

A Comparing Study about the Movement of Jesus' Kingdom and Korean Churches' Tong-il

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이 논문은 연구는 현재 미국의 제국주의 정책에 대한 미국의 여러 신학자들이 비판을 바탕으로, 한국 교회의 통일 운동과 예수의 하나님 나라 운동을 비교 연구하는 글입니다. 우선, 서구 개인주의 사회의 예수에 대한 개념을 비판하면서, 예수의 정치적인 상황, 즉 로마 제국의 식민지배 상황이 예수의 하나님 나라 운동을 로마 제국에 저항하는 운동으로 발전시켜가고 있으며, 예수의 하나님 나라 운동의 구체적인 사역 예언자적 사역, 제사장적 사역 등이 로마 제국에 구체적으로 어떻게 저항했는지를 살펴보았습니다. 그리고, 한국 교회의 통일 운동이 예수의 두 가지 사역과 비교해서 어떠한 의미를 가지고 있는지를 살펴보았습니다. 첫번째로 한국 교회의 1988년 평화 통일 선언이 가지고 있는 예언자적인 성격을 살펴보았고, 다음으로는 1993년부터 시작된 남북 나눔 운동을 예수의 제사장 사역과 함께 연결해서 살펴보았습니다. 통일 선언은 한국 교회 최초로 한국 사회의 구조적인 죄악, 즉 분단의 문제를 회개하면서 민족의 아픔을 철저히 되돌아보는 선언으로서 예언자적 의의가 크며, 남북 나눔 운동은 한국 교회의 아픔을 치료하고 민족 전체의 삶을 보살피는 운동으로서 충분히 제사장적인 역할을 하고 있습니다.

주제어: 하나님나라 운동, 평화통일 선언, 남북나눔 운동

I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis will discuss the issue of Korean Churches' *Tong-il*¹⁾ movement from the perspectives of the Jesus' Kingdom movement. I will, especially, focus on Jesus' kingdom movement against the Roman Empire as a way of showing that the American Empire bears similarities to the Roman Empire. I will also make a connection between Jesus' kingdom movement and the Korean churches' *Tong-il* movement.

Korean society has been suffering in various social areas because of the Korean War and division under imperialism until now. In Korean modern history around 1890's-1950's, Korea had suffered under various empires such as China, Japan, Russia, America, and European countries; the Japanese Empire came to rule over all of Korea for 36 years from 1910 to 1945 with the cruel imperialistic policy, which was a very horrible experience for all Koreans. Korea was liberated on August 15, 1945 because Japan was defeated in the Second World War; however, the Korean peninsula was divided by the two empires, North by the Soviet Union and South by the U.S.A. This historical event was the main cause of the Korean War, which caused Korea to be divided into two nations on July 27, 1953. After the Korean War, both Koreas have been in the middle of the structural suffering caused by the Korean War and division such as economic, political, and spiritual unbalance under the neo-imperialistic world order. Therefore, many Koreans have been trying to re-unify both Koreas to solve these structural problems. I think that this situation can be connected with the Jesus' kingdom movement 2000 years ago because he was in the middle of the Roman Empire, which caused the structural problems in the Palestinian society. In my thesis, I will demonstrate that Jesus' kingdom movement can become the model of Korean churches' *Tong-il* movement, not only for the Korean peninsula but also for world peace as well.

In the first chapter, I will explain the relationship between the Palestinian society and the Roman Empire, and demonstrate that Jesus' kingdom movement was a resistance movement throughout his kingdom ministry. Secondly, I will explain the historical backgrounds of Korean *Tong-il* movement in Korea, especially, in Korean churches', and then, I will argue how the Korean *Tong-il* movement relates to Jesus' kingdom movement in terms of imperialism. Furthermore, I will offer some practical ideas which will provide the barometer for the kingdom movement as I evaluate the Korean churches' *Tong-il* movement. There are two main events in the Korean church's *Tong-il* movement: the Korean Church's Declaration for Peaceful *Tong-il* by

1) I will use this word, '*Tong-il*,' as the romanized form of 're-unification' because *Tong-il* means not only political unity, but it should deal with the total socio-religio-ethnic issues in Korean society. When I refer *Tong-il*, it means the total change of my nation. I will develop this thesis to deal with the issue about *Tong-il*.

some progressive churches of KNCC (the National Council of Churches in Korea) in 1988; and the South-North Sharing Movement including all Korean conservative and progressive churches. In the third chapter, I will provide Jesus' prophetic ministry for the kingdom of God with some more concrete theological arguments comparing it with the Korean Church's Declaration for Peaceful *Tong-il* in 1988. Lastly, I will study Jesus' priestly ministry for the kingdom of God comparing it with the South and North Sharing Movement from 1993 to present.

