidential election, Dulles had advocated a "New Look" in US foreign policy, emphasizing "Massive Retaliation" and the use of "brinkmanship" and the "madman theory" so that the United States could have wider policy options in Korea. As Secretary of State, Dulles would make bold speeches to spread fear and uncertainty in the Communist world regarding US nuclear plans. The administration even claimed to regard atomic bombs much as it did conventional weapons, as a viable option in war.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Richard H. Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Wilmington, DE: A Scholarly Resources, 1999), 69.

If Truman and Acheson had tried such an aggressive approach, there would have been an outcry from the Protestant churches. While Secretary Dulles was not above criticism from his political enemies, he definitely had more maneuvering room than his Democratic predecessors. Coming from a liberal Presbyterian background, and having worked for many years with the Federal Council of Churches (FCCC) through chairing the Commission to Study the Bases of a Just and Durable Peace since 1941, Dulles enjoyed close ties with many Protestant leaders. Although he had resigned from his NCCC position when he became secretary of state, Dulles told Dr. Walter W. Van Kirk, Secretary of the Department of International Justice and Goodwill (an NCCC committee), “You may rest assured that the views of the National Council of the Churches of Christ will continue to receive my most earnest consideration.”<sup>154</sup> In return, the NCCC courteously refrained from openly criticizing Dulles’ foreign policy approach.

#### *The Influence of Religious Leaders upon the Eisenhower Administration*

The NCCC was particularly concerned that the new Eisenhower administration might compromise on the POW issue out of political expediency. As soon as Eisenhower was elected, the NCCC met with Dulles and submitted a memo on Korea to the President-elect, emphasizing the importance of Christianity in Korean life, the suffering of the Korean churches, the evangelical work among POWs and refugees, and the irrepressible conflict between Communism and Christianity in Korean society.<sup>155</sup> The NCCC requested that the President-elect meet with Christian leaders during his upcoming

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<sup>154</sup> Letter from John Foster Dulles to Dr. Walter W. Van Kirk, 30 April 1953, John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 77, Folder: Van Kirk, Walter W – Seeley Mudd Library.

<sup>155</sup> Memorandum Regarding Christians in Korea, John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 62, Folder: National Council of the Churches of Christ in America – Seeley Mudd Library

visit to Korea in late 1952.<sup>156</sup> Following their advice, Dulles recommended two Catholic and two Protestant missionaries to meet with Eisenhower. Although there is no evidence to indicate that the meeting took place during Eisenhower's three-day visit, at the very least an effort was made.<sup>157</sup>

*Anti-American Sentiment Caused by Pang Wang-il's Tragic Death*

On December 5, 1952, the same day that Eisenhower finished his visit and returned to the United States, an incident occurred that would produce widespread anti-American sentiment in South Korea. The Assistant General Secretary of the Korean National Council of Christ (KNCC), Rev. Pang Wang-il, was brutally beaten to death by several American soldiers. Pang was originally a Presbyterian pastor from North Korea. He was regarded as a hero among the refugee Christians because he had "survived two and a half years of Japanese imprisonment and torture for refusing to bow to the Shinto shrines during World War II."<sup>158</sup> His wife had been left mentally ill after being tortured by both the Japanese and Korean Communists prior their escape to the South. During the Korean War, Rev. Pang led a refugee church in Pusan.<sup>159</sup> He spoke English fluently and was well known by the missionaries and US chaplains. Shortly before his death, he had received a scholarship to study in the United States.

On the evening of December 5, Pang went to visit his brother in Pyong Taek, a small town located north of Taejŏn and south of Seoul. While Pang was waiting for his brother to come home, he fell asleep. He was wakened by a loud noise outside of the

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<sup>156</sup> Letter from Rowland M. Cross to JFD, 18 November 1952, John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 62, Folder: National Council of Churches of Christ in America – Seeley Mudd Library.

<sup>157</sup> No newspaper, not even religious journals, mentioned any meetings between Eisenhower and the Christian groups in Korea. It is quite clear that although it was planned, the planned meeting never took place.

<sup>158</sup> Russell T. Hitt, "Korean Pastor Slain in Brawl: U.S. Soldiers Called Assailants," *Christian Life*, February 1953, 39.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

house, and found that his sister-in-law was being assaulted by four apparently drunken American soldiers, according to eyewitness accounts. The soldiers seized Pang, ignoring his protests in English that he was a Presbyterian pastor. Lt. James D. Goff, the leader of the gang, beat Pang with his pistol until Pang was unconscious. They then took Pang to a military post, where he was charged as a thief that they had caught in the streets. Pang's sister-in-law found an Army chaplain who was able to identify Pang, however, and have him flown by helicopter to a hospital ship in In'chŏn Harbor on December 6. Pang died four days later.<sup>160</sup>

The death of Rev. Pang was a critical moment in Korean-American relations during the Korean War. American atrocities were generally overlooked by the ROK government and the media, but Pang's death prompted an outcry, not only because of who Pang was, but also because of how his attackers were treated. On the day after the assault, instead of being taken into custody, the commander of the army post placed Lt. Goff in charge of all Korean laborers. Many Koreans and missionaries interpreted the commander's action as an assertion of his authority without any regard for Korean sensibilities.<sup>161</sup> While other incidents could be forgiven as the result of either the inexperience of the American soldiers involved or communication difficulties with civilians, Pang's case blatantly revealed the poor discipline of US troops and the command structure's indifference towards investigating crimes committed by its soldiers.

Even after Pang died from his injuries, the military police took no action against the suspects until the incident was reported, in January 1953, by Donald E. Hoke, chief editor of *Christian Life*. His article caught the attention of the American public and put

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<sup>160</sup> "Memorandum on the Reverend Pang Wha-il Case," 18 March 1953, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 197, Box 1, Folder 4 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

pressure on the military to take action. A court martial was held almost two months after the incident. Lt. Goff was found “not guilty of murder, but guilty of aggravated assault in which grievous bodily harm was intentionally inflicted.”<sup>162</sup> In the end, he was “sentenced to be dismissed from the Service, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and to be confined at hard labor for two years.”<sup>163</sup>

The relative lightness of the sentence disappointed many Koreans and led them to think that “a Korean’s life is worth two years of an American’s freedom.”<sup>164</sup> Although individual soldiers and officers collected relief money for Pang’s family, no official concern was shown for Pang’s psychologically-impaired widow and four young children.<sup>165</sup> Although the incident had little effect on the relationship between the two governments, extensive anti-American sentiment was reported by the missionaries.

In response, American churches launched a nationwide special relief effort for Pang’s family. The yearly “One Great Time of Sharing” church-sponsored, humanitarian-relief fundraising campaign included money for the Pang family. Private donations were also sent by sympathetic individuals and organizations across the country to the Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Korea Mission Station in the field. The NCCC also took up the case and petitioned the Eisenhower administration to compensate the family for death of Pang. The petition letter emphasized that this incident had caused so much distrust among the Korean people that it merited the President’s attention either to initiate new legal procedures to satisfy the claims, or else to take administrative action

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<sup>162</sup> Letter from Colonel George Patrick Welch, Chief Public Information Division of the Department of the Army to Dr. Earl F. Adams, 16 February 1953, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 197, Box 4, Folder 19 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> “Memorandum on the Reverend Pang Wha-il Case,” 18 March 1953, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 197, Box 1, Folder 4 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

to assist the family. Senator Styles Bridges (R-NH) took an interest in the case and introduced a bill to reimburse Pang's family.<sup>166</sup> The President signed the bill in October 1954, awarding \$10,000 (US) to the family.<sup>167</sup>

The Pang case sheds light on the influence of religious institutions and publications on US public opinion and government actions. Missionaries and religious leaders were sensitive to Korean opinion and sentiment. Throughout the Korean War the missionaries served not only as liaisons between the US military and Korean civilians, but also as self-appointed goodwill ambassadors between the US government and the Korean people. The impact of their efforts was seen in both Korea and America. They helped the American people to care about Korean suffering, and they helped the Korean people to support the American military presence. Religious groups showed an ability to arouse public interest and to even shape US policy in Korea. The most historically significant use of that ability would be seen when the truce talks derailed over the issue of voluntary repatriation.

#### *Billy Graham's Visit to Korea*

The Rev. Billy Graham, a popular evangelist, also took a trip to Korea in December 1952, shortly after Eisenhower had returned from the Far East. He was a personal friend of the newly-elected president. General Mark W. Clark in Tokyo welcomed Graham and his companions (Rev. Grady Wilson, Rev. Bob Pierce, and Ray Provost, a Presbyterian missionary to Korea who served as the professional photographer for the journey team). Clark gave Graham the rank of field general so that he could have

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<sup>166</sup> Letter from John C. Smith to Rev. E. Otto DeCamp, 26 March 1953, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 197, Box 4, Folder 19 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>167</sup> Letter from Wallace C. Merwin to J. Calvitt Clarke of Christian Children's Fund, Inc., 18 October 1954, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 197, Box 4, Folder 19 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

full access to all military facilities and the frontline. He arrived in Pusan four days after Rev. Pang's death. During his three weeks in Korea, Graham met with many missionaries; political leaders, including President Syngman Rhee; Korean church leaders; and field generals. He also spoke to soldiers, visited POW camps, and attended the funeral of Rev. Pang.

Rev. Billy Graham's trip was heavily reported in the United States, and he recorded two special *Hour of Decision* radio shows from Korea with testimonies from American soldiers and Korean pastors. His journey diary, *I Saw Your Sons At War*, was published by the Billy Graham Evangelical Association in 1953 and widely circulated in the United States. When Graham returned to the United States three weeks later, he presented to President Eisenhower one of the North Korean Christians' blood-signed petitions that he had been given.<sup>168</sup> The President ordered the petition book to be preserved, and wrote back to Graham, "I am enormously touched by the book which you brought me containing the names and finger prints of the prisoners of war in some of the camps in South Korea. For me, as I am sure you know, it has a very special meaning."<sup>169</sup>

Religious groups were encouraged to see that the Eisenhower administration had no intention of yielding on the POW issue. Dulles was firmly committed to voluntary repatriation because it might encourage defections, thus making Soviet leaders more cautious in initiating military operations outside Russia.<sup>170</sup> When Representative Walter Judd, a major leader of the "China Bloc" in the House of Representatives, a group of pro-Chiang Kai-shek Congressmen, asked the President for his opinion on voluntary

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<sup>168</sup> Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace*, 95.

<sup>169</sup> Letter from Dwight D. Eisenhower to Billy Graham, 3 November 1953, Billy Graham Files, Box 996, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President, 1953-1961, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.

<sup>170</sup> Foot, *A Substitute for Victory*, 161.

repatriation, Eisenhower told him, “Walter, this is one you don’t need to worry about. I had the job of putting thousands of anti-Communists in Eastern Europe, including refugees from Russia who had fled to escape it, in box cars like cattle and sending them back to Soviet concentration camps or slaughter. You’ll never find me yielding on this one.”<sup>171</sup> In his message to Congress in February 1953, Eisenhower declared, “We shall never acquiesce in the enslavement of any people in order to purchase fancied gain for ourselves.”<sup>172</sup> Eisenhower’s plan was not to yield, but to pressure the Communists to concede.

In February 1953, the administration seriously considered using atomic weapons against Communist positions in Korea. Since Manchuria and the Kaesŏng sanctuaries provided cover from UN bombings, atomic weapons were examined as a way to bring the enemies out of hiding at once, and break the deadlock by destroying their war-making capacity.<sup>173</sup> In order to put more pressure on the Communist side, Dulles informed Beijing, through India’s Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in New Delhi and other foreign intermediaries, that the United States would extend the war to mainland China and use atomic weapons if the armistice negotiations collapsed.<sup>174</sup>

Eisenhower’s nuclear preparations coincided with the death of Stalin in March 1953. The new leadership in Moscow favored an armistice in Korea. Beijing also needed to re-deploy its resources for national reconstruction and was eager to make peace.<sup>175</sup> The Communist side showed their change of attitude by accepting a UN

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<sup>171</sup> Quote in Oral History Interview with Walter Judd #1, by Paul Hopper on 29 August 1968, Columbia University Oral History Project (Oral History Research Office, Bulter Library, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027).

<sup>172</sup> A report on Eisenhower, *Austin Daily Herald*, 11 February 1953.

<sup>173</sup> Immerman, *John Foster Dulles*, 69.

<sup>174</sup> Immerman, *John Foster Dulles*, 70-71.

<sup>175</sup> Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History*, 325-330.

proposal for the exchange of sick and wounded POWs in April. Shortly after Dulles delivered his warning, the Communist side agreed to the principle of non-forceful repatriation (a toned-down version of voluntary repatriation). The United States agreed to transfer the non-repatriates to the custody of neutral nations in the DMZ.

### *The Objection from South Korea*

With a possible armistice in sight, South Korean president Syngman Rhee dropped a bombshell on the negotiating table by unilaterally releasing all North Korean non-repatriates on June 18. This operation was executed by Rhee's loyal Christian General Wŏn Yong-dŏk, the commander of the Military Police Command, which was established under the direct order of Rhee in early 1953. General Wŏn's troops seized the camp guards on June 18. At the predetermined hour, they cut the barbed wire and extinguished the camps' lights so that the prisoners could escape under cover of darkness.<sup>176</sup> In the end, about 27,451 North Korean prisoners escaped (see Table 8.10), and the UN troops could only catch about one thousand of them.

Rhee's action also signaled that he would withdraw ROK forces from the UNC if the United States continued to ignore his views. Certainly, this action was Syngman Rhee's attempt to sabotage the truce, but it was more a failure of US diplomacy. Since the beginning of the truce talks, the ROK government had been excluded from the negotiations. A superpower sought to dictate the fate of a weaker nation. Many Americans might have viewed Rhee as their most ungrateful client in East Asia, but, objectively speaking, if the armistice had been concluded at that point, it would have left the South Korean government with no security guarantees should the Communists reinvade after UN forces left the peninsula. Many South Koreans viewed the outbreak of

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<sup>176</sup> Sun Yup Paik, *From Pusan to Panmunjom* (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 1992), 229-230.

the Korean War as the avoidable consequence of the US's noncommittal stance on the defense of South Korea. Therefore, as the president of South Korea, Rhee was compelled to protect the interests of his country. His decision to release the prisoners actually earned him great praise from his people. His popularity rose to "intoxicating heights," in the words of Dean Acheson.<sup>177</sup>

From a position of weakness, Rhee showed himself to be a skillful practitioner of the "madman theory." An act of such rashness was almost an attempt at committing national suicide – angering his superpower protector and threatening to withdraw his own troops from the alliance defending his country. Nonetheless, Rhee's gamble was well-calculated; he put the United States into such a position that it had to choose between a complete withdrawal or a full commitment to the security of South Korea.<sup>178</sup>

Most South Koreans sided with Rhee. According to Marion L. Conrow, a Methodist missionary in Ewha University, the whole country felt the same way: that "the truce was a mistake," that it was not to the advantage of the Korean people, and that they were being treated unfairly by the United States.<sup>179</sup> Lt. Horace G. Underwood at P'anmunjŏm also recognized the unpopularity of the US policy among the South Koreans.<sup>180</sup> Korean Christians were mostly against the truce, even though they were usually divided among themselves on other religious issues. On June 15, three days before the mass escape, Korean Christian leaders released a statement protesting the

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<sup>177</sup> Acheson, *The Korean War*, 150.

<sup>178</sup> Stephen Jin-Woo Kim, *Master of Manipulation: Syngman Rhee and the Seoul-Washington Alliance 1953-1960* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2001), 89.

<sup>179</sup> By Marion L. Conrow, 26 September 1953, 1461-4-1:05, Church & Society, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

<sup>180</sup> Horace G. Underwood resigned his position as interpreter because he did not desire to be seen at the signing ceremonies. He sought to dissociate himself from the unpopular armistice fearing that it might have a negative affect on his future missionary work in Korea. Underwood, *Korea in War, Revolution and Peace*, 180.

armistice. They were against “any attempt at compromise” with the Communist side, appealed to the US to “[make] provision against another aggression,” and asked for support from churches all over the world.<sup>181</sup> Together with other residents in South Korea, Christian families, churches, and refugees were mobilized to assist and house these runaway prisoners. General Wŏn’s operation was a remarkable success.

President Eisenhower was so upset at Rhee’s action that he threatened to withdraw US troops from South Korea and remove Rhee from power. A military coup against President Rhee, known as Operation EVERYDAY, was seriously considered by the US government. Nevertheless, Secretary Dulles and his advisers in the National Security Council were able to convince the President to change his mind and push forward with an armistice to justify U.S. sacrifices and safeguard America’s political position in East Asia.<sup>182</sup> A three-track campaign to win Rhee over began immediately. The President sent a private letter with some strong words to Rhee, threatening to withdraw US troops from Korea. The administration mobilized Rhee’s friends in the United States, such as Senator William Knowland and General James Alward Van Fleet, to persuade the old man to make concessions. Secretary Dulles dispatched Walter S. Robertson, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, to negotiate with Rhee.

Since Rhee had long played his religious card to mobilize Christian opinion to support him, Secretary Dulles also thought to use international religious opinion to quash Rhee’s attempt. He first planned to ask a missionary, Rev. Archibald Campbell, to speak with Rhee. But when Dulles’s friend, Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, Director of the

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<sup>181</sup> A Statement of Korea Christians to Dr. Frederick Nolde, 15 June 1953, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 346-347.