II. BODY

A. Jesus' Kingdom Movement against the Roman Empire

When the Roman Empire ruled over her colonies, it usually manipulated the colonial religious and political leaders using military and economic power. Many leaders of the Palestinian society became the puppet of the Roman Empire and exploited Palestinian common people, the oppressed, to maintain their own power. Jesus' kingdom movement was in the middle of this imperial situation. Jesus criticized the religious and political leaders and did his ministry showing the hope of the Kingdom of God. Jesus' movement seemed to be over when he was crucified as a political criminal; however, Jesus' kingdom movement developed over all the Mediterranean territory as the other kingdom movement of the early churches.²⁾ In this chapter, I will demonstrate how Jesus' kingdom movement had developed in the Roman Empire.

a. Roman Empire and Palestinians³⁾

It is needless to say that Israel history is the history of resistance and struggle against various empires. The beginning point of Israel is the moment of escape from the Egyptian Empire. After making their kingdom, they had suffered many attacks by neighboring empires; finally, Israel perished by the hands of the Babylonian Empire and was led captive out of Israel.⁴⁾ Fortunately, they had a period of political liberty which allowed them return to their own land; however, the Roman Empire colonized the land again.⁵⁾ Throughout this conflict against empires, Palestinians developed the concept of messianism for their future. This

2) I can find Jesus' Kingdom movement was connected with early churches' kingdom movement as I read church history and Paul's letter for the early church. I will, however, focus on Jesus' kingdom movement for the coherence of this thesis.

3) There are two ethnical terms in the Palestinian society: Palestinians and Isrealites. Because the latter contains the religious meaning, I will use Palestinians when I mean the people on the era under the Roman Empire, but I will use Israel, a nation's name, when I utter the historical backgrounds or events in this thesis.

4) See further the discussion in John Bright, *A History of Israel*, especially, the part four and five.

5) See further the discussion in Alan F. Segal, *Rebecca's Children Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World*, 13-37, and the references there.

messianism became their national identity, and led them to join in the kingdom movement against the earthly empire. In the era of Jesus, this messianism hit the climax with organizing resistant movements in Palestinian society against the Roman Empire.⁶⁾ They had waited for Messiah to liberate them from the Roman Empire's oppression, and Palestinians thought that Jesus was a possible Messiah. The core of the Roman Empire's institution was always *legion* system, military power, which was able to mobilize economic, political and ideological commitments.⁷⁾ Rome conquered other nations constantly and built the Roman imperial colonies by military power around the world. At the same time, Romans had their self-legitimizing ideology of "defending their friends and allies," and of "bringing civilization and peace" for the colonies.⁸⁾ The imperial conquests, however, carried out constant violence in the colonies. Under the name of *Pax Romana*, every colony suffered the spiral of violence.⁹⁾ The politics of the Roman Empire was to install its own client rulers and religious leaders. They guaranteed a sense of security for colonial people, but exploited their colonies with the spiral of violence. The Palestinian common people, the oppressed, suffered the grim realities of life not only because of the spiral of violence from the Roman Empire, but also because of the Roman clients such as the Herodian kings and the Jerusalem high priests. Actually, this reality made Palestinians join in various resistance movements against the Roman Empire and leave their hometown to escape all this violence from the Roman Empire.¹⁰⁾ Particularly in the areas of Jesus' ministry such as Nazareth and Capernaum, the common people suffered seriously in their life due to the Roman Empire and the empire's clients. Therefore, it is clear that Jesus' kingdom movement was thought of as one of resistant movements for all Palestinian society.

b. Jesus' Kingdom Movement against the Roman Empire

Because Jesus was in the middle of the Roman Imperialism, Jesus' kingdom movement can be connected with the resistance movement. Even though some conservative theologians have been trying to depoliticize Jesus' movement,¹¹⁾ I argue that Jesus' kingdom movement focused on the denial of the Roman Empire through his two main ministries: prophetic ministry such as condemnation of Rome's client rulers and teaching about the kingdom of God; and the priestly ministry such as feeding and healing the common people to rebuild the community

6) See further the discussion in Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, chap 2, and the references there.

7) Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1986), chap. 9.

8) Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 29.

9) *Ibid*, 20-58. Dr. Horsley explains this situation as 'the politics of violence.'

10) See further the discussion in Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence*, chaps. 3, 4, 5, and the references there.

11) Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 6-12.

for the Palestinian society.

To begin with, I will discuss the first proclamation of Jesus, "Repent, the kingdom is coming!" Nobody can doubt this truth. The debate about this is whether or not Jesus' kingdom movement is connected with the resistance movement against the Roman Empire. As I quoted Horsley's criticism,¹²⁾ I need to criticize the depoliticizing tendency of Western individualistic Christians. This tendency reduces the historical meaning of Jesus' kingdom movement, but emphasizes only the spiritual meaning of the Kingdom of God. Jesus did his ministry in the middle of the Roman Empire. Therefore, his kingdom movement is historically placed under the rule of the Roman Empire.

His kingdom movement can be shown in his ministry as the form of resistance movement against the Roman Empire. The first characteristic of his kingdom ministry was the prophetic mission throughout his preaching and teaching. He not only objected to the Herodian kingships, but also criticized the high priests in Jerusalem, who were the ruler's main clients, as being the puppets of the Roman Empire. Furthermore, when he preached the imminent kingdom of God, it made Palestinians have hope of a new world against the Roman Empire because of Messianism throughout their history under various empires. The second characteristic of his movement was the priestly work for Palestinians demonstrated through his healing and feeding ministry for a new community. In the community, Jesus healed and fed people in order to help the community recover. Due to his ministry, finally, Jesus was arrested by the puppets of the Roman Empire and crucified as a political criminal. Richard A. Horsley points out that Jesus' action in his ministry was not for political revolution, but for social revolution¹³⁾ because Jesus' movement for re-building the community with the power of healing and feeding was very successful for the community for the hope of the new world. Finally, his ministry developed to the early church's kingdom movement against the Roman Empire even though Jesus was killed by the Roman Empire.

B. Korean Churches' *Tong-il* Movement against the Neo-empire

There are various historical similarities between Israel and Korea; both countries suffered domination by some empires throughout their history. Korea is located in the middle of China and Japan; so, whenever both countries made a new empire, Korea became the victim of the empires as was Israel. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how the Korean peninsula is in crisis under the neo-empire, America, and international dynamics, and how the *Tong-il* movement can help the Korean community recover as did Jesus' kingdom movement.

12) Ibid., 6-9.

13) Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 318-326.

a. The Neo-imperialism and international dynamics in Korea

Not only had Korea been a battle ground under the neighboring nations, but now it is also a kind of bartering ram under international dynamics connected with ideological dynamics as well as geological location. The Korean peninsula has the world spotlight because of the nuclear issue between North Korea and the U.S.A. under the international dynamics: South Korea, Japan, America, North Korea, Russia, and China.

In the modern history, the Japanese Empire had ruled over Korea with military and economic power like the Roman Empire for 36 years; however, Koreans had the chance to have freedom because Japan was defeated in the Second World War on October, 15, 1945. Most Koreans thought that they could escape the imperial government at that moment, but the Korean peninsula was divided into North and South by two other empires, the Soviet Union and the United States. North Korea supported by the Soviet Union became communist; whereas, South, by the United States, became capitalistic. Many political leaders who joined in the resistance movement against imperialism tried to unify the two ideological institutions; however, they failed because both governments tried to unify with their own political power. These trials were in vain and the Korean peninsula has been divided into two different nations as a result of the Korean War.¹⁴⁾ After the Korean War, both Koreas have lived in their own way without any concerns about the opposite under the shadow of two new kinds of empires which had the ideological super power. As both Koreas rebuilt their nations, inevitably they depended economically and militarily on the super powers around them such as South Korea to Japan and America, and North Korea to China and the Soviet Union. The economic problem of North Korea after the breakdown of the Soviet Union is a good example of this kind of relationship in the Korean peninsula.