<sup>182</sup> Edward C. Keefer, “President Dwight D. Eisenhower and the End of the Korean War,” *Diplomatic History* 10 (Summer 1986): 285-286.

Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), a sub-organization of the World Council of Churches (WCC), volunteered to bring word to Rhee during his visit to Korea, Dulles gladly accepted.<sup>183</sup> Although Dr. Nolde's mission from Dulles was secret, many observers speculated that he was sent as a special envoy.

Dr. Nolde met with Rhee on July 3. His job was to inform the South Korean President that the opinion of Western churches favored an armistice. Rhee responded that his foreign policy approach relied upon divine guidance. In analyzing the current political situation, Rhee regarded Korea as "Joseph" in the Bible, who was betrayed and sold into slavery by his older brothers – the United States and other Western countries. Nolde saw Rhee's attitude as "messianic" and believed his mindset was "undergirded by religious conviction."<sup>184</sup> To make sure that Rhee got the correct idea of opinions in the Christian world, he wrote Rhee a letter after the meeting, telling him frankly that "Christian opinion around the world, as expressed in formal statements of the Christian agencies which our Commission represents, strongly [supported] the effort promptly to seek a truce on honorable terms and [considered] the present conditions favorable for a step of this kind."<sup>185</sup> Rhee realized that American Christians were at odds with Korean Christians over the truce issue. Rhee's opinion of liberal Christian institutions, such as the NCCC and the WCC, turned sour. He began to denounce the WCC as a pro-Communist religious organization and mobilized Korean Christians to support his stance in defiance of the opinion of WCC leaders.

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<sup>183</sup> See Telephone Conversation with Dr. Fred Nolde, 23 June 1953, John Foster Dulles Files, Box 10, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President, 1953-1961, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.

<sup>184</sup> A Statement of Korean Christians to Dr. Frederick Nolde, 15 June 1953, *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, 372.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 378.

It is hard to measure the effect of Dr. Nolde's mission, but it demonstrates that Dulles attempted to use American religious leaders to nullify the religious pressure from Rhee. Rhee had long been sensitive to US public opinion, particularly church opinion. Many times, Rhee had instructed his ambassador in Washington D.C. to recruit support from American church leaders. With American and Western churches calling for a truce, Rhee's bargaining position was undoubtedly weakened. As soon as Dr. Nolde returned to Washington, he reported to Secretary Dulles and told him that the Korean situation was one in which religious factors needed to be emphasized in Rhee's mind. The Secretary said that he thought that Dr. Nolde had helped the situation.<sup>186</sup>

Eventually, Rhee agreed not to obstruct the truce once the United States promised him a security pact and an economic and military aid package. The Korean Armistice was finally signed at P'anmunjöm on July 27. In Operation BIG SWITCH, the United Nations received back their 12,773 UNC POWs (see Table 8.12b), while 70,183 North Koreans and 5,640 Chinese were sent back to the Communist side (see Table 8.12a). In September 1953, non-repatriates from both sides (359 UN prisoners, 22,604 North Korean and Chinese prisoners) were sent to the Demilitarized Zone under Indian custody, and a few hundred changed their minds (see Tables 13a and 13b). After the 90-day interview period, the remaining non-repatriates were released. 14,227 Chinese went to Taiwan and 7,593 Koreans stayed in South Korea.

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<sup>186</sup> Telephone Conversation with Dr. Nolde, 17 July 1953, John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 10, Eisenhower Library.

### *Obtaining a Psychological Victory in the Korean War*

As soon as the Armistice was signed, the Eisenhower administration began to explore the existence of 22,604 non-repatriates in UN custody.<sup>187</sup> Allen Dulles, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, described the POW exchange as “one of the greatest psychological victories so far achieved by the free world against Communism.”<sup>188</sup> Secretary of State John Foster Dulles also agreed with his brother’s statement. In an address on September 2, 1953 to the American Legion Convention, he declared that “a new and healthy principle [had] been established” because “this time, no Red Army prisoners who [wanted] freedom [would] be sent back to captivity.” He believed that “the Red Army [would] be less dependable as tools of aggression” and therefore, the United States had “increased the prospect of peace and added to [the nation’s] security.”<sup>189</sup>

Echoes of winning a psychological victory in the Korean War were heard across the country. In North Carolina, Colonel Gordon Singles, the chief of the psychological warfare center at Fort Bragg, told a group of enrolled officers on September 11, 1953, that evidence of a psychological victory in Korea was supported by the refusal of almost half the captured Communists, “the equivalent of eight divisions,” to be repatriated.<sup>190</sup> Again and again, American officials emphasized the number of non-repatriates. The idea

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<sup>187</sup> This figure (22,604) was the final number of prisoners in UN custody in August 1953. The UN authorities had released 27,000 North Korean non-repatriated civilian internees earlier in September 1952 (Operation HOMECOMING & Operation THANKSGIVING) and the South Korean government had unilaterally released another 26,000 North Korean non-repatriated soldiers in June 1953. Therefore, the total number of non-repatriates had been reduced to only 22,604.

<sup>188</sup> Quoted in Foot, *A Substitute for Victory*, 190.

<sup>189</sup> Quoted in “CCB Staff Proposal for Exploiting Chinese and North Korean POWs Refusal to be Repatriated,” 29 December 1953, NSCS Files, Box 117, Eisenhower Library.

<sup>190</sup> “Great Psychological Victory for U.S. in Korea Acclaimed,” *The Daily Courier*, 12 September 1953. See also “Psychological Victory Hailed in Korea; More Trouble for Reds Seen,” *The Coshocton Ohio Tribune*, 11 September 1953.

of winning a psychological victory was vital, because after suffering 140,000 US and 15,431 UN casualties, the US government and the United Nations needed to have a legitimate claim of achievement in order to maintain its credibility as a peace-keeping body.<sup>191</sup>

The decision of 33,462 North Koreans (soldiers and civilians), and 14,227 Chinese not to return to the Iron Curtain resonated with all Americans. Comparisons between the 47,689 enemy troops who chose to stay free, and the 347 UN and ROK troops that preferred Communism, spoke volumes, corroborating what people had heard from the millions of northern refugees, and the reports of Communist atrocities uncovered in the North and the South. All these facts were seen as proof to Americans that their system of government was better, and that given the choice, people would choose it.

According to C. H. Peake of the Far Eastern Division in the State Department, the struggle in Korea had gone beyond its initial objective of stopping aggression. The aggression had been stopped and new meaning had been found in the Korean War.<sup>192</sup> Korea became a major symbol in the Cold War struggle. The Korean War was commemorated in Washington, D.C. with a monument proclaiming that “freedom is not free,” to signify the sacrifices the American people and government made from July 1950 to July 1953.

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<sup>191</sup> See also Callum A. MacDonald, “‘Horeos Behind Barbed Wire’ – The United States, Britain and the POW issue in the Korean War,” *The Korean War in History*, eds. James Cotton and Ian Neary (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1989), 144.

<sup>192</sup> Memo from Mr. Peake to Allison and Johnson, 1 December 1952, 695A.0024/10-2952 – 12-2952] “International Political Relations, 1950-1954/Acheson, Dean/ US Dept of State, Records of the US Dept of State relating to Korea: International political relations, 1950-1954, National Archives.

By upholding the humanitarian principle of voluntary repatriation, Peake observed, the struggle of the free world had shifted “to maintain the principle of individual human rights against the totalitarian state and the assertion of the rulers of such states that the individual lives only to serve the state.”<sup>193</sup> The case of Korea was universalized, Peake explained, “raising it above a local tactical effort to stop aggression and merely ‘contain’ the Communist world, and [provided] as the foundation for a continuing long-term struggle against totalitarianism as well as against aggression, fundamental principles which respect human dignity and rights.”<sup>194</sup>

In American churches, POW camps were perceived as being of great religious significance due to the success of missionary activities. The American Bible Society sent 150,000 Scripture portions to the prisoners. The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago sent 500,000 Korean tracts. Bob Pierce’s World Vision, Inc. supplied musical instruments, such as portable organs, trumpets, trombones, accordions, flutes, and harmonicas, for use in the worship services held in prison camps. American churches also sent stationery, clocks, and athletic equipment for the Bible Institutes inside the prison camps.

Chaplain Voelkel’s ministry received the most recognition and praise. In 1952, the US Army awarded Voelkel the Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian decoration. The South Korean government presented him with its Welfare Medal to recognize his contribution to the conversion of many prisoners. A school in Inch’ŏn built by released prisoners was named after him. His book, *Behind Barbed Wire in Korea* (1953), which told the POW story, with an introduction by Billy Graham, sold 50,000

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

copies.<sup>195</sup> Rodger R. Venzke, US Chaplain Corps historian, praised Voelkel's ministry as "one of the most remarkable in history."<sup>196</sup> Venzke also considered his work "one of the influences that ultimately convinced some 60,000 North Korean prisoners not to return to the Communist state following the war."<sup>197</sup>

Chaplain Woodberry also received a lot of attention. In three separate memoirs written by Chinese non-repatriate prisoners, Chaplain Woodberry was well respected by many anti-Communist prisoners.<sup>198</sup> They described him as their most trust worthy friend, who constantly gave them comfort and encouragement. On the other hand, most memoirs by Chinese Communist prisoners reflected a hatred of Woodberry, calling him a fox or a spy.<sup>199</sup> They distrusted his work and questioned the sincerity of his faith.

UN prison authorities, however, praised Woodberry for his work. According to reports submitted by Woodberry's superior officers, the Chaplain was "of inestimable value to the military authorities."<sup>200</sup> "His friendship and the deep respect in which he was held by the majority of the prisoners," Colonel William B. Estes, Chief of Chaplains, KCOMZ, testified, "were the decisive factors in averting riot and revolt."<sup>201</sup> For his

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<sup>195</sup> Rhodes and Campbell, *History of the Korea Mission Vol.2*, 51.

<sup>196</sup> Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace*, 78.

<sup>197</sup> Venzke's figure included the ROK troops and civilians as well. See *ibid.*, 79. See also Brown, *Mission to Korea*, 198.

<sup>198</sup> Jian-guo Wang, *Renhai Da Beiju* 人海大悲劇 (The Tragedy of human-wave tactics); Lang Liu, *Liuxie Dao Mingtian* 流血到天明 (Bleeding till tomorrow). See also Min-jin Guo, *Hanzhanyiwang: Yuxue Rensheng Huarenquan* 韓戰憶往: 浴血餘生話人權 (Memoir of the Korean War: Human Rights of the POWs in the Contest of Bloody Survival).

<sup>199</sup> Zhe-shi Zhang, ed., *Meijun Jizhongying Qinli Ji* 美軍集中營親歷記 (Personal records in the American prison camps).

<sup>200</sup> A summary of reports on Chaplain Woodberry by Colonel William B. Estes, Chief of Chaplains, KCOMZ, Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 360, Folder: Earle J. Woodberry – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

contributions he was awarded the U.S. Medal of Freedom in 1955.<sup>202</sup> The Nationalist Government in Taiwan gave him another medal and invited him to continue his ministry in Taiwan.

Church leaders in the United States also praised the influence of Christianity on the conversions of these prisoners and claimed a victory over Communism by Christianity. "Liberation comes through the Christian faith," Harold E. Fey, Managing Editor of *The Christian Century* proclaimed, "brought to this place by missionaries and Korean pastors.... Under these circumstances Communists are being converted by tens of thousands. Here where the ideological struggle is conducted fairly, truth triumphs as it has always done, as it will always do."<sup>203</sup> Although his observations on the actual situation in the camp might not be fair or even accurate, they reflected a popular contemporary religious opinion, that Christianity had a key role to play in the ideological battle against Communism.

## CONCLUSION

A limited war was hard to fight and difficult to win. General MacArthur pushed to expand the war and pursue a complete victory, but President Truman wanted to limit the war to Korea and pursue peace. Although the country was sharply divided, most Americans and most religious leaders favored a truce. Despite the desire for peace, negotiations became deadlocked because over half of the prisoners refused to be

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<sup>202</sup> According to both statistics and the testimony of prisoners and the UN authorities, the influence of Chaplain Woodberry on the Chinese POWs was undeniable. He was very popular among the anti-Communist POWs. After they went to Taiwan, Woodberry was invited by the Taiwanese government to continue his ministry in Taiwan. After he retired, when he visited Taiwan again, ex-POWs gathered together to host his trip during his visit. Guo, *Hanzhanyiwang*., 169.

<sup>7</sup> Harold E. Fey, "Korea Must Live!" *The Christian Century* 75 (20 February 1952): 217.

repatriated. UN authorities faced a moral dilemma that caused the war to drag on for another two years.

Religion was an important factor in this controversy. To many Americans, the conversion of 20,000 prisoners to the Christian faith added appeal to the idea of non-repatriation. Church leaders lobbied the government and helped shape public opinion to support voluntary repatriation on humanitarian principles. That the final 22,604 non-repatriated prisoners, not including those who escaped earlier, could enjoy a real choice of freedom was perceived as a significant achievement by many who had participated in the war. While the United States government claimed a psychological victory over the non-repatriated prisoners, church leaders also claimed a victory of Christianity over Communism in the prison camps.

Missionary activities in the POW camps highlighted the power of religion in the battle against Communism. Their success made many US officials realize that Christian workers and Christian institutions were useful allies in conducting US policy. For example, in the aftermath of Rev. Pang's death, the efforts of missionaries and church leaders to obtain compensation for the family helped to dissipate some of the anti-American feelings that tragedy had aroused. Christian relief efforts also proved effective not only in healing the destruction of war, but also, in the process, in projecting a benevolent image of America that would impact U.S.-Korean relations for decades to come. American policy-makers therefore became more willing to recognize the usefulness of Christian beliefs, actors, and institutions in fighting the Cold War. In the end, the Korean War not only established a firm military alliance between the United

States and South Korea, but also brought forth a solid partnership between political and religious actors in the conduct of foreign affairs.

## CONCLUSION

In order to appreciate the religious factors at work during the years of the Korean War, a great deal of background material was presented in this dissertation. During the Late Chosŏn period, Korea was surrounded by stronger neighbors. Could Korea remain independent if it was not modernized? Initially, Korean rulers wanted Korea to remain a Hermit Kingdom, but that was not a viable option when many foreign powers and their gunboats came knocking on its door. Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910 showed that, without building a strong country, Korea could not survive as an independent nation. Many forward-thinking men looked to the Western model. A young Syngman Rhee, who later became the first president of South Korea, for example, envisioned a modernized and Christianized Korea. Perhaps his ideas were influenced by the American missionaries who were working to develop the country. By their works, these missionaries earned themselves a good reputation among members of the royal family and many in the general population.

In some quarters of academia, the work of missionaries around the world has been viewed with skepticism. Their efforts to Westernize native peoples have been criticized as culturally destructive and racist. Missionaries are sometimes considered tools or promoters of imperialism. Korea serves as a good contrast. Western imperialism was not a major issue in the case of Korea because it was Japanese colonialism that threatened Korean independence and that sought to replace Korean culture. On the contrary,

Christianity and American missionaries were important influences in the rise of Korean nationalism and anti-colonialism. They were a significant factor in Korea's path to modernity. In fact, the case can be made that, in the context of Japanese imperialism, Christian institutions served to preserve Korean heritage – for example, through the mission schools' teaching of the Korean language and history.

These religious factors grew in significance during the years of national rebirth that followed World War II. By 1945, most of Korea's well-known patriots shared similar Christian backgrounds. The influence of Christianity reached an unprecedented level during the Korean War, due to the humanitarian crisis that the war produced. The legacy of these religious activities continues to be felt today, fifty-seven years later, as South Korea has now become one of the most Christianized nations in the world. And yet, because the influence of religion is so subtle, its role in the Korean War has until now been poorly understood and insufficiently documented.

The following sections review Christian influences present in Korea from 1884 to 1950, as developed in the dissertation. The purpose here is to remind the reader of the most essential lessons from the decades leading up to and through the Korean War, so as to recognize the big picture of religious developments over this 66-year period.

### *The Influence of American Missionaries in the Early Period*

Since the beginning of the arrival of the first Protestant missionary to Korea in 1884, by 1905, Americans comprised the majority of the foreign missionaries residing in Korea. Although Jesuit priests had arrived earlier, it was American missionaries who had the strongest influence within the Korean Christian community. Unlike the case of China, where foreign missionaries were generally distrusted and condemned as

collaborators with Western imperialists, many Koreans regarded missionaries as their allies and friends. Even as the United States pursued a pro-Japanese policy, American missionaries remained well-liked and respected. When the US government withdrew its minister from Korea in 1905, American missionaries stayed behind. Over the next four decades of harsh Japanese colonial rule, missionaries kept watch over the survival of the Korean churches, and yet working within the limits set by the Japanese authorities. Many of their children later inherited their passion and love for Korea. Some chose to become missionaries themselves, while others returned as reporters, educators, or diplomats when the US government liberated the southern part of Korea in 1945.

Part of the reason for the positive image of American missionaries was that their efforts brought many positive benefits to the Korean people. They established hospitals, mission schools, churches, seminaries, and publication companies. Their activities brought important changes to traditional Korean society. By 1910, a third of all schools in Korea were run by foreign missionaries.

The Western education offered by these missionaries and their mission schools introduced American ideals of liberalism, freedom, and democracy. These principles provided essential guidance for the development of modern Korea. Yet, even as missionaries and their mission schools sought to transform Korean society, their use of *han'gŭl* and their teaching of Korean history and culture contributed to the rediscovery of a national identity. This awakening nationalism would prove a significant obstacle to Japanese imperialistic ambitions. Christianity became Korea's fastest growing religion during the colonial period. Despite Japan's efforts to nullify the influence of Christianity in Korea and its deportation of all foreign missionaries in 1941, the churches survived

and Christianity's influence expanded rapidly in the postwar period under American occupation.

Missionaries had a great influence on a number of important Korean leaders. Missionaries assisted Yun Chi-ho and Philip Jaisohn, progressive reformers of the late Chosŏn period, in receiving a Western education in the United States. Upon their return to Korea, Yun and Jaisohn organized the Independence Club to advocate Western democratic ideals and to call for reforms and modernization. Meanwhile, the mission schools were graduating many of the young patriots who would later lead the independence movement, both at home and abroad, such as Syngman Rhee, An Chang-ho, Yŏ Un-hyong and Kim Kyu-sik. Through their contact with the West at the mission schools, many of these leaders believed that the best hope for Korea's future lay in following the Western model, even in the embracing of Christianity. Looking to the future, they foresaw a radically transformed Korea: Westernized and Christianized, but also strong and independent.<sup>1</sup> In the end, the South Korea of today has many similarities to their vision.

### *The Growth of Christian Churches and their Role in Korean Nationalism*

As the twentieth century dawned, Christianity was beginning to experience exceptional growth throughout Korea but particularly in the north. By 1930, P'yŏngyang

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<sup>1</sup> For a significant period of time, these four men all conducted their nationalist efforts from overseas, each pursuing a different approach to Korean independence. An Ch'ang-ho, a leader of the Korean Provisional Government (KPG), focused on Christian education for Koreans around the world. Pak Yong-man sought a military solution to independence through training nationalist fighters both in the United States and later in China. Syngman Rhee, the first Premier of the KPG, looked to diplomacy and led the diplomatic mission in Washington. Kim Kyu-sik, another leader of the KPG, also pursued diplomacy until, disillusioned with American racism, he went to China to join the KPG. Korean-Americans in Hawaii and the continental United States provided most of the financial support for exile nationalist activities, including the KPG in Shanghai and the Korean Commission, a diplomatic office of the KPG in Washington -- and the great majority of Korean Americans were churchgoers. Korean churches in Manchuria also contributed to these efforts.

had become the “Christian Capital of Korea.”<sup>2</sup> The P’yöngyang Presbyterian Mission Station was the largest Presbyterian mission station in the world, ministering to more than 100,000 native believers. The northern provinces not only had the highest per capita Christian population, but also some of the largest churches, mission schools, and seminaries.

Religious motivations aside, another significant factor in Christianity’s rapid expansion was the churches’ involvement in the rise of Korean nationalism. Confronted with the loss of independence and the harsh policies of Japanese colonial rule, a number of prominent Protestant clergymen developed a form of “liberation theology.”<sup>3</sup> They found hope in the pages of the Bible, by reading of Israel’s deliverance from slavery and from oppression by its more-powerful neighbors.<sup>4</sup> Ministers preached the promise of a national deliverance with true conviction and great persuasive power. Their message attracted many nationalists, who found refuge and comfort in the church. Churches became convenient places for secret meetings of the anti-Japanese and anti-colonial underground. Christian nationalists were involved in organizing and supporting the March First Independence Movement of 1919. When March 1<sup>st</sup> came, missionaries

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<sup>2</sup> This was a term commonly used by missionaries and Korea Christian in referring to P’yöngyang. See Chapter 1, the section on Christianity and Korea’s Struggle for Independence.

<sup>3</sup> Liberation theology focuses on the earthly Christian life. Jesus Christ is seen as the redeemer of the oppressed in this life and not just as the redeemer of Christians at the resurrection. As such, the teaching of these Korean pastors is a form of liberation theology, but it should not be confused with the more familiar form of liberation theology that much later came to have a significant influence in Latin America, and which contained elements of Communist ideology.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

assisted the participants.<sup>5</sup> When the colonial government brutally suppressed the movement, churches suffered great losses of both property and personnel – especially church leaders. In the years that followed, the church's losses continued mounting, as some of its most influential clergy were arrested for opposing the forced establishment of Shinto worship. Yet, for all of their losses, Christian churches gained a positive reputation in the independence movement, and those clergymen who survived imprisonment earned such fame that many would go on to become famous church leaders following Japan's defeat in World War II.

The importance of Christianity to the Korean nationalist movement can be seen in Kim Il-sung's autobiography. Although it is a biased account, one would expect that any such bias would seek to downplay the importance of Christian churches. Kim's concessions, therefore, of the churches' importance to the independence movement must carry significance. Kim's autobiography provided details of his Christian upbringing and his family's connections to several churches and to Christian education. One can also see the influence of Kim's church background in his co-opting of Christian themes in developing his personality cult. In his book, Kim states that many nationalists, including Communists, took advantage of church gatherings and drew support from churchgoers for their anti-Japanese activities in Manchuria and Korea. These claims are consistent with the developments of 1945, when, for a brief period following Japan's surrender,

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<sup>5</sup> Although Korean churches were active organizers of the March First Independence Movement (1919), there is no evidence that American missionaries helped in this planning. Perhaps certain missionaries had prior knowledge of the movement, but most were caught by surprise when March 1<sup>st</sup> came. Missionaries performed an important role in the movement, nonetheless, by sheltering student demonstrators, by allowing organizers to use their facilities, by documenting the atrocities with photographs, and by publicly condemning Japanese brutality. See Donald N. Clark, "'Surely God Will Work Out Their Salvation: Protestant Missionaries in the March First Movement,'" *Korean Studies* 13 (1989): 41-42.

Communists, leftists, and Christians all worked together to form the People's Republic under the leadership of Yŏ Un-hyong, a famous Christian socialist.

### *Growing Conflicts between Communism and Christianity*

The division of Korea following the conclusion of World War II set the stage for a national tragedy greater than any that had come before. When the Russians took over the north, they had to contend with a strong Christian presence in all the major northern cities. These Christians were politically active and supported Cho Man-sik's bid for leadership. Many rightists, especially intellectuals and landowners, also rallied around Cho, hoping that he would protect their interests. Because Cho's popularity far overshadowed that of the local Communists, the Russians agreed to put Cho in charge of a coalition government in P'yŏngyang. When Cho refused to support the Moscow Agreement, however, the Soviets put him under house arrest. Into Cho's place stepped Kim Il-sung, as the new political leader in the north.

Communists in the north sought to increase their control over the churches by gradual steps. Over the next year, as the noose began to tighten around the Church's neck, increasing conflict was inevitable. Christian students rioted when their leaders were arrested by the police. Seeing little hope of religious freedom and liberty, some Christian clergymen and a large number of laymen followed the capitalists, landowners and ex-collaborators in marching south.

These refugees brought with them news of Communist persecutions and the lack of religious freedom in the north. Their reports frightened many Christian leaders of the south. P'yŏngyang had once been called the "Christian Capital of Korea," but it was now lost. The political battlefield had moved to the south. Christian leaders began to rethink

their initial policy of seeking cooperation with leftists. Some switched to the conservative camp and allied themselves with the ex-collaborators and landowners.

American occupation forces were challenged by leftists who supported the People's Republic organized by Yō Un-hyong and his supporters. The situation was further complicated by the fact that many political factions competed for popular support and political domination. Rightists took the upper hand when they gained the trust of Commander George Z. Williams, who was in charge of hiring officials for the American Military Government (AMG). Song Chin-u, leader of the Korean Democratic Party, was Williams' favorite because he believed Song to be sternly anti-Communist and pro-democracy. Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku were also helped by Williams. As the son of a missionary, Williams was understandably sympathetic towards Korean Christians. He hired many of them to work for the AMG. Christian clergymen and laymen who could speak English were in high demand because only a very small number of American officers spoke Korean.

As rightists were gaining power in the AMG, leftists sought support from urban workers and the landless masses. In Seoul, violence, terrorism, and political assassination were the order of the day. Communists not only succeeded in infiltrating Yō Un-hyong's People's Party, but also established strongholds in the mountains of the Chōlla provinces. When the AMG finally outlawed the Communist Party, most of its leaders fled north, but the fight between the left and the right had already spilled into the streets and countryside. Christians and churches were a common target of Communist attacks. Seeking revenge for their losses in the north, some refugees joined rightist terror groups that launched reprisal attacks against the Communists. The rift between

Communists and Christians grew deeper as violence on both sides of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel intensified in the form of religious persecutions in the north and guerilla attacks in the south.

Kim Il-sung and Syngman Rhee represented two different kinds of Korean nationalists, and they embraced two different visions of a modern Korea. A political competition between the two groups was inevitable. While Communists saw Christianity as a political threat and began persecuting the Church in the north, Christians in the south allied themselves with other rightists in order to contain the spread of Communism. By 1948, two separate regimes had arisen in Korea, each competing for national domination.

#### *The Role of Missionaries in the Inter-War Years*

The role of missionaries was essential in the political development of South Korea during the inter-war years. From 1945 to 1948, missionaries and their children played a critical role in assisting the Christian community in the south gain political power and social influence. Some of these missionaries were hired by the AMG as advisors, because of their valuable language skills and local connections. Others, particularly children of missionaries, like Commander Williams, were still enlisted following the end of World War II. They returned to Korea through military transfers because of the need for language experts. Because the missionaries enjoyed the support of the AMG, they exercised greater influence than they ever had before, even though their numbers were initially small. As conditions stabilized, more civilian missionaries were allowed to return by late 1946.

Missionary activities promoted positive relations between the United States and the American-occupied southern part of Korea. Though difficult to definitively measure,

missionaries' service for the AMG and their assistance to Korean churches strengthened the general influence of Christianity in postwar South Korea. They not only re-connected Korean churches with their American supporters, but also laid the foundation for the later development of many Christian institutions, including schools, universities, hospitals, and health care centers.

Better educated than most of those in the general population, Korean Christians had an unprecedented opportunity to gain political influence. Many Christians were elected into the First National Assembly, thereby marking 1948 as the beginning of a new era of Christian political power in South Korea. After establishing the Constitution of the Republic of Korea (ROK), the National Assembly members elected Syngman Rhee as the first president. Rhee's political fortunes depended heavily on the loyalty of Christians and refugees from the north. Most of Rhee's closest advisors and trusted generals were well-known Christian laymen. At the same time, Rhee was exceptionally friendly towards missionaries. His own experiences in the United States had shown him the influence of the church in American society.

During the early period of his presidency, and with very limited funds, Rhee's publicity team in Washington depended on the support of church leaders and Christian journalists to lobby the American government and to publish information about Korea. For example, as part of his efforts to obtain a defense commitment from the US prior to the outbreak of the Korean War, Rhee specifically mobilized the Korean Church to demonstrate and write petitions, knowing that their message and the missionaries' reports of church activities would resonate with American Christians. The effort temporarily

failed when US troops withdrew in 1949 and when South Korea was excluded from the American vision of a Pacific defense perimeter

Nevertheless, American missionaries continued to work tirelessly to raise American interest in the defense of South Korea. Although they had no direct access to the State Department, they used whatever resources and religious connections that they had. When John Foster Dulles visited Seoul in his capacity as President Truman's special envoy to negotiate a peace treaty with Japan, American missionaries invited him to dinner and tried to impress upon him the achievements of Christianity in Korea. Deeply influenced by their efforts, Dulles later became the most pro-Korean diplomat in the State Department and remained so throughout the Korean War. He recognized Korea as a model of the "Asiatic experiment in democracy"<sup>6</sup> and argued strongly for US intervention through the United Nations, when war broke out on June 25, 1950. In his public speeches during the early months of the war, Dulles even defined the Korean War as a battle for religious freedom.

### *The Rise of Religious Anti-Communism in the Early Cold War*

Ever since the Bolsheviks took power in Russia in 1917, many Americans had harbored anti-Communist sentiments. Yet, in religious circles, anti-Communism did not become a strong influence until the Cold War began. During the 1930s and early 1940s, there had been no great outcry against Communism in the United States -- except from the Catholic Church -- even though it was known that the Soviets were persecuting Christians and promoting atheism. Instead, Communism was gaining ground in America, among labor workers and the Protestant elite. Even some Christian socialists and liberal

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<sup>6</sup> "Speech: Re. Korea and Japan, CBS Broadcast," dated July 1, 1950, John Foster Dulles Papers, Speech, Statement, Press Conference, etc: 1950 January to August, Box 301, Seeley Mudd Library.

theologians, such as Harry F. Ward, praised the Soviets and embraced certain elements of socialist principles.<sup>7</sup>

Things began to change when World War II came to an end in 1945. The Soviet-American rivalry in Europe and the ideological competition between Communism and capitalism began to intensify. In his 1946 Long Telegram to the State Department, George F. Kennan, a Russian specialist in the US Foreign Service, warned against the potential Soviet threat and argued that the best strategy for dealing with the Soviet Union would be to strengthen Western institutions and an American commitment to assist endangered nations. His ideas became the backbone of the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and later the containment strategy during the Cold War.

In response to Kennan's warning, many policymakers began work on promoting Western institutions. From the point of view of public relations, espousing the virtues of capitalism as an economic model did not have great marketing appeal. Instead, leaders pointed to freedom, including religious freedom. They also argued that Western institutions had their origins in Christianity. To confront and contain the spread of Communism, Christian beliefs were brought back to the center of American society. President Truman described the American way of life as being "based upon the will of the majority, and distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression."<sup>8</sup> Freedom, especially the freedom of religion, would emerge as a key theme of American Cold War ideology. In his 1947 State of the Union Address,

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<sup>7</sup> See David Nelson Duke, *In the Trenches with Jesus and Marx: Harry F. Ward and the Struggle for Social Justice* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> Harry Truman, Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine, 12 March 1947, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1947* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1963), 178.

President Truman envisioned that the American people would spread their freedom and democracy to the whole earth so that “free men everywhere will share our devotion to those ideals.”<sup>9</sup> American Christians in particular frequently viewed the competition between Communism and democracy as a competition between Communism and Christianity, because many leaders argued that democracy was built upon the foundation of Christian principles.

### *The Impact of Atomic Fear*

During these interwar years, religion continued to capture public interest because of the invention of atomic weapons. The discovery and use of atomic bombs against Japan caused much controversy in the United States. Americans felt pride, but also guilt and fear. For some people, the horrifying pictures of suffering in Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought to mind the Biblical prophecies concerning the end of the world. When the Soviet Union then detonated its own atomic device in September 1949, the nation became gripped with fear of a possible nuclear war. Led by preachers such as Rev. Billy Graham, a revival built up steam in late 1949, perhaps in response to the uncertainties of the era.

With the outbreak of the Korean War and later the entrance of China into the conflict, many people worried that the Korean War would escalate into another world war with atomic weapons. Mainstream religious leaders from the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC) began to warn against adopting an aggressive policy of punishing enemies with atomic bombs, whereas military leaders were favoring such tactics as a means of achieving a quick victory. With public opinion divided over the

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<sup>9</sup> Harry Truman, Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union, 6 January 1947, *ibid.*, 12.

proper strategy for ending the war, the opinion of the NCCC had a strong influence on President Truman, who decided to seek peace instead of expanding the war to China.

### *Ideological Battles of the Korean War*

The Korean War was more than merely a physical war; it was also an ideological war, as the battle between the ideologies of Communism and Freedom was being fought in the minds of millions of Koreans. Despite propaganda promising a Communist utopia, an estimated 1,500,000 people from the North had made the painful decision to leave everything and migrate south prior to the outbreak of the war. This was a startling 18 percent of the entire northern population.<sup>10</sup> They had voted with their feet for freedom. And whereas many of them were persecuted Christians, they were particularly voting for religious freedom. The refugees kept coming throughout the war. In a mass exodus, hundreds of thousands of northerners fled south with the retreating UN forces, risking the harrowing journey across the battle lines and a life of destitution once they arrived in the South. Perhaps the most dramatic decisions were not made by the refugees, but by North Korean and Chinese prisoners of war who adamantly refused to be repatriated to their homelands. Their decision shocked both their own governments and their captors.

Although the repatriation issue developed out of the presence of a large number of ex-Nationalist soldiers in the Chinese Volunteers' Army and ex-ROK soldiers and civilians in the North Korean People's Army, the US government and American missionaries were also partially responsible for the decision of these prisoners. The CI&E (Civilian Information and Education) programs and the religious activities, organized by prison camp authorities but operated by missionaries serving as civilian

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<sup>10</sup> Another estimated 1,000,000 fled south during the war. An additional 50,000 prisoners of war refused to be repatriated. By war's end nearly a third of the northern population lived in the south, and another 20 percent had died.

chaplains, intensified the existing ideological conflicts between Communists and anti-Communists. Many prisoners embraced the democratic ideals and religious messages that they heard at these meetings. Once a man accepted Christianity or embraced Western ideas, however, he often found himself the target of Communist attacks. Soldiers from the same regiment and ex-comrades in arms became deadly enemies. Prison camps became a new battlefield, and each compound a new war zone. The ideological pressure on each prisoner was so strong that there was no middle ground. With the help of missionary chaplains, Christian converts petitioned UN authorities with blood petitions for non-repatriation. Their requests generated a great deal of sympathy from religious groups in the United States.