There is another kind of imperialism in the Korean peninsula the U.S.A. like the Roman Empire. After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, America remained as the only super power in the world and the Republican President, George W. Bush, runs the U.S.A. like a neo-empire as he intends to rule over the world after 9/11. The Afghanistan War, the Iraq War, the conflict with North Korea¹⁵⁾ and the plan of Missile Defense¹⁶⁾ are the series of proofs that the Bush Administration is leading

14) Further reading about the historical background: ManGil Kang, *Korean History on 20 Century* (Seoul: Creation and Critique, 1999) and *How can we re-unify our nations?* (Seoul: DangDea Press, 2003).

15) Many people misunderstand this situation as only focus on the Korea's nuclear plan; however, the Bush administration's policy about North Korea is another reason of the conflict because the Bush administration refuse the Geneva Treaty in October 1994 which was made between the Clinton administration and the North Korea government to solve the unclear issue of North Korea. They came to an agreement that America guaranteed the national security of North Korea and financial aid such as the energy and food problem and North Korea gave up the nuclear plan.

16) After the Bush administration won the election, they abolished the Clinton administration's policy related to North Korea because they needed to make the international order focus on their regime.

the nation like an empire. Richard A. Horsley criticizes this situation and believes that America is on the road to becoming a neo-empire.¹⁷⁾ The Bush administration's imperial policy makes the Korean peninsula tremble again because another possibility of a war as we have seen when the Roman Empire used the spiral of violence to rule over its colonies.

b. Koreas' suffering and Korean churches under imperialism

The Korean War and division became the main reasons for most of Korea's social problems. During the Korean War, Koreans had suffered extreme violence: more than 1.5 million people died about 3.6 million were wounded and about three million were missing.¹⁸⁾ Many South Koreans from North still miss their hometown, and they say that their last hope is to visit there. After the Korean War, there has been an abyss between South Korea and North Korea, which made both Koreas live their life separately with animosity. Even though they are one nation, they have been quarreling with each other with extreme animosity¹⁹⁾ that makes all Koreans be psychologically and emotionally wounded.

Moreover, the division caused another division in South Korea to take place reformative and conservative ideological differences. Literally, South Korea guarantees freedom of thought; however, the experience of war blocks reasonable thought about social issues. No reformative thoughts in South Korea! This is attitude of the conservatives depending on the extreme hatred against North Korea. Several military governments have used this emotional condition to maintain their political illegitimacy against the democracy as such they have persecuted many reformative people in South Korea. Until now, South Korea is in the middle of this conflict caused by the Korean War and division. Furthermore, during this conflict in South Korea, the imperial power naturally manipulates these kinds of government to establish their imperialistic client in South Korea as the means of defense against the communist governments such as China and North Korea.

The other issue to discuss is how South Korean churches acted in this historical situation. There are two kinds of judgment against Korean churches in Korean

The first treatment is to re-enforce the missile defense plan(MD) against the communistic countries such as China and North Korea. Furthermore, the Bush administration pushes the Korean government and Japanese government to join in the MD plan to sell their missiles with the slogan of self-defense against the communist government. This will become a serious burden to Korean people because they have to pay more taxes because of this plan.

17) See further the discussion in Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 129-149, and the references there.

18) Finally, the UN representatives and North Korea signed the Treaty of Truce on July 27, 1953. After the war enormous violence remained in the Korean peninsula.