### *Religious Ideology in the Cold War*

The suffering caused by the brutal war and the violence in the prison camps hardened the ice of the Cold War. In particular, many American religious and political leaders were awakened by the conditions in Korea and began to take a tougher stand against Communism. The war weakened the political power of liberals and strengthened conservatives. Religious rhetoric by politicians and public sentiment against atheistic Communism made things more black and white, connecting moral justification and religious righteousness to America's democracy, freedom, and capitalistic market economy.

From the very beginning of the Korean War, President Truman had regarded the war as a battle for freedom, and therefore, despite the long delay for peace caused by the deadlock over POWs, he refused to yield on the principle of voluntary repatriation. His firm commitment to humanitarian principles reflected his deep religious convictions. His

stand on the POW issue can be interpreted as a measure of his resolve to support freedom of religion and choice. Although the development of the Korean War was disappointing to many Americans, the actions of President Truman, with the exception of firing General MacArthur, were consistent with the general public sentiment, especially the opinion of mainstream Protestant groups.

### ***The Legacy of the Religious Factors in the Korean War***

The Korean War was the period when religious factors in Korea took on international significance. These religious factors traced their roots primarily to the arrival of the first American missionaries sixty-six years before the war. In the years following the war, these religious factors, having been brought into prominence by the conflict, continued to impact history. It is worthwhile, in these final pages, to analyze the influence of these religious factors on later historical events. Two follow-up questions should be considered in assessing the significance of these factors. First, what effect did these religious factors have on developments after the Korean War? Second, what effect did the Korean War itself have on the development of Christianity in both Korea and the United States? In answer to these questions, four areas of impact can be identified: 1) the development of the Cold War and religious revival, 2) the development of US-Korean relations, 3) the development of South Korea, and 4) the development of Christianity in South Korea.

#### ***1) The Impact on the Cold War and Religious Revival in the United States***

John Lewis Gaddis, who has long stressed the importance of geopolitics and power balances, has pointed out that historians failed to grasp what was a simple fact for those living in the Cold War – people, from the top to the bottom, saw the Cold War as a

struggle between good and evil.<sup>11</sup> America was able to sustain the Cold War over so many years, at such a high expense, through two psychological motivations: the sense of moral rightness and the fear of the spread of Communism. Such fear was particularly intensified by the war in Korea.

On November 27, 1950, *Time Magazine* reported that “a growing interest in religion [was] evident all over the U.S.”<sup>12</sup> For example, Billy Graham’s Portland, Oregon Crusade in September was attended by 520,000,<sup>13</sup> doubling the attendance of his Columbia, South Carolina Crusade in July, before the war began (see Table 4.1). On one evening of the Portland Crusade, Rev. Bob Pierce was invited to report on his travels in East Asia, especially Korea and Japan, before an audience of 17,000.<sup>14</sup> On the last day of the crusade, September 4 (Labor Day), at the “Crusade for Freedom” Rally in Multnomah Stadium, the governors of both Washington and Oregon joined a crowd of 22,000.<sup>15</sup> When Graham led another crusade in Atlanta, Georgia, from November to December, another half million attended (see Table 4.1).

Churches all over the United States were reporting a significant increase in regular worship attendance as well. The response to the Army Church Program was also unexpectedly high. Chaplain Clauda R. Ingram (Lt. Colonel), 45<sup>th</sup> Division Chaplain, reported from Camp Polk, Louisiana: “During my twenty years’ experience I have never had church attendance as large or as enthusiastic as I find it here.” His experience paralleled that of Chaplain Leonard A. Ellis (Captain), from Camp Custer in Michigan

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<sup>11</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 286-287.

<sup>12</sup> “Trend,” *TIME*, 27 November 1950.

<sup>13</sup> According to data provided by the Billy Graham Evangelical Association, *TIME* at that time reported a higher number: 632,000. See “Revival” *TIME*, 18 September 1950.

<sup>14</sup> Billy Graham, *Just as I am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 1997), 178.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

where “94 percent of the soldiers attended services regularly each Sunday.”<sup>16</sup> In particular, dispensational Christian sects, such as the Seventh-Day Adventists and the Jehovah Witnesses, which advocated the end of the world and the second coming of Christ, enjoyed the largest percentage gain in church membership.<sup>17</sup>

While most editors in the press attributed this growth to the “psychological insecurity” of the American people, some credited the trend to the improved promotional efforts of religious groups.<sup>18</sup> Even the US government became involved in promoting religion. In late November, as soon as the Chinese intervention in Korea was public knowledge, President Truman called attention to the fundamental place of religion and religious institutions in American life. He gave a statement in support of the nonsectarian Religion in American Life Movement, urging “all Americans to attend and support the church, chapel, or synagogue of their individual choice.”<sup>19</sup> Thousands of giant outdoor posters were displayed, saying, “Take your problems to Church this week – millions leave them there!” It was the first time in American history that a nationwide campaign had employed mass advertising facilities in support of religion.<sup>20</sup>

According to the prominent theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, mass evangelism and the increased intellectual interest in religion were undeniable proof of a shift in American culture toward religiosity.<sup>21</sup> “There is scarcely a college or university,” Niebuhr explained, “which has not recently either created a department of religious studies or

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<sup>16</sup> “Response Unusually Good to Army Church Program,” *Presbyterian Life*, 20 January 1951, 23.

<sup>17</sup> For the Adventists, see “Signs of the Times,” *TIME*, 31 July 1950; and for the Jehovah’s Witnesses, see “Waiting for Armageddon,” *TIME*, 14 August 1950.

<sup>18</sup> “Trend,” *TIME*, 27 November 1950. See also “Religion in 1950,” *Presbyterian Life*, 20 January 1951, 21.

<sup>19</sup> “Religion in American Life,” *The United Presbyterian*, 20 November 1950, 9.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> “Trend,” *TIME*, 27 November 1950.

substantially enlarged existing departments."<sup>22</sup> With more Americans turning to religion not only for answers to their personal problems but also for answers to international crises, religious public opinion became a stronger influence upon foreign policy.

The religious revival that started during the late 1940s and which was accelerated by the outbreak of the Korean War persisted throughout the war and postwar years (see Table 4.1). Through both the secular press and also religious publications, especially the reports of missionaries, the situation in Korea shocked millions of Americans with the horror and suffering of war. The public arose to provide humanitarian relief for those ravaged by the war, and turned to a more determined and aggressive diplomatic and military effort against further Communist expansion in other parts of the globe. In addition, both religious and political leaders advocated a deeper commitment to the cause of religion as a part of the battle against Communist influence, both at home and abroad. This was the decade in which the words "under God" were added to the Pledge of Allegiance. Taking the advice of Rev. Billy Graham, President Eisenhower, who had not been a church member, joined the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) after he entered the White House in order to show his commitment to organized religion. He expressed his idea of the importance of religion this way: "Our government makes no sense unless it is founded on a deeply felt religious belief -- and I don't care what it is."<sup>23</sup> Coincidentally, both the President and the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, belonged to the Protestant denomination, which had a close relationship with the Korean Protestant churches and financed the largest share of Christian reconstruction programs in South Korea.

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<sup>22</sup> Quote in *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> James M. Wall, "Changes in Attitude: the Lost World of the 1950s," *The Christian Century*, 18 October 1995, 947-948.

## ***2) The Impact on the Development of Korean-American Relations***

Although there was no missionary-diplomat like Dr. Horace Allen during the Korean War, missionaries remained a strong force in facilitating the development of Korean-American relations. Dr. Harold Noble, son of American missionaries in P'yŏngyang before World War II, served as the political attaché and first secretary at the US embassy in Seoul from 1948 to 1951. He was an important official who acted as liaison between the American embassy and President Syngman Rhee. During the initial stages of the war, he was sent by Ambassador John J. Muccio to stay with Rhee and advise him on the policy of the United States.<sup>24</sup> Noble's missionary background also made him a useful go-between for the missionary community and the embassy. Missionaries in the war zone needed such a helper as they sought embassy permission to allow their missionary colleagues, who had evacuated to Japan, to return to Korea.

When John Foster Dulles became Secretary of State in 1953, American religious interests had direct access to the State Department. Dulles handled Rhee's efforts to sabotage the truce talks with great care, utilizing the influence of American church leaders to convince Rhee to cooperate. A military alliance between the two countries was finally established with the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty on October 1, 1953. Since then, the bilateral relationship between the two countries has often been described as "an alliance forged in blood."<sup>25</sup> South Korea has grown to be one of the closest US allies in East Asia. During the Vietnam War, South Korea was the only Asian country to send two divisions to fight on the US side. In the recent war against Iraq, South Korea is

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<sup>24</sup> Harold Joyce Noble, *Embassy at War* edited with introduction by Frank Baldwin (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1975), 104-122.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in William Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 186.

again a strong US ally. Even though the United States government closed most of its military bases in Philippines and Japan, those in South Korea remain open.

Apart from the strong official ties between the two governments, Korean-American relations also grew at the non-state level throughout the 1950s. Every year since the war, while the best brains in Korea came to receive their education in the United States, more American missionaries left for South Korea. The social, cultural, and religious ties between the two nations were tightening. American churches continued sending relief packages and also money to rebuild the Christian social and religious institutions that had been destroyed by the war. Dr. Bob Pierce, who produced two well-known documentary films on Korea and the suffering of the war, started America's first international adoption agency, World Vision, Inc., in September 1950. Three times in the 1960s, Dr. Pierce's Korean Orphans Choir toured the United States to give concerts to raise money for orphanages in Korea.<sup>26</sup> Wherever they went, they attracted huge crowds and received wide publicity among television and radio audiences. Many American families answered the call to adopt Korean War orphans. Another source of Korean immigration into the United States was the many marriages between American soldiers and Korean women. And since the US maintained a military presence in Korea after the war, such marriages continued. The Korean-American community, with an eighty percent Christian population, has become a prominent minority in American society today.

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<sup>26</sup> Bob Pierce, *The Korean Orphan Choir: They Sing Their Thanks* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965), 12. On the first tour (1961-1962), they sang in 62 cities in the United States and Canada over 90 days. On their second tour (1962-1963), they visited 15 countries in the Orient and Europe and then sang in 70 cities in the United States and in leading Canadian cities. On their third tour (1965-1966), they visited 23 states and 4 Canadian provinces in a period of seven and a half months.

Americans and South Koreans continue to work closely on issues involving North Korea. Although there are differences between the two governments in terms of how to approach unification and how to handle the North Korean nuclear threat, there is cooperation at the non-state level. Since the 1990s, Christian churches in South Korea have been at the forefront of re-unification efforts. In addition to prayer, religious relief agencies in both South Korea and the United States sent food and relief packages to North Korea during the devastating famine of the 1990s. Church leaders, perhaps recalling P'yŏngyang's Christian heritage, are looking for ways to re-enter North Korea.<sup>27</sup>

According to Professor Thomas Hong-soon Han of the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, the religious factor will continue to be an essential part of efforts to open a dialogue with North Korea, and, ultimately, of efforts to achieve the peaceful reunification of the country.<sup>28</sup> Korean churches in the northeastern part of China, for example, have established a modern-day underground railroad that has cared for and transported thousands of North Korean refugees into South Korea via China. At the present time, just as during the inter-war period, churches remain the major source of information on conditions inside North Korea. Their reports and information continue to affect American public opinion and US policy on the Korean peninsula.

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<sup>27</sup> For example, in 2003, Dr. James Jin-Kyung Kim, a famous South Korean Christian educator who built a private university in Yanji known as Yanbian University of Science and Technology (YUST), was given permission to build a new university in P'yŏngyang, P'yŏngyang University of Science and Technology (PUST). The project was funded by private sources, especially Christian churches and institutions from all over the world. Educators will soon be allowed to enter P'yŏngyang to teach in PUST. If the North Korean government does not alter the schedule, PUST should be opened in the Fall of 2007.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Hong-soon Han, "The Role of the Church in South-North Dialogue," <http://www.mi.infn.it/~landnet/corea/proc/022.pdf>.

### 3) *The Impact on the Political Development of South Korea*

The power and influence of the Christian community in South Korea continued to grow during the Korean War, even though a significant number of clergymen and lay workers were executed or carried off by North Korean authorities when the Communists overran and later evacuated the South. The number of Christians increased rapidly because of the influx of about 100,000 new Christian refugees during the war. Their arrival strengthened not only the Christian community, but also Rhee's political power base as well. Refugees, Christian and otherwise, were the backbone supporters for Rhee's policy of *pukchin t'ongil* (advance northward and achieve unification).

Christianity's influence on Korean politics continued even after Syngman Rhee's regime ended in 1960. Rhee's shortlived successor, Chang Myŏn (John M. Chang), was a devout Catholic. Following Chang Myŏn, the Second Republic was established under the new president Yun Po-sŏn, a Presbyterian elder. Dr. Paek Nak-chun (George Paik), President of the at that time still religious Yonsei University, became President of the House of Councilors. The cabinet was also filled with Christian laymen.<sup>29</sup> Over the next four decades, the power and influence of Christians continued to grow in Korean politics, despite military dictatorships. The Christian community was one of the principal opposition groups to General Park Chung-hee's military government, and one of the leading forces in the movement to democratize the nation, which finally occurred in 1992.

Since democracy was reestablished, all of Korea's presidents have been Christian: Kim Young-sam (1992-1998), Kim Dae-jung (1998-2003), and Roh Moo-hyun (2003-

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<sup>29</sup> Alan Carter Covell, "Korean Conversion to Christianity," *Asian & Pacific Quarterly of Cultural and Social Affairs* 19 (1987): 36.

present). Today, of the 299 representatives of the Korean National Assembly, 103 are Protestants and 70 are Catholics, which is about 58 percent of the whole legislative body.<sup>30</sup> In addition to its earlier growth, the Christian population in South Korea doubled every decade from 1960 to 1980.<sup>31</sup> By 2005, about one third of South Korea's 45 million people were Christians (11 million Protestants and 3 million Roman Catholics).<sup>32</sup> Christianity is currently the leading political and religious force in South Korea.

#### ***4) The Impact on the Development of Christianity in South Korea***

Following the Communist takeover of China in 1949, missionary-sending churches in America looked to Korea as the hope for reaching Asia with the gospel. In 1950, keeping South Korea free from Communism was a key interest of the American churches. When war broke out and the US government entered the fray, they began to appreciate that Korea did, in fact, hold a key strategic value in holding back Communism's advance. Having reached this conclusion, the American government found its interests coincided with those of the American churches.

Some Korean church leaders perceive the Korean War as a negative influence on the development of Korean Christianity. Korean Protestant churches had begun as self-

<sup>30</sup> Data is taken from the web page of JoongAng Daily, a member of Korea's leading newspaper group, <http://news.joins.com/et/200502/25/200502251850590931a000a100a120.html>.

<sup>31</sup> Table: Comparative Church Growth Statistics

Year	Population Size	Size of Protestant Church	% of Population	Size of Catholic Church	% of Population	% of Christians in Population
1957	22,949,000	844,000	3.7	285,000	1.2	4.9
1968	31,093,000	1,873,000	6.0	751,000	2.4	8.4
1970	31,569,000	3,193,000	10.1	788,000	2.5	12.6
1972	32,459,000	3,452,000	10.6	804,000	2.5	13.1
1974	33,450,000	4,019,000	11.9	1,012,000	3.0	14.9
1976	35,860,000	4,659,000	13.0	1,053,000	2.9	15.9
1978	37,019,000	5,294,000	14.3	1,144,000	3.1	17.4
1981	38,723,000	7,637,000	19.8	1,439,000	3.7	23.5

See James Huntley Grayson, *Early Buddhism and Christianity in Korea: A Study in the Emplantation of Religion* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 126.

<sup>32</sup> Andrew E. Kim, "History of Christianity in Korea: From Its Troubled Beginning to Its Contemporary Success," <http://www.kimsoft.com/1997/xhist.htm>].

governing and self-reliant, but they became, after the outbreak of the war, more strongly dependent upon America. Many Korean Pastors depended on foreign support during the Korean War and during the postwar period. Much of the church leadership had been killed by the Communists; missionaries were needed to lead and to train new leaders. Much of the churches' infrastructure and institutions had been destroyed by the war; American money was needed to rebuild them. After years of war, the Korean people were left destitute; American supplies were needed to help people get back on their feet. During the 1950s many new American missionaries arrived in Korea, and found their services in high demand, particularly in addressing poverty. Even many non-believers looked to churches for food and medicine.

This new dependency of the Korean Church upon America can be interpreted more positively, however, as the forging of a stronger partnership between churches in America and Korea. Even though Korean churches became dependent on American support, there was no lack because American churches were eager to provide help to the war-torn country. Much of the money that was sent to rebuild this impoverished country flowed through churches and Christian institutions. If even non-Christians looked to churches for help, then this underscores the growing importance of churches in Korean social life. The result, after five decades of American support, is not a dependent and weak church, but a vibrant and growing one. The financial power and the missionary zeal of the Korean churches have out-grown many Western churches. According to the latest statistics, South Korea is now the second largest missionary sending country in the world.<sup>33</sup> Each year since 2000, South Korea has sent out an average of 1,100 missionaries. This was more than the number sent by all European countries combined

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<sup>33</sup> Rob Moll, "Mission Incredible," *Christianity Today* 50 (March 2006): 28.

(Protestant or Catholic). It has also taken the lead in sending out mission workers to Asia, Africa, and many Muslim countries in the Middle East. It may well turn out that the early missionaries were right, and Korea will become the key to Christianity's growth in Asia.

In fact, rather than lamenting the temporary loss of church independence caused by the war, the war can be recognized as ultimately strengthening churches in Korea. The ravages of war further weakened the Confucian structure of traditional Korean society because most young men were either killed in combat or were at least separated from their families for several years.<sup>34</sup> Women and children depended more on government or private relief for survival. As a result, Christian humanitarian relief efforts enhanced the prestige of Christianity and its influence in Korea society. Without the Korean War, Christianity would not have grown as rapidly as it did and Korean churches would not have received as much financial support from American churches. American overseas missions would have continued to focus on Japan, the Philippines, India, and various countries in Africa, with Korea as only a secondary interest.

### *Final Thoughts*

To appreciate the fundamental importance of religious – particularly Christian – factors in the growth of modern Korea and in Korean-American relations, perhaps it is helpful to consider a world without them. If missionaries had never come to Korea, the development of modern Korea would have been different – whether better or worse,

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<sup>34</sup> The Korean War significantly weakened the structure of traditional Korean life. The breakdown of the self-sufficient farm economy, the loosening of the bonds of the old family system, and the rise of women and youth as breadwinners all eroded the foundations of the long-established Confucian society. The war created a vacuum that would be filled, in time, by Christianity. The same stresses were at work on Confucianism in the North. In this case, however, the central government would fill the vacuum with its personality cult and more controlled economic and social programs. The religious transformation of the North is perhaps more startling than that in the South, although few tangible facts are available. .

certainly very different. There would have been no Syngman Rhee (nor his book, *Spirit of Independence*, the most well-known nationalist writing) – nor any other Christian patriots, no “non-violent” March First Independence Movement (1919), no Cho Man-sik, no George Z. Williams, no Underwood family, no Christian schools and institutions, and no churches. The resistance to a Communist- controlled North and a leftist dominated South would have been significantly weakened during the interwar years. Perhaps the war in Korea would not even have been necessary if the Communists had succeeded in sabotaging the American-sponsored South Korean government.

But if the war had come and the United States had still intervened without a Christian connection to America, perhaps the “police action” in Korea would not have aroused as much interest and support from the American public. Without a clear moral justification for American intervention, a war in distant Korea, bogged down in a bloody conflict with China, and coming right on the heels of World War II, could have become as unpopular as Vietnam. The United States might have been eager to extricate itself and shortened the war by yielding on the POW controversy. Indeed, the POW controversy might have been smaller scale and have captured less public attention without camp conversions and blood letters given to Billy Graham. Also, without moral guidance, the United States could have adopted a more aggressive position, expanding the war to China or using the atomic bomb as General Douglas MacArthur and his supporters demanded. Nor, following the war (if one imagines the war progressing along the same course even in the absence of religious factors), would America and Korea have developed such close ties at the non-state level. Moreover, the development of modern Korea would probably have taken along a different path.

The religious factors of the Korean War are important components in the study of the rise of modern Korea. Therefore, through understanding the religious factors at work prior to and during the Korean War, historians can better appreciate later historical events, namely the unfolding of the Cold War and the development of the modern ties that still persist between America and South Korea.

## APPENDIX 1.1: Tables for CHAPTER 1

Table 1.1: Funding for Foreign Missionary work in East and Southeast Asia (Methodist Episcopal Church)

Country Name	1891	1894	1897	1900	1903	1906	1907	1908*
China	108,519	118,711	114,011	119,376	126,630	142,750	150,550	157,550
India	114,000	117,537	133,058	144,241	149,589	175,200	182,900	188,806
Japan	61,666	54,408	48,576	49,739	54,000	59,300	62,500	62,500
Korea	15,924	15,967	14,285	16,911	23,000	26,940	28,465	28,465
Malaysia	7,250	8,889	9,378	10,500	11,981	16,580	21,380	21,380
Philippine Islands	-	-	-	-	14,000	21,350	23,650	25,630
Foreign Mission	566,347	592,940	586,800	629,625	683,942	777,275	820,000	missing**

\* Data for 1909 not available.

\*\* Incomplete materials.

Source: *Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church: Korea Mission 1884-1943* (Seoul: 한국기독교역사연구소 The Institute for Korean Church History, 2001).

Table 1.2: Comparison of the number of overall Christian converts in Korea and in Japan

Country Name	1887	1898	% increase from 1887 to 1898	1907	% increase from 1898 to 1907
Japan	20,000	41,000	105%	50,000	22%
Korea	20	5,000	24900%	41,000	720%

Source: Data quoted by Jongsuk Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry: Korean American Relations to 1910* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 5.

Table 1.3: The Growth of Protestant Christianity, 1905-1907

Year	Churches	Stations	Baptized Adherents	Probationers
1905	321	470	9,761	30,136
1907	642	1,047	18,964	99,300
% Increase	200%	222.3%	194.2%	329.5%

Source: Horace G. Underwood, *The Call of Korea* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1908), 146-48, Quoted by Chung-shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003): 29.

Table 1.4: Comparison of the Methodist Ministry in Korea (1912) and in Japan (1918)

	1903 in Korea	1907 in Korea	1912 in Korea*	1918 in Japan
Missionaries	39	42	64	113
Ordained Preachers	4	6	30	145
Evangelists (Un-ordained Preachers in Korea)	15	29	269	111
Bible Women	Unknown	Unknown	26	85
Churches (Churches and Chapels in Korea)	67	219	437	298
Membership	1,616	3,885	10,507	15,852
Resident Members	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	8,608
Probationers	5,299	19,570	15,618	Unknown
Other adherents	Unknown	16,158	21,119	Unknown

\* Data in 1918 is not available.

Source: For the data of the Korean Methodist Church, see "Foreign Missions Report: Korea Conference (1912)," *Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church: Korea Mission 1884-1943* (Seoul: 한국기독교역사연구소 The Institute for Korean Church History, 2001): 430-433. For the data of the Japanese Methodist Church, see Bishop Herbert Welch, "Seoul Area - Japan and Korea," (1921), *ibid.*, 655.

Table 1.5: Number of Presbyterian Churches in 1910

<i>Province</i>	<i># of churches</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Main city</i>
<i>Seoul (Capital city)</i>	11	1.6	-
Hamgyong (NK)	31	4.5	Hamhung
P'yong'an (NK)	<b>260</b>	<b>37.8</b>	Pyongyang
Hwanghae (NK)	<b>103</b>	<b>15.0</b>	Haeju
Kyonggi (SK)	56	8.2	Seoul
Ch'ungch'ong (SK)	25	3.7	Taegu
Cholla (SK)	76	11.0	Kwangju
Kyongsang (SK)	<b>125</b>	<b>18.2</b>	Pusan
Total	687	100	-

Source: Chung-shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003): 33.

Table 1.6: Christianity in Korea: Basic Statistics in 1941

<i>Denominations</i>	<i># of Churches</i>	<i># of workers</i>	<i>Membership</i>
Roman Catholic	499	320	109,210
Greek Orthodox	6	5	115
Korea Presbyterian	3,348	3,075	262,075
Methodist Episcopal	876	295	50,286
Episcopal	136	104	7,738
Seventh-Day Adventist	185	80	4,510
Holiness	205	221	9,169
Salvation Army	140	156	4,876
Korean Missionary Society	15	14	518
Pentecostal	4	4	80
Christian Church	6	6	285
Japan Christian Church	53	63	5,381
Plymouth Brethren	2	3	98
Korean Christian Church	30	8	1,415
Korean Congregational	26	26	550
Church of God	14	14	968
Church of Christ	13	5	140
Korean Christian Church	8	5	Unknown
Church of Jesus	8	5	Unknown
Korean Evangelical Church	19	7	422
Church of Christ	19	19	Unknown
Japan Union Church	1	Unknown	Unknown
Nazarene	3	3	86
Pure Evangelical Church	1	1	106
East Asia Christian Church	30	32	1,311
Total	5,640	4,471	459,339

(Source: "The List of Worship & Religions in Korea" By the Training Dept., Education Bureau of the Governor General of Chosen, December, 1941, pp.55-57 recorded in "Statistics - Japan & Korea" / General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allies Powers, Box#5780, RG331 GHQ/SCAP records, CIE ©, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington National Records Center.)

Table 1.7: Number of Modern Schools, 1910

<i>Category</i>	<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Public School	80	3.6%
Semipublic School	73	3.3%
<i>Subtotal</i>	153	6.9%
Private School	*1,325	59.3%
Religious related Private School	755	33.8%
<i>Subtotal</i>	2,080	93.1%
<b>Total</b>	2,233	100%

Source: Chung-shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003), 122.

\* According to Professor Park, "many of the non-church affiliated private schools were founded by native Christians on the model of, and with stimulation from, successful church-related schools."

Table 1.8: Number of Westerners in 1894

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Diplomatic service	14	12%
Business	69	58%
Missionaries	35	30%
<i>Total</i>	118	100%

Source: Samuel H. Moffett, "The Westerner," in *First Encounters: Korea 1880-1910* ed. by Peter A. Underwood (Seoul: Dragan's Eye Graphics, 1982), 36.

Table 1.9: Signers of the Declaration of Independence (March 1, 1919)

<i>Religious Groups</i>	<i>Number of Signers</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Chondoists	15	Choe Nam-son, Son Pyong-hui
Christians	16	Yi Sunghun, Kil Son-ju, Kim Pyong-jo, Yu Yo-dae
Buddhists	2	Han Yong-un, Paek Yong-ong

Sources: Wanne J. Joe, *A Cultural History of Modern Korea: A History of Korean Civilization* (Elizabeth, NJ & Seoul: Hollyn, 2000), 808.

Table 1.10: Religious Affiliation of People Arrested During the March First Independence Movement 1919

<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Ch'ondogyo	2,268	15	2,283	11.69
Shich'ongyon	14	0	14	0.07
Buddhist	220	0	220	1.13
Confucianist	346	0	346	1.77
<b>Methodist</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>2.87</b>
<b>Presbyterian</b>	<b>2,254</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>2,486</b>	<b>12.74</b>
<b>Congregational</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0.04</b>
<b>Other Protestants</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>1.64</b>
<b>Catholics</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0.28</b>
Other Religions	21	0	21	0.11
No religious affiliation	9,255	49	9,304	47.65
Unknown	3,809	98	3,907	20.01
<b>Total:</b>	<b>19,054</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>19,525</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Korean Government-General, Governor's Office, *Chosen no dokuritsu shiso oyobi undo* [The Korean Independence Thought and Movement] (Seoul, 1924), pp.98-106.) See also Chong-sik Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1963): 115-118.

Table 1.11: The Growth of the Presbyterian Church before and after the 1919 Uprising

<i>Year</i>	<i>Churches</i>	<i>Newly Established Churches</i>	<i>Adherents</i>
1917	1,648	52	149,526
1918	1,778	102	160,919
1919	1,705	115	144,062
1920	1,738	184	153,915
1921	1,879	267	179,158

Source: Chung-shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003): 36.

Table 1.12: Korean Church Membership

<i>Year</i>	<i>Adherents</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1937	374,085	Sino-Japanese War
1939	370,462	Shinto Shrine worship enforced
1941	332,607*	Missionaries were imprisoned and forced to leave
1943	208,758	

Source: Chung-shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003): 36.

\* Compared to Table 1.6, the figure is much lower here because of the different sources. The Japanese data might reflect the inactive members while the church data here might reflect the actual attendant. In other words, some Christians, who refused to bow down to the Shinto Shrine, chose to leave or forced to leave their churches.

## APPENDIX 1.2: Tables for CHAPTER 2:

Table 2.1: Reported Membership in Religious Organization, 1911-1944

<i>Religion</i>	<i>1911</i>	<i>1928</i>	<i>1939</i>	<i>1944</i>	<i>% in 1944</i>
Buddhists	340,000	270,000	194,000	187,000	20.1
<b>Christians</b>	<b>201,000</b>	<b>340,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>621,000</b>	<b>66.6</b>
Chondokyo	109,000	111,000	80,000	72,000	7.7
Others	119,000	83,000	50,000	52,000	5.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>769,000</i>	<i>804,000</i>	<i>824,000</i>	<i>932,000</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>% of population</i>	<i>5.7%</i>	<i>4.3%</i>	<i>3.8%</i>	<i>3.7%</i>	

Source: Data for 1911, 1928, and 1939, from Office of the Overseas Minister, *Takumu tokei*, 1939; for 1944 from *Annual Report on the Administration of Chosen 1944*. See Joungwon Kim, *Divided Korea: The Politics of Development, 1945-1972* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 21.

Table 2.2: The Provincial Distribution of the Young Friends' Party

<i>Southern Provinces</i>		<i>Northern Provinces</i>	
Kyonggi	103	Kangwon	13
North Chungchong	0	Hwanghae	79
South Chungchong	15	South Pyongan	815
North Cholla	23	North Pyongan	1,668
South Cholla	0	South Hamgyong	1,400
North Kyongsang	21	North Hamyong	54
South Kyongsang	56		
<i>Total</i>	<i>218</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>4,017</i>

Source: Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution 1945-1950* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 15.

Table 2.3: Religious Membership in Korea in between 1939-1941

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Churches/ Temples</i>	<i>Workers</i>	<i>Overall Membership</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Christianity</b>	<b>5,640</b>	<b>4,471</b>	<b>459,339**</b>	<b>33.5</b>
Japanese Buddhism	1,560	1,733	339,512*	24.8
Sectarian Shinto	324	710	93,110*	6.8
State Shinto	73	157	No register membership	n.a.
Korean Buddhism	1,727	6,639	196,135	14.3
Togaku	973	Unknown	117,585	8.6
Hunchi	1,091	Unknown	137,807	10.0
Buddhistic	26	Unknown	23,054	1.7
Shamanism	29	Unknown	4,707	0.3
Confucianism	<i>missing</i>	<i>missing</i>	<i>Missing</i>	n.a.
<i>Total</i>	<i>11,443</i>	<i>13,710</i>	<i>1,371,249</i>	<i>100</i>

\* The membership was mostly Japanese population in Korea. If these two groups were deducted from the total, it would become 938,627, which is similar to the total in Table 2.2.

\*\*The percentage of Christian could be as high as 49% of the overall religious population if the Japanese groups are taken out of the calculation.

Source: "The List of Worship & Religions in Korea" By the Training Dept., Education Bureau of the Governor General of Chosen, December, 1941, pp.55-57 recorded in "Statistics - Japan & Korea" / General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allies Powers, Box#5780, RG331 GHQ/SCAP records, CIE ©, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington National Records Center.

Table 2.4a: Percentage of Foreign Population in Korea

	1941	%
Japanese	717,011	2.9%
Foreigners	73,823	0.3%
Koreans	23,913,063	96.8%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>24,703,897</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*not exact data, but approximate amount

Source: 美軍政期情報資料集 CIC (방첩대) 보고서 1945.9 - 1949.1, 1:213.

Table 2.4b: Distribution of North and South Korean Population (1941)

<i>Southern</i>	15,408,237*	62.4%
<i>Northern</i>	9,295,659*	37.6%
<b>Total Korean population</b>	<b>23,913,063</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*not exact data, but approximate amount

Source: 美軍政期情報資料集 CIC (방첩대) 보고서 1945.9 - 1949.1, 1:213.

Table 2.5: Major Christian Churches in Korea (1941)

<i>Denominations</i>	<i># of Churches</i>	<i># of workers</i>	<i>Membership</i>
Roman Catholic*	499	320	109,210
Korea Presbyterian*	3,348	3,075	262,075
Methodist Episcopal	876	295	50,286
Episcopal	136	104	7,738
Seventh-Day Adventist	185	80	4,510
Holiness	205	221	9,169
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,249</b>	<b>4,094</b>	<b>442,988</b>

\* Majority of its membership were in North Korea.

Source: "The List of Worship & Religions in Korea" By the Training Dept., Education Bureau of the Governor General of Chosen, December, 1941, pp.55-57 recorded in "Statistics - Japan & Korea" / General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allies Powers, Box#5780, RG331 GHQ/SCAP records, CIE ©, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington National Records Center.

Table 2.6: Survey of Presbyterian Stations\*\* in 1940

<i>Station</i>	<i>Ratio of Presbyterian Population to the total population in the area</i>
Syenchun (N)*	1:13
Chairyung (N)	1:28
Pyongyang (N)	1:28
Kangkei (N)	1:34
Pusan (S)	1:38
Manchuria (Korean)	1:60
Andong (S)	1:68
Taegu (S)*	1:77
Chungju (S)	1:100
Seoul (S)*	d.n.a.

\* These stations had a significant amount of Catholic population as well. If Catholics were added, the ratio in Taegu, for example, was 1:13.