19) For example, every Korean needs to go into army service: about two years in the South and seven years in the North. It means that both of them have quarreled for more than 50 years as they have seen each other as enemies even though they are the same nation.

history. Most conservative right-wing churches played the role of the puppet of the capitalistic empire like the Palestinian religious leaders such as the extreme eulogy for the American Empire and the military governments, and the severe critique and objection to any kind of social justice movements. Even though the Korean church has grown tremendously, an imperialistic characteristic is behind that growth because most Korean churches have taught that America is God's knight who will protect South Koreans and punish the North Korean government. This tendency has received severe critique from Korean people. On the contrary, some progressive churches, which did not yield under the Japanese Empire, have played the prophetic and priestly role for Korean people. These Korean churches have been in the resistance movement such as the *Tong-il* movement, the democratic movement and social welfare movements. The *Tong-il* movement is salient in Korean history.²⁰⁾ Now is the time when Korean churches need to reflect on *Tong-il* movement for the next generations.

c. The historical background of Korean churches' *Tong-il* movement

The debate about the Korean *Tong-il* issue involving the Korean government and civil institutions can be divided mainly into four periods in Korean history: the plan to conquer North Korea with military power during the 1950's by the regime of president SeungMan Lee right after the Korean War; Peaceful *Tong-il* and the Neutral Nation in the world from the 4/19 people's revolution in 1960 to the military coup d'etat by president JeongHee Park on May 16, 1961; cruel oppression of any civil movements under the military governments of president JeongHee Park, president DooWhan Jeon and president TeaWoo Ro until the early 1990's; and the Sunshine policy of president DeaJoong Kim until now. Historically, this debate has developed recently under the regime of president DeaJoong Kim who won the Nobel Peace Prize for his effort at Korean *Tong-il*.

Under the several military governments, ironically, there were several declarations for *Tong-il* such as '7.4 South and North Declaration for unification' by the regime of president JeongHee Park, 'the Unification Declaration for National Harmony and Democracy for South and North Korea' in Jan. 22, 1982 by the regime of president DooWhan Jeon, and 'the Unification Method for Han-nation' in Sep. 11, 1989 by the regime of president TeaWoo Ro; however, they never tried to put these measures unto practice for Korean *Tong-il*, but they only used them to appease Korean people in front of the international society. President DeaJoong Kim's sunshine policy, however, is the first endeavor by Korean government for Korean *Tong-il* which affects all Koreans even though some extreme conservatives are opposed to it. Professor ManGil Gang says that 'the 6/15 Declaration' between the South Korean president, DeaJoong Kim, and the North Korean president, JeongIl Kim, is the first

20) ManYeol Lee, *Korean Christianity and the Tong-il Movement* (Seoul: Korean Christian History Research Institution Press, 2001), 351-358.

historical document for *Tong-il* because it declares the peaceful settlement for all Korean people in the Korean peninsula.²¹⁾

In this historical structure, many progressive churches have eagerly joined in the *Tong-il* movement as the Korean social democratic movement. Moreover, many conservative churches started to join this movement in the last ten years because they felt that they needed to help North Korean people in terms of supplying humanistic aid for North Koreans' economic difficulties. As the progressive churches had joined in the Korean democratic movement, they came to declare 'the South and North Churches Declaration for Peaceful *Tong-il*' on Feb. 29, 1988. This is a very important document in the Korean *Tong-il* movement because it contains the historical awareness of Korean structural problems related to the Korean War and division, and the churches' confession of the structural problems of the Korean society.²²⁾ Furthermore, not only did it make the conservative churches join in the Korean *Tong-il* movement in order to bring civil aid for North Koreans, but it also made many South Korean civilians begin to visit North Korea as another form of *Tong-il* movement, which made all South Koreans aware of the situation of North Koreans.²³⁾

d. The relation between the Kingdom Movement and the *Tong-il* Movement

As Jesus' kingdom movement was especially connected with the resistance movement against the Roman Empire, the Korean *Tong-il* movement is under the neo-empire, the U.S.A., as well as some past empires in the Korean peninsula. I find that Jesus' kingdom movement began with the religious kingdom movement and developed to the political resistance movement because of the historicity of his kingdom movement; whereas, the Korean *Tong-il* movement was caused by the Korean political situation and has developed into the Korean churches' kingdom movement because of the historicity of the *Tong-il* movement.

As Jesus' kingdom movement was in the middle of the Roman Empire, the Korean *Tong-il* movement is related to the neo-empire. Richard A. Horsley explains the similarity between the Roman Empire and the U.S.A.:

The more we learn about the effects not only of ancient Roman imperialism but of modern American imperialism, however, the more uncomfortable we feel about our imperial identity. Film footage on the evening news

21) ManGil Kang, *How can we re-unify our nations?* (Seoul: DangDea Press, 2003), 156-177.