\*\* These stations were run by Presbyterian Church (USA).

Sources: H. A. Rhodes' presentation "Survey of the Stations" during the Korean Consultative Conference (September 20-22, 1944), Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 30 - Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

Table 2.7a: Proportion of Population Reached by the Church in Villages with Churches by Regions in 1925\* (25 samples)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Total Village Population</i>	<i>Resident Church-Membership</i>	<i>% of Population in Church</i>
North	2,370	817	34.5
Center	5,599	1,120	20.0
South	10,226	1,278	12.5

\* Data not available in 1945.

Source: Edmund deSchweinitz Brunner, Ph.D. "The Christian Mission in Relation to Rural Problems," *The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council (March 24 – April 8, 1928)*, 52. Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to internal affairs of Korea (Chosen), 1910-1929, RG 59, National Archives and Records Administration.

Table 2.7b: Landownership by General Farming Population and by Church Membership Compared by Regions (35 villages) in 1925

<i>Region</i>	<i>Number of Village</i>	<i>Non Christian Families</i>		<i>Christian Families</i>	
		<i>Number</i>	<i>% Owning Land Tilled</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>% Owning Land Tilled</i>
North	10	1336	33.4	120	37.5
Central	12	1085	24.9	211	11.0
South	13	1487	16.5	281	18.8

Source: Edmund deSchweinitz Brunner, Ph.D. "The Christian Mission in Relation to Rural Problems," *The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council (March 24 – April 8, 1928)*, 24. Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to internal affairs of Korea (Chosen), 1910-1929, RG 59, National Archives and Records Administration.

Table 2.8: Population Growth in the Southern Zone (1946-1948)

<i>Origins</i>	<i>1946</i>	<i>1948</i>
Existing Population (May 1944)	15,879,110	19,369,270
Repatriation from Japan	898,219	212,980
Repatriation from other areas	85,529	21,318
Migration from NK (recorded)	401,685	468,589
Natural increase (approximate)	650,000	400,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>17,914,543</i>	<i>20,472,152</i>
<i>Unprocessed entries (estimated)**</i>	<i>1,454,727</i>	<i>430,000</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,369,270</b>	<b>20,902,152</b>
<b>Total unnatural population increase*</b>	<b>2,840,160</b>	<b>1,132,887</b>

\* Total unnatural population increase from 1946 to 1948 is 3,973,042.

\*\* These probably were the unprocessed refugees from North Korea and Japan.

Source: "Food Report for South Korea as of March 1948," Food Supplies, Korea 1945-1948, RG 59, Records of the US Dept of State relating to internal affairs of Korea, 1945-1949, File 895, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

Table 2.9: The State of Christianity in Korea at the Time of Annexation

	<i>Presbyterian</i>	<i>Methodists</i>	<i>New Sects</i>	<i>Catholics</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Total</i>
Missionary Premises	1,211	402	168	149	4	1,934
(Church hall)	456	131	101	47	3	738
Missionaries	125	69	13	46	1	254
(Americans)	86	64	7	1	0	158
Korean Pastors	1,317	625	179	197	8	2,326
Members	115,072	37,620	7,897	38,197	188	198,974
Japanese	39	0	108	192	0	339
School	1,193	430	42	73	0	1,738
Students	102,113	29,285	782	778	0	132,958
Hospitals	6	3	2	1	0	12

Source: Takakyoshi Matsuo, "The Japanese Protestants in Korea, Part One: The Missionary Activity of the Japan Congregational Church in Korea," translated by S. Takiguchi, *Modern Asian Studies* 13 (1979), 419.

Table 2.10: 1939 Statistics for various Missions (Federal Council of Missionary Bodies)

<i>Mission</i>	<i>Total Missionaries</i>	<i>Total Membership</i>
<i>Church of Christ Mission</i>	4	330
English Church Mission	14	6,102
<i>Methodist Missionary Society</i>	108	28,439
<i>Oriental Missionary Society</i>	4	7,195
Australian Presbyterian Mission	29	19,435
<i>Presbyterian Church in U.S.A. Mission</i>	118	120,560
<i>Presbyterian Church in U.S. Mission</i>	66	21,980
United Church of Canada Mission	38	17,508
Salvation Army	16	18,002
<i>Seventh Day Adventist Mission</i>	19	7,288
Roman Catholic Totals (Four Mission)	278	141,243
<i>Grant Totals</i>	694	388,082

Source: Rev. Edward Adam, "Information of Christian Work in Korea, October 12, 1945," Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Folder 29 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

## APPENDIX 1.3: Tables for CHAPTER 3

Table 3.1: Percentage of Christians in the AMG and First Republic (1946-1948)

<i>Position</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Christians</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>American Military Government (high position)</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>70.0%</b>
Advisory Council	11	6	54.5%
Korean Interim Legislative Assembly*	90	21	23.3%
Korean Legislative Assembly**	190	38	20.0%

\* Half by election and half by appointment.

\*\* 100% election.

Source: For the data on Advisory Council, see Chung-shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003), 168. For the others, see Harry A. Rhodes and Archibald Campbell, *History of the Korean Mission: Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.*, Vol.2, 1939-1959 (New York: Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1964), 380-381.

Table 3.2: Population Growth in the Southern Zone (1946-1948)

<i>Origins</i>	<i>1946</i>	<i>1948</i>
Existing Population (May 1944)	15,879,110	19,369,270
Repatriation from Japan	898,219	212,980
Repatriation from other areas	85,529	21,318
Migration from NK (recorded)	401,685	468,589
Natural increase (approximate)	650,000	400,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>17,914,543</i>	<i>20,472,152</i>
<b>Unprocessed entries (estimated)**</b>	<b>1,454,727</b>	<b>430,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,369,270</b>	<b>20,902,152</b>
<b>Total unnatural population increase*</b>	<b>2,840,160</b>	<b>1,132,887</b>

\* Total unnatural population increase from 1946 to 1948 is 3,973,042.

\*\* These probably were the unprocessed refugees from North Korea and Japan.

Source: "Food Report for South Korea as of March 1948," Food Supplies, Korea 1945-1948, RG 59, Records of the US Dept of State relating to internal affairs of Korea, 1945-1949, File 895, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

Table 3.3: Population Growth in Major Southern Cities and Selected Ration Store Data in 1947

<i>City</i>	<i>Population in 1941</i>	<i>Population in 1947</i>	<i>Net Population Growth from 1941 to 1947</i>	<i>Number of Ration Stores</i>	<i>Average number of persons served by store each ration period</i>	<i>Percentage of Population growth</i>
Seoul	935,464	1,141,766	206,302*	194	5,885	22%
Pusan	249,734	400,156	150,422*	59	6,782	60%
Taegu	178,923	269,113	90,190	45	5,980	50%
Inchon	171,165	215,784	44,619	54	3,996	26%
Kwangju	64,520	100,451	35,931	8	12,556	56%
Taejon	45,541	96,207	50,666	40	2,405	111%
Kaesong	72,062	87,173	15,111	22	3,962	21%
Chonju	47,230	83,333	36,103	11	7,576	76%
Pohang	n.a.	45,147	n.a.	8	5,643	n.a.
Suwon	n.a.	42,173	n.a.	50	843	n.a.

\* Seoul got most of its net increase from the northern refugees while Pusan got its share from Japan.

Source: Data for 1941 is taken from 美軍政助情報資料集 CIC (방첩대) 보고서 1945.9 - 1949.1, 1:218 and data for 1947 is taken from "Food Distribution In South Korea," Food Supplies, Korea 1945-1948, RG 59, Records of the US Dept of State relating to internal affairs of Korea, 1945-1949, File 895, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

Table 3.4: Statistical Summary of Civil Disturbances in South Korea during the election month (May 1-15, 1948)

Rightists killed	59
Leftists killed	43
Police killed	6
<i>Total</i>	<b>162</b>
Rightist wounded	25
Leftists wounded	10
Police wounded	15
<i>Total</i>	<b>50</b>
Rioters Apprehended	211
Rightist home Burned	20
Rightist home Bombed	6
Rightist home Attacked	13
<i>Total</i>	<b>39</b>
Leftists homes Attacked	3
Attacks on police boxes	22
Attacks on polling places	36
Myun offices of city halls attacked	4
<b>Christian churches Attacked*</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Missionary home**</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>US Army Bus***</b>	<b>1</b>

\* one in Kaesong and one in Kanggyong

\*\* one Catholic Missionary's home was in Chunchon

\*\*\* one U.S. Army Bus in Seoul

Source: Report by Lt Col. Joseph Huckins, 美軍政期情報資料集 CIC (방첩대) 보고서 1945.9 - 1949.1, 3:424.

## APPENDIX 1.4: Tables for CHAPTER 4

Table 4.1 Data of Billy Graham Crusades (1947-1954)

<i>Crusade's Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Attendance</i>	<i>Inquirers</i>
YFC Evangelistic Campaign	Grand Rapids, MI	09/17/1947-09/21/1947	30,000	500
Charlotte Revival	Charlotte, NC	11/09/1947-11/23/1947	42,000	1,200
Augusta Crusade	Augusta, GA	10/03/1947-10/19/1948	65,000	1,400
Christ for Greater Los Angeles	Los Angeles, CA	09/25/1949-11/20/1949	350,000	3,000*
Boston Crusade	Boston, MA	12/31/1949-01/16/1950	105,000	3,000
Columbia Crusade	Columbia, SC	02/19/1950-03/12/1950	190,000	12,000
New England Tour	-	03/27/1950-04/23/1950	160,000	6,000
Greater Portland Gospel Crusade	Portland, OR	02/21/1950-03/11/1950	120,000	9,000
DGEA Incorporated	Minneapolis, MN	09/17/1950	282,000	5,700
Atlanta Crusade	Atlanta, GA	02/28/1951	100,000	1,000
Southern States tour	-	Jan-Feb 1951	125,000	
Fort Worth Crusade	Fort Worth, TX	02/21/1951-03/25/1951	336,300	4,000
Great Shreveport-Rossier Area Crusade	Shreveport, LA	04/08/1951-04/29/1951	223,000	5,446
Cincinnati rallies	Cincinnati, OH	05/12/1951-05/13/1951	21,000	
Greater Memphis Evangelistic Campaign	Memphis, TN	05/20/1951-06/20/1951	317,700	4,648
Seattle Crusade	Seattle, WA	05/20/1951-06/03/1951	147,000	1,755
Christ for Hollywood	Hollywood, CA	09/19/1951-10/06/1951	135,000	2,120
Greensboro Crusade	Greensboro, NC	10/14/1951-01/26/1951	391,050	6,443
Raleigh rallies	Raleigh, NC	11/16/1951-11/18/1951	34,000	1,450
Washington D.C. Crusade	Washington, DC	01/13/1952-02/18/1952	307,000	6,244
Crusade	Louisville, KY	02/13/1952-02/18/1952	100,000	1,000
Jackson Crusade	Jackson, MS	06/15/1952-07/11/1952	362,300	5,927
US cities tour	-	Aug 1952	126,000	
Pittsburgh Crusade	Pittsburgh, PA	09/07/1952-10/07/1952	263,500	5,986
Albuquerque Crusade	Albuquerque, NM	11/02/1952-12/02/1952	133,030	3,011
Florida cities tour	-	Jan-Feb 1953	120,000	
Chattanooga Crusade	Chattanooga, TN	03/15/1953-04/14/1953	283,300	4,406
St. Louis Revival	St. Louis, MO	04/16/1953-05/16/1953	318,400	3,065
Dallas Crusades	Dallas, TX	05/11/1953-06/03/1953	313,000	3,869
West Texas tour	-	June-July 1953	77,000	
Amarillo rally	Amarillo, TX	06/30/1953	20,000	600-800
Syracuse Crusade	Syracuse, NY	08/02/1953-08/31/1953	105,200	2,630
Detroit Crusade	Detroit, MI	09/27/1953-11/01/1953	363,030	6,980
Asheville Crusade	Asheville, NC	11/08/1953-11/22/1953	112,100	2,653
London Crusade	London	03/01/1954-05/22/1954	2,047,333	38,447
European tour	-	06/16/1954-06/30/1954	303,800	
Nashville Crusade	Nashville, TN	08/22/1954-09/19/1954	652,000	9,067
New Orleans Crusade	New Orleans, LA	10/3/1954-10/31/1954	319,300	4,932

Source: The History of the Billy Graham Evangelical Association.

\* Some other data suggest a higher figure from 4,200 to 6,000.

Table 4.2a: Religious Bodies – Church Membership\* (1926-1956)

	1926	1940	1950	1955	1956
All Protestant bodies	31,511,701	37,814,606	51,079,578	58,448,567	60,148,980
The Roman Catholic Church	18,605,003	21,284,455	28,634,878	33,396,647	34,563,851
Other	4,459,642	5,402,533	7,116,034	8,317,315	8,512,123
Total number of members	54,576,346	64,501,594	86,830,490	100,162,529	103,224,954
Percent of total population	47%	49%	57%	61%	62%
Average number per local church	235	265	304	328	334

Source: National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America; *Yearbook of American Churches*.

\* Membership 13 years of age and over

Table 4.2b: Religious Bodies – Number of Churches and Membership\* (1947-1953)

Year	1947		1950		1953	
	Member	Church	Member	Church	Member	Church
<b>Religious Bodies</b>						
Roman Catholic Church	25,286,178	14,523	28,635,000	15,533	31,476,261	20,618
Eastern Orthodox Churches	600,000	586	1,650,000	882	2,021,000	1,138
Jewish Congregations	4,641,000	3,728	5,000,000	3,728	5,000,000	3,990
“Protestant” bodies over 50,000	44,571,486	224,479	49,969,000	257,640	54,654,814	249,668
Other bodies	2,287,524	22,267	1,576,000	19,153	1,690,770	18,945
<b>Total</b>	<b>77,386,188</b>	<b>265,583</b>	<b>86,830,000</b>	<b>281,511</b>	<b>94,842,845</b>	<b>294,359</b>

Source: *Yearbook of American Churches*, 1949, 1951, 1954.

\* Membership 13 years of age and over

Table 4.2c: Growth Rates (1947-1953)

Year	1950		1953	
	Member	Church	Member	Church
<b>Religious Bodies</b>				
Roman Catholic Church	13.2%	7.0%	9.9%	32.7%
Eastern Orthodox Churches	175%	50.5%	22.5%	29.0%
Jewish Congregations	7.7%	0%	0%	7.0%
“Protestant” bodies over 50,000	12.1%	14.8%	9.3%	-3.1%
Other bodies	-31.1%	-14.0%	7.3%	-1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>

Source: *Yearbook of American Churches* 1949, 1951, 1954.

## APPENDIX 1.5: Tables for CHAPTER 5

Table 5.1: Population of Major Cities in South Korea (1941-1947)

<i>City</i>	<i>1941</i>	<i>1947</i>	<i>Growth Rate</i>
<i>Seoul</i>	935,464	1,141,766	22%
<i>Pusan</i>	249,734	400,156	60%
<i>Taegu</i>	178,923	269,113	50%
<i>Inchon</i>	171,165	215,784	26%
Kwangju	64,520	100,451	56%
<i>Taejon</i>	45,541	96,207	111%
<i>Kaesong</i>	72,062	87,173	21%
Chonju	47,230	83,333	76%
Pohang	n.a.	45,147	n.a.
Suwon	n.a.	42,173	n.a.

Source: Data for 1941 is taken from 美軍政期情報資料集 *CIC (방첩대) 보고서 1945.9 - 1949.1*, 1:218 and data for 1947 is taken from "Food Distribution In South Korea," Food Supplies, Korea 1945-1948, RG 59, Records of the US Dept of State relating to internal affairs of Korea, 1945-1949, File 895, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

Table 5.2: Statistics of the "Save the Nation Evangelistic Crusade" (April-May 1950)

<i>City</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Natural Capacity</i>	<i>Expanded Max. Capacity</i>	<i>Numbers of Days</i>
Taegu	Town Hall	2000		11
	Gil Dodd's Exhibition Race in the City stadium		60,000	1
Pusan	<i>d.n.a.</i>	<i>d.n.a.</i>	<i>d.n.a.</i>	5
	Gil Dodd's Exhibition Race in the City stadium		30,000	1
Seoul	Presbyterian Church	3000	20,000	10
Taejon	High School Hall	2000	6,000	<i>d.n.a.</i>
Inchon	Methodist Church	1,200	20,000	7

"d.n.a." means data not available.

Source: Bob Pierce, *The Untold Korean Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1951).

Table 5.3: Southern Presbyterian Missionaries who Stayed Behind

<i>Kwangju Station</i>	<i>Chonju Station</i>
Dr. Herbert Codington	Dr. Ovid B. Bush,
Rev. H. Petrie Mitchel and his wife (Mary Belle)	Dr. Paul S. Crane and his wife (Mariella)
Miss Florence Root	Rev. William A. Linton and his wife (Charlotte)
	Miss Gene N. Lindler
	Miss Margaret Pritchard

Table 5.4: Foreign Civilians Held Captive by the North Koreans, 1950-1953

	<i>Died in Captivity</i>	<i>Survived Captivity</i>	<i>Total</i>
Diplomats	0	6	6
Catholic Priests	7	4	11
Catholic Nuns	4	5	9
Catholic Laymen	1	0	1
Male Missionaries	2	4	6
Female Missionaries	1	3	4
Foreign officials	0	1	1
Business persons	1	1	2
Journalists	0	2	2
USA Engineers	2	0	2
White Russians	5	4	9
Turkish	0	5	5
Civilians	0	2	2
Children below 18	0	8	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>68</b>

Source: Donald N. Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience 1900-1950* (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2003), 381-383.

## APPENDIX 1.6: Tables for CHAPTER 6

Table 6.1: Foreign Civilians Held Captive by the North Koreans, 1950-53

	<i>Died in Captivity</i>	<i>Survived Captivity</i>	<i>Total</i>
Diplomats	0	6	6
Catholic Priests	7	4	11
Catholic Nuns	4	5	9
Catholic Laymen	1	0	1
Male Missionaries	2	4	6
Female Missionaries	1	3	4
Foreign officials	0	1	1
Business persons	1	1	2
Journalists	0	2	2
USA Engineers	2	0	2
White Russians	5	4	9
Turkish	0	5	5
Civilians	0	2	2
Children below 18	0	8	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>68</b>

Source: Donald N. Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea: Western Experience 1900-1950* (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2003), 381-383.

Table 6.2: Materials donated by American Churches distributed through the UN

	<b>\$ worth of Supplies</b>
American Friends Service Committee	\$234,153
Church World Services	\$700,663
General Conference of Seventh Day Adventist	\$10,000
Lutheran World Relief	\$184,265
Oriental Missionary Society	\$102,883
Religious Denominations of Fort Devens, Mass	\$1,000
War Relief Service-National Catholic Welfare Conference	\$3,623,492
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,856,446</b>

The total amount of contributions by all US voluntary agencies was US\$10,952,657. Church donations were about 44 percent of the total.

Source: Heung-soo Kim, "한국전쟁 시기 기독교 외원단체의 구호활동" (Relief Activities of Foreign Christian Voluntary Agencies during the Korean War), *한국기독교와 역사 History of Korean Christianity* 23 (2005): 107.

Table 6.3: The Executive Committee of Korea Church World Service

Position	Name	Organization
President	Dr. Edward Adams	Presbyterian, USA
Vice President	Mr. Chang	Salvation Army
Secretary	Rev. Kim Sa Keun	
Treasurer	Dr. E.J.O. Fraser	United Church of Canada
Executive Director	Dr. Henry D. Appenzeller	Methodist
Executive Assistant	Mr. Gregory B. Votaw	
Field Supervisor	Mr. James Atkinson	
Secretary for Child Welfare	Miss Anne Davison	
Training Midwives	Miss Edith J. Galt	

Source: Ibid., 109-110.

Table 6.4: Number of Christian Pastors and Evangelists Arrested by Communist in South Korea (1950-1951)

<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Ministers</i>	<i>Evangelists</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Families members</i>
Methodist	35	8	43	156
Presbyterian	111	9	120	488
Holiness	8	3	11	51
Salvation Army		6	6	42
<i>Total:</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>737</i>

Source: *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, ed. Heung Soo Kim (Seoul: The Institute for Korean Church History, 2003), 312-317.

Table 6.5: The Civilian Calamity of War (June 1952)

<i>Civilian Calamity</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Total</i>
(1) Broken residence		600,000
Entirely broken or burned down	380,000	
Partially broken	220,000	
(2) Victims		938,761
captured	42,732	
slaughtered	122,799	
The deceased	236,475	
The wounded	228,580	
missing	298,175	
(3) Refugees		4,000,000

Sources: "The situation of Calamity of War in Korea as at June 1952," *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, ed. Heung Soo Kim (Seoul: The Institute for Korean Church History, 2003), 309-310.

Table 6.6: Church Destruction after the Communist Invasion (June 20, 1952)

<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Destroy by fire</i>	<i>Area (pyung)</i>	<i>Broke down</i>	<i>Area (pyung)</i>
<b>Methodist</b>	84	4,800	155	
<b>Presbyterian</b>	152	8,850	468	26,480
<b>Holiness</b>	27		79	
<b>Salvation</b>	4	455	4	874
<i>Total</i>	<b>267</b>		<b>706</b>	

Source: *Documents of the WCC Library: The Korean War*, ed. Heung Soo Kim (Seoul: The Institute for Korean Church History, 2003), 311.

## APPENDIX 1.7: Tables for CHAPTER 8

Table 8.1: Official List of membership denominations of the National Council of Churches of Christ

<i>Denominations</i>	<i>Membership</i>
African Methodist Episcopal Church	1,166,301
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church	530,116
American Baptist Convention	1,561,073
Augustan Evangelical Lutheran Church	440,244
Church of the Brethren	186,201
Colored Methodist Episcopal Church	381,000
Congregational-Christian Churches	1,204,789
Czech-Moravian Brethren Church	5,000
Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church	19,404
Evangelical and Reformed Church	726,361
Evangelical United Brethren Church	717,531
Friends – Five Year Meeting	68,612
Friends of Philadelphia and Vicinity	5,509
International Convention of Disciples of Christ	1,767,964
Methodist Church	8,935,647
Moravian	47,271
National Baptist Conventions	4,445,605
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.	678,206
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.	2,318,615
Protestant Episcopal Church	2,540,548
Reformed Church in America	183,178
Roumanian Orthodox Church of America	390
Russian Orthodox Church	400,000
Seventh Day Baptist	6,430
Syrian Antiochan Orthodox Church	40,061
United Lutheran Church	1,954,342
United Presbyterian Church	213,810
<i>Total:</i>	<i>30,629,225</i>

Source: "Ministry of Disruption: A brief study of the activities of Carl McIntire and the American Council of Christian Churches," *Presbyterian Church Archives*, RG197, Box 6, Folder 34 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Table 8.2a: US Casualty Figures of the Korean War

	<i>June 1950 – June 1951</i>	<i>July 1951 – July 1953</i>
Killed	21,300	12,300
Wounded	53,100	50,200
Missing or capture	4,400	700
<i>Total</i>	<i>78,800</i>	<i>63,200</i>

Source: Dean Acheson, *The Korean War* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969, 1971), 129.

Table 8.2b: War-related Korean War Casualties

	<b>KIA</b>	<b>MIA</b>	<b>WIN</b>	<b>Civilian</b>
South Korea	187,712	30,000	429,000	500,000>
North Korea	1.5 million			
China	152,400		238,000	n/a
USA	33,741 (+ 2,827)		103,284	n/a
Other UNC	3,063		11,817	n/a

Source: Allan R. Millett, *Their War For Korea: American, Asian, and European Combatants and civilians 1945-1953* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's Inc., 2002), 266.

Table 8.2c: United Nations Forces (Non-ROK, Non-U.S.)

	<b>Force</b>	<b>Deaths</b>	<b>Wounded</b>
Australia	2,282	272	1,034
Belgium and Luxembourg	944	104	350
Canada	6,146	309	1,202
Colombia	1,068	210	610
Ethiopia	1,271	122	566
France	1,119	271	1,008
Greece	1,263	194	459
Netherlands	819	120	645
New Zealand	1,389	22	79
Philippines	1,496	128	299
South Africa	826	34	0
Thailand	1,294	136	469
Turkey	5,455	889	2,111
United Kingdom	14,198	1,078	2,674
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,570</b>	<b>3,925</b>	<b>11,506</b>

Source: Data on the amount of force taken from "The Forgotten War: Three Long Years in Korea," *National Geographic Maps for National Geographic Magazine* (Washington, D.C., 2003). Data on deaths and wounds taken from the table "Casualties, United Nations Forces (Non-ROK, Non-U.S.)" *Encyclopedia of the Korean War* ed. by Spencer C. Tucker (New York: Checkmark Books, 2002), 100.

Table 8.3: Distribution of POWs

<b>Location</b>	<b>Dec. 1950</b>	<b>Feb. 1951</b>	<b>Mar 1951</b>	<b>May 1951</b>	<b>Jun 1951</b>
Enclosure 1	9,539	5,787	d.n.a.	38,850	7,000- 10,000
Enclosure 2	34,703		d.n.a.		
Enclosure 3	39,518	38,395	d.n.a.		
Enclosure 4	12,715		d.n.a.		
Enclosure 5	31,800	31,880	d.n.a.		
14 <sup>th</sup> Field Hospital	7,237	10,146	d.n.a.		
Labor force	1,663		d.n.a.		
Chinese POWs	616		d.n.a.		
Koje-do		53,588	98,799	115,884	140,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>137,791</b>	<b>139,196</b>	<b>d.n.a</b>	<b>154,734</b>	<b>d.n.a.</b>

Source: "The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War (U)," (Military History Office: Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G3 Headquarters, United States Army, Pacific, June 1960), 9, 13, 14,

Table 8.4: Result of Second Screening of Prisoners (April 13, 1952)

	<i>NKs</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>CCF</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>SKs</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>CI</i> s	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>
To go	21,102	22	3,075	15	3,559	22	2,628	7	30,364
To stay	30,389	32	14,126	69	11,057	69	18,675	47	74,247
<i>Total screened</i>	<i>51,491</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>17,201</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>14,616</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>21,303</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>104,611</i>
Unscreened	*44,345	46	3,193	16	1,284	9	18,015	46	66,837
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>95,836</i></b>		<b><i>20,394</i></b>		<b><i>15,900</i></b>		<b><i>39,318</i></b>		<b><i>171,448</i></b>

\*Includes 37,872 Communists who refuse to be screened.

Source: Allan E. Goodman, ed. *Negotiating While Fighting: The Diary of Admiral C. Turner Joy and the Korean Armistice Conference* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 356.

Table 8.5: Prisoners in CI&amp;E-sponsored Educational Activities (July 4, 1952)

<i>Activities</i>	<i># of participants</i>
Orientation classes	69,998
Literacy classes	11,307
Juvenile classes	3,525
Adult continuation classes	3,958
Reading groups	42,000
Agriculture classes	13,674
Health classes	15,007
Vocational classes	2,577
Vocational production	1,994

Source: "The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War (U)," (Military History Office: Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G3 Headquarters, United States Army, Pacific, June 1960), 117.

Table 8.6: Number of POWs Receiving Baptism and admissions to the catechumenate during Communion Services

	<i>May 6, 1951</i>	<i>October 7, 1951</i>	<i>April 13, 1952</i>
Number Baptized	84	202	614
New Catechumens	111	465	1,397
Total Communicants	500	1,712	2,317

Source: "Chaplain's Report: Kojedo Prisoner of War Camp, March 1951 – April 1952," Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 40 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Table 8.7: Number of Protestant North Korean POWs in Kojedo

	<i>March 1951</i>	<i>April 1952</i>
Baptized	d.n.a.	2,266
Catechumens	d.n.a.	1,571
Preparing for the Catechumenate	d.n.a.	11,225
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>4,261*</i></b>	<b><i>15,062</i></b>

\* Data provided by Chaplain Harold Voelkel. Christians already existed in the POW Camps prior to their relocation to Kojedo.

Source: "Chaplain's Report: Kojedo Prisoner of War Camp, March 1951 – April 1952," Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 16, Folder 40 – Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Table 8.8: Number of Chinese POWs Attending Worship Services in Chejudo (May 1952)

	<i># of Service</i>	<i># of Attendance</i>	<i>Average # per meeting</i>
Sunday Worship	8	34,800	4,350
Weekday Worship	21	32,195	1,533

Source: "Copies of EJW's reports for April, May, and June 1952," Presbyterian Church Archives, Record Group 140, Box 18, Folder 7 - Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Table 8.9: POWs in UN Custody

	<i>Non-repatriates</i>	<i>Repatriates</i>
ROK soldiers	10,216	6,027
ROK civilians	37,000	Unknown
NK soldiers	25,452	61,411
NK civilians	8,010	9,151
Chinese Soldiers	14,704*	5,650
<b>Total</b>	<b>95,382</b>	<b>82,239</b>

\* Estimate number given by the UNC negotiators.

\*\* Data taken from Table 8.12.

Source: "The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War (U)," (Military History Office: Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G3 Headquarters, United States Army, Pacific, June 1960), 37, 40-41.

Table 8.10: The Prison Outbreak in Non-Repatriate Camps

<i>Camp</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Escaped</i>	<i>Injured</i>	<i>Dead</i>	<i>Recaptured</i>
2	3,033	158	0	0	0
4	1,140	869	0	1	0
4a	489	16	0	0	0
5	10,614	9,906	8	6	236
6	10,998	8,374	2	2	505
7	3,836	2,814	7	3	178
9	3,885	3,883	2	0	37
10	1,477	400	107	30	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,472</b>	<b>26,420</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>1,031</b>

Source: "The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War (U)," (Military History Office: Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G3 Headquarters, United States Army, Pacific, June 1960), 69.

Table 8.11: Disposition of the 98,714 POWs and CI's on July 31, 1953

<i>Camp</i>	<i>Repatriate</i>		<i>Non-Repatriate</i>		
	<i>POW's</i>	<i>CI's</i>	<i>Camp</i>	<i>POW's</i>	<i>CI's</i>
1	45,475	806	2	4,611	85
1a	11,320	3	3	14,273	
1b	2,421		6	4,383	167
1c	14	8,429			
8	4,328				
Munsan-ni	600				
Yondong-po	1,799				
<b>Total</b>	<b>65,957</b>	<b>9,238</b>		<b>23,267</b>	<b>252</b>

Source: "The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War (U)," (Military History Office: Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G3 Headquarters, United States Army, Pacific, June 1960), 85.

Table 8.12a: Prisoners Returned to Communist Control under Operation BIG SWITCH (September 1953)

	<i>Korean</i>	<i>Chinese</i>
Male	60,788	5,639
Female	473	1
Children	23	0
CI's	8,899	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>70,183</b>	<b>5,640</b>

Source: "The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War (U)," (Military History Office: Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G3 Headquarters, United States Army, Pacific, June 1960), 89.

Table 8.12b: Prisoners Returned to UNC Control under Operation BIG SWITCH (September 1953)

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Number of POWs</i>
South Koreans	7,862
Americans	3,597
British	945
Turks	229
Filipinos	40
Canadians	30
Columbians	22
Australians	21
Frenchmen	12
South Africans	8
Greeks	2
Dutch	2
Belgium	1
New Zealand	1
Japan	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,773</b>

Source: Clayton D. Laurie, "Big Switch/Little Switch, Operation," *Encyclopedia of the Korean War* ed. Spencer C. Tucker (New York: Checkmark Books, 2002), 76.

Table 8.13a: Disposition of Non-repatriate Prisoners (Communist) in January 1954

	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Korean</i>	<i>Total</i>
Returned to Communist Control	441	188	629
Escaped and missing	2	11	13
Died in custody of CFI	15	23	38
<i>Remaining in custody*</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>104</i>
Returned to UNC control	14,227	7,593	21,820
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,704</b>	<b>7,900</b>	<b>22,604</b>

\*Of those remaining in the DMZ, 12 Chinese and 74 Koreans desired to go to neutral countries, 7 Chinese and 10 Koreans were being held for disciplinary action, and 1 Korean was being held as a witness.

Source: "The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War (U)," (Military History Office: Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G3 Headquarters, United States Army, Pacific, June 1960), 97.

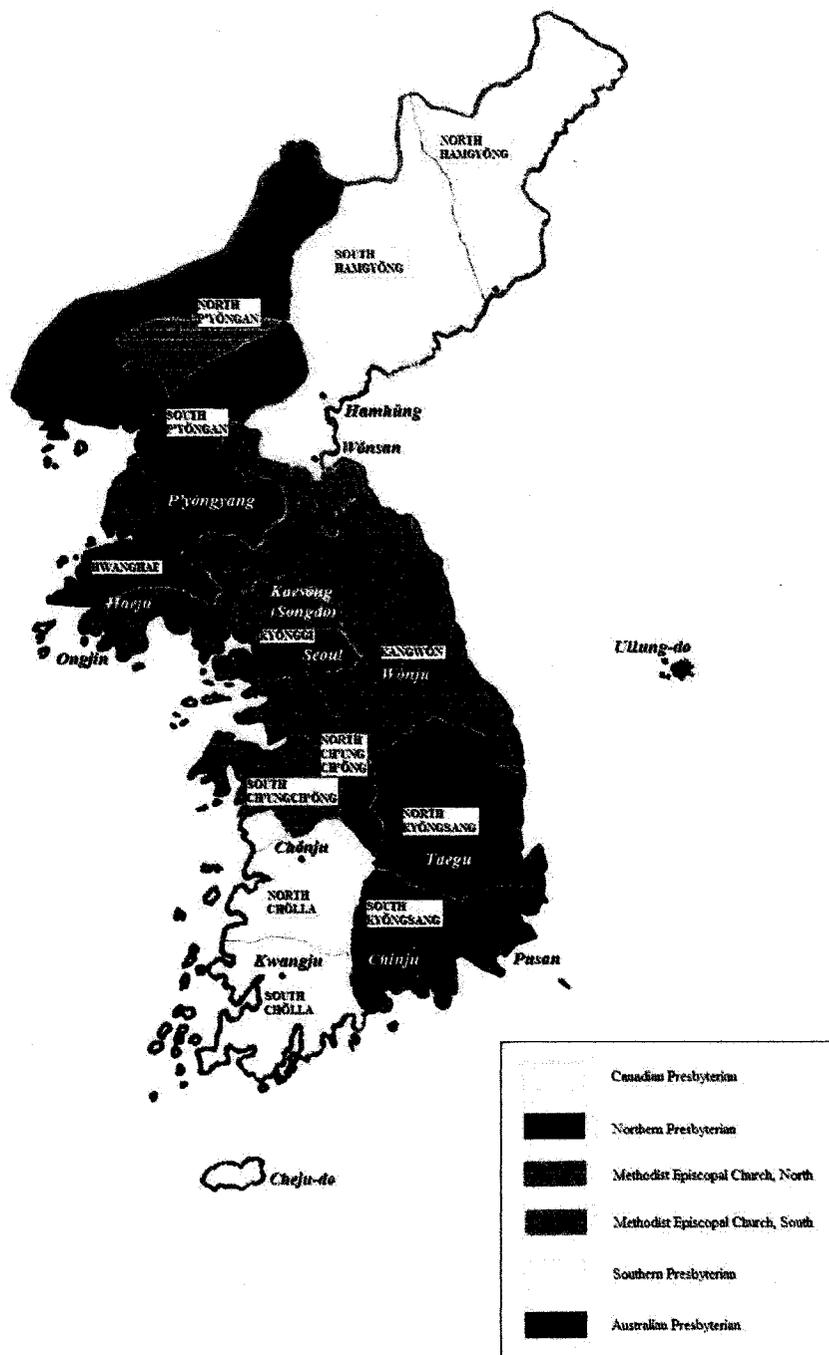
Table 8.13b: Disposition of Non-repatriate Prisoners (UNC) in January 1954

	Prisoners
Returned to UNC Control	9
Escaped	1
Shipped to India	2
Returned to Communist control	347
<b>Total</b>	<b>359</b>

Source: Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory: The Politics of Peacemaking at the Korean Armistice Talks* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), 191.