22) SeongHyun Hong, ed., *Peace and Tong-il Theology* (Seoul: HanDeul, 2002), 73-74.

23) Further reading of Korean history about the re-unification movement: ManGil Kang, *Korean History on 20 Century* (Seoul: Creation and Critique, 1999) and *How can we re-unify our nations?* (Seoul: DangDea Press, 2003), and Korean church history about this issue: ManYeol Lee, *Korean Christianity and the Tong-il Movement*, (Seoul: Korean Christian History Research Institution Press, 2001) and SeongHyun Hong, ed., *Peace and Tong-il Theology* (Seoul: HanDeul, 2002) and see the references in these books.

form the American war on the Vietnamese and pictures in the Catholic press of priests, nuns, and peasants killed by death squads trained by the U.S. military sowed doubts in the hearts of many. American imperialism, however, has not subsided but gained strength as it transformed into global capitalism with the American government and military ready to enforce the new world order.²⁴⁾

Because the American Empire is still trying to keep a hand on the Korean peninsula,²⁵⁾ Koreans are in the middle of the resistance movement against the American Empire through the *Tong-il* movement because the *Tong-il* movement resists the oppression of imperialism. Therefore, Korean churches should join in this movement as Jesus did in his ministry. Fortunately, Korean progressive and conservative churches have joined in the *Tong-il* movement for more ten years. As many other Korean institutions have joined in the *Tong-il* movement, the Korean churches have not only walked with this movement, but they also have hope of *Tong-il* in terms of the kingdom of God; this is the work for peace and reconciliation to overcome the various conflicts in the Korean peninsula under imperialism.²⁶⁾ Furthermore, I think that Korean churches need to come together more concretely, both conservative churches and progressive churches, in order to develop the *Tong-il* movement as the kingdom movement.

C. The Prophetic Ministry of Jesus' Kingdom Movement and Korean Churches' *Tong-il* Movement

In this chapter, I will try to apply Jesus' prophetic kingdom ministry to the Korean churches' *Tong-il* movement. There are three main *Tong-il* movements in the Korean churches: 'the progressive churches' South-North Church Declaration for Peace *Tong-il*' in 1988; 'Rev. IkWhan Moon's Visiting Movement to North Korea' in 1989;²⁷⁾ and 'all Korean churches' South-North Sharing Movement for *Tong-il*' from

24) Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 147.

25) The Bush administration forces the two Koreas to obey his international order through the MD (Missile Defense) project in South Korea and the nuclear issue in North Korea. America announced that they will put an airplane craft in the middle of the East Sea between Korea and Japan next September as a part of the MD plan; moreover, America insists on the unconditional surrender of North Korea's military power even though many countries try to compromise with both nations.

26) TeaJoon Kim, ed., *Practical Dimensions for Peace and Tong-il* (Seoul: HanWool Press, 2003), 316-320.

27) Rev. IkWhan Moon had worked for Korean *Tong-il* through the Korean political oppression period under three military governments: president JeongHee Park, DooWhan Jeon, and TeaWoo Ro. Even though he knew that he would go to jail if he visited North Korea, he visited North Korea in 1989 as a civilian against the Law of National Security of Korea which does not permit contact with any communist nations or people because South Korean government ruling philosophy is capitalistic, and not communistic. His visit was the first big event as a civilian against the law. After that, many Koreans realized that Korean common people could go to North Korea and contact with North Korean president IlSeong Kim, which is, I think, a kind of conversion of the common sense of Koreans. Because of his endeavor for Korean *Tong-il*, he was nominated the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. I think that his trial is one of the prophetic voices for Korean society; however, I will not talk about

1993 to the present. I think that these three main movements are similar to Jesus' kingdom movement: the first two can be connected with the prophetic ministry of Jesus, and the last with the priestly ministry; therefore, I will try to synthesize Jesus' kingdom movement with the *Tong-il* ministry for Korea as well as for world peace. In this chapter, I will study Jesus' prophetic ministry along with the South-North Church Declaration for Peace *Tong-il* in 1988.

a. The prophetic voices of Jesus against the Roman Empire

Jesus was the prophet for the kingdom of God against the Roman