APPENDIX 2.1

Map 1: Allocation of Territory among Major Protestant Denominations



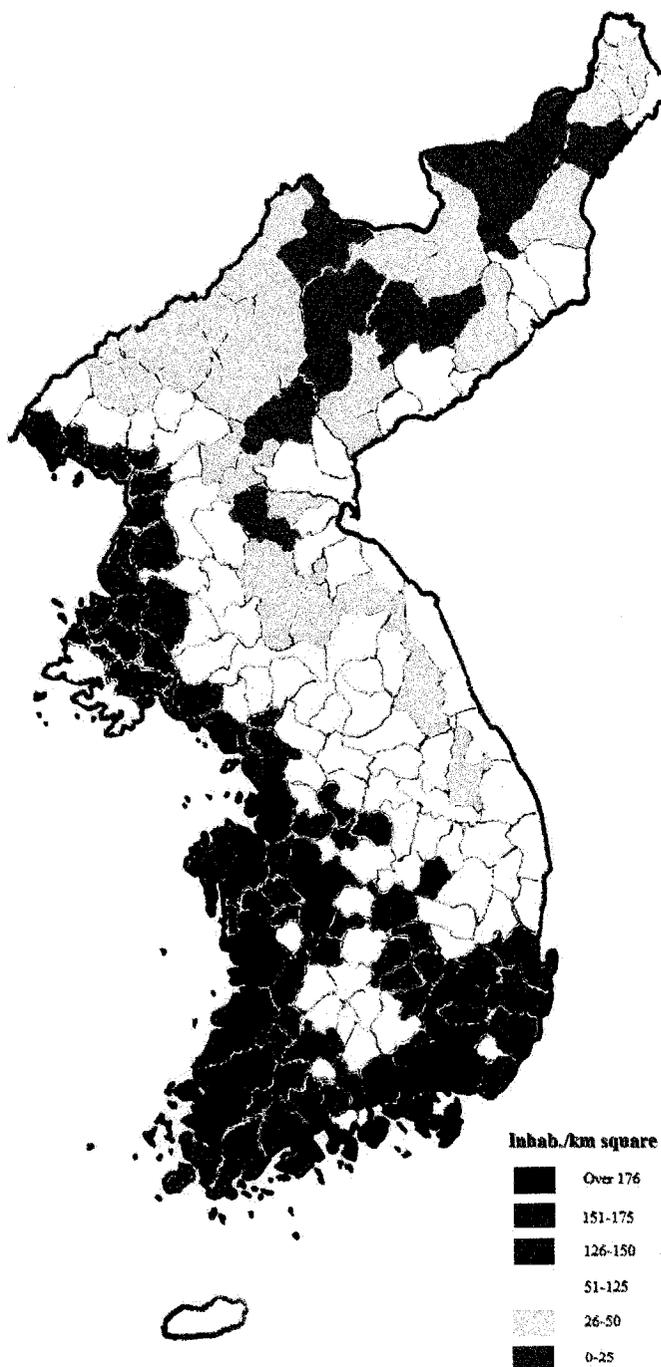
Source: Edmund deSchweinitz Brunner, Ph.D. "The Christian Mission in Relation to Rural Problems," *The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council (March 24 – April 8, 1928)*, Map III. Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to internal affairs of Korea (Chosen), 1910-1929, RG 59, National Archives and Records Administration.

APPENDIX 2.2  
Map 2: Map of North Korea



## APPENDIX 2.3

Map 3: The Population Density of the Korean Peninsula (1936)



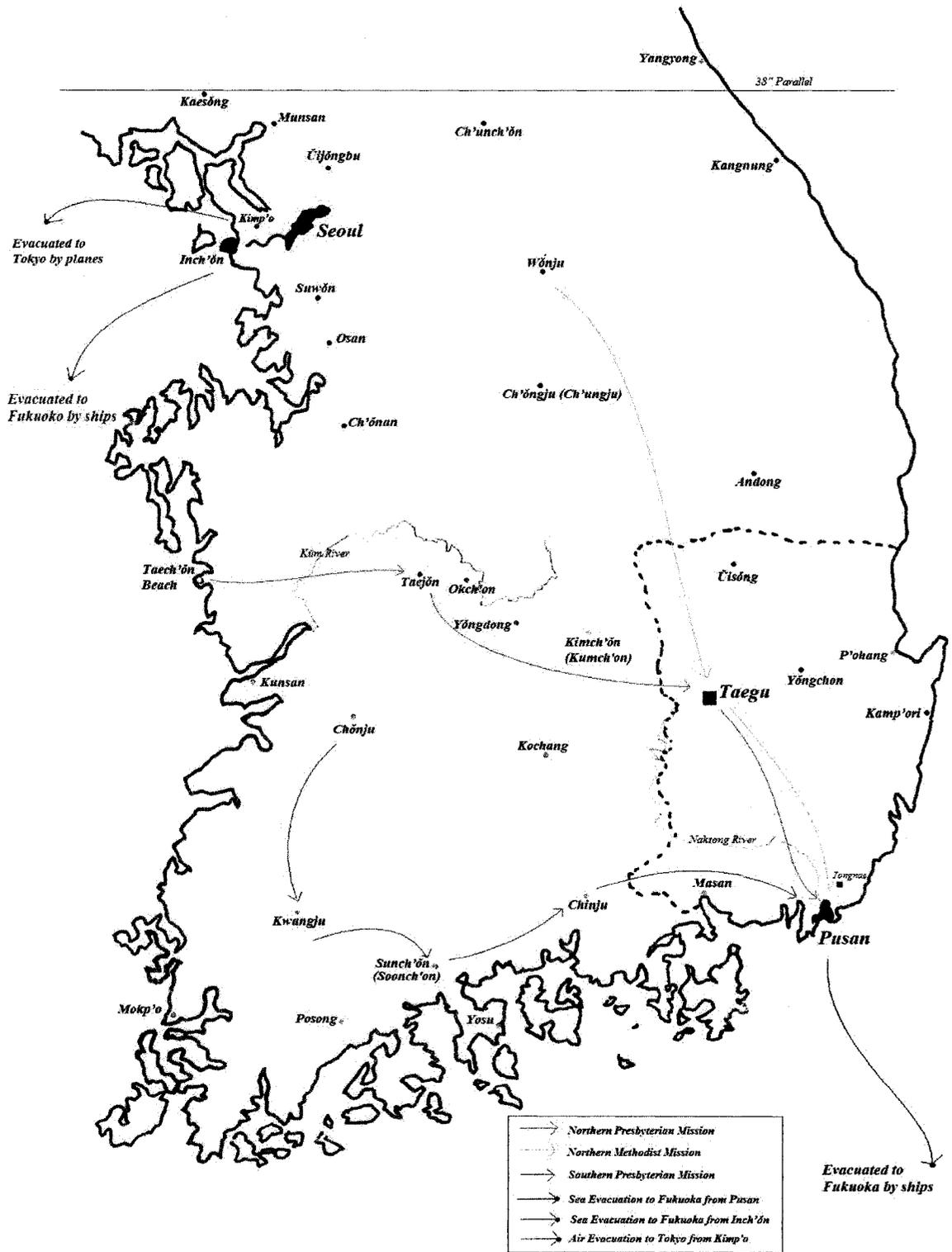
Source: Hermann Lautensach, *Korea: A Geography Based on the Author's Travels and Literature*, trans. and ed. Katherine Dege and Eckart Dege (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1988; originally published in German, 1945).

APPENDIX 2.4  
Map 4: Map of the Korean Peninsula



APPENDIX 2.5

Map 5: The Evacuation of the American Protestant Missionaries (June-July 1950)

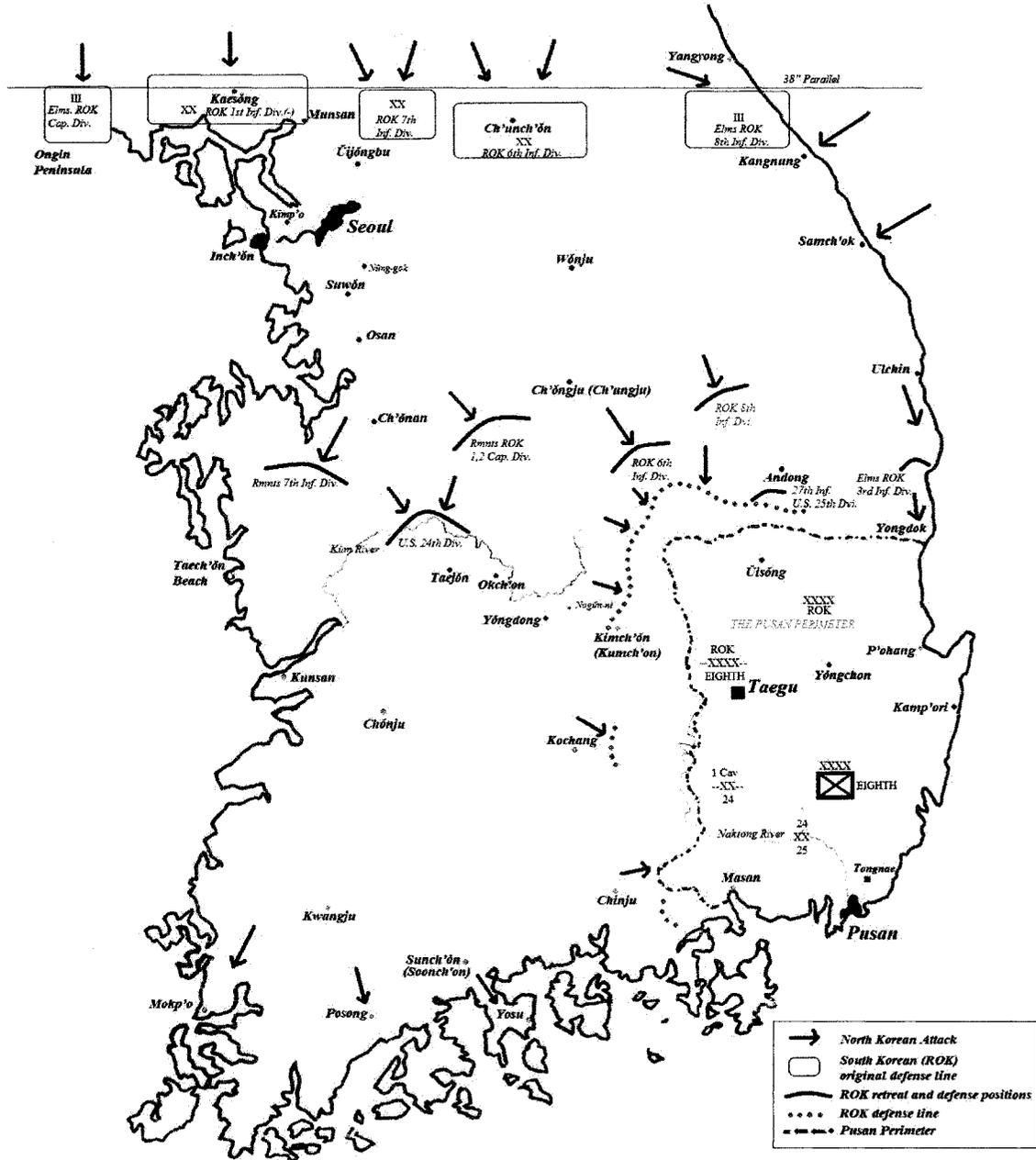


APPENDIX 2.6  
Map 6: Major Korean Cities (June 1950)



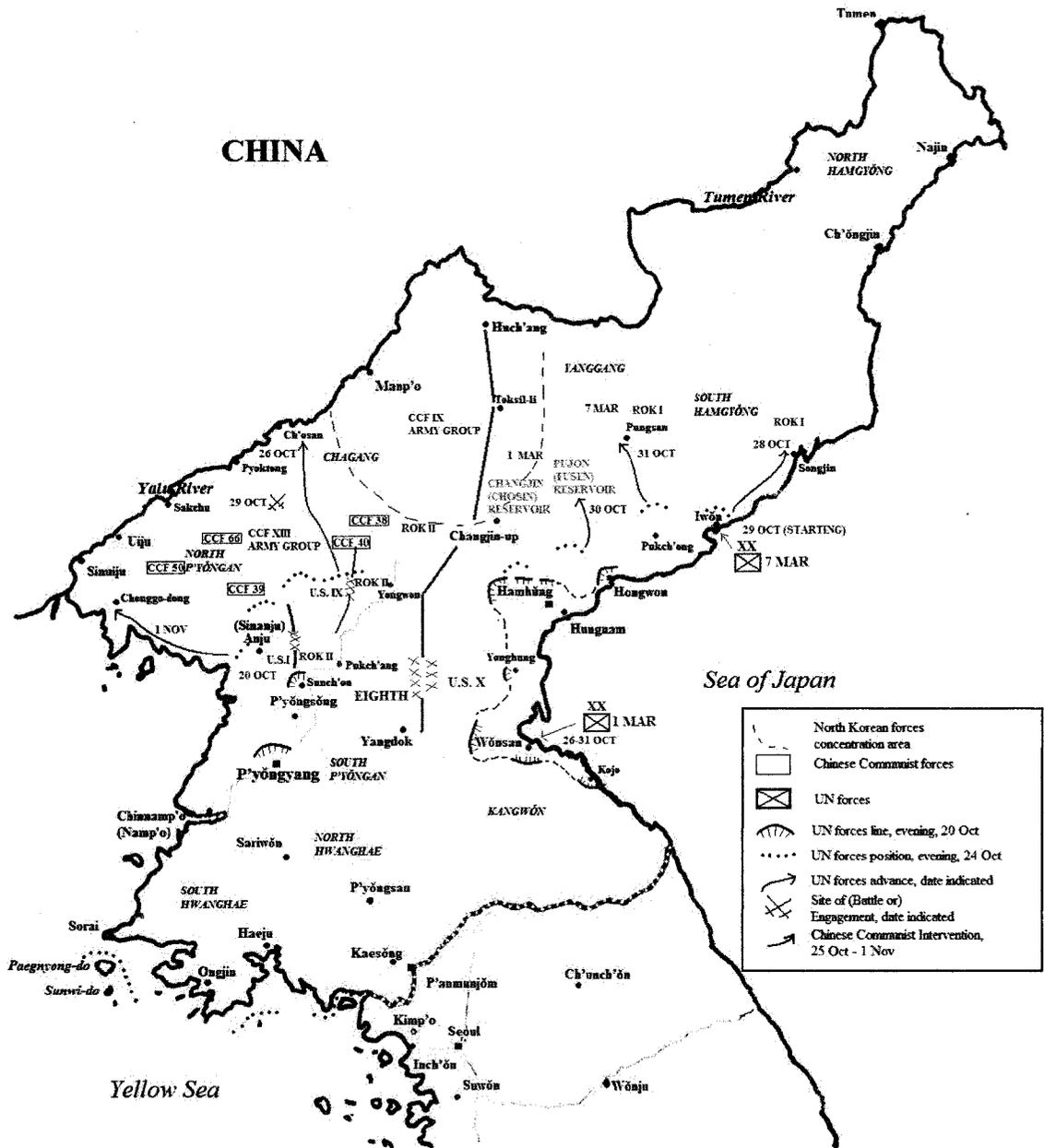
APPENDIX 2.7

Map 7: South Korea Under the Attack of the North Korean Army



Source: James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War: Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972).

APPENDIX 2.8  
 Map 8: UN Forces in North Korea



Source: James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War: Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972).

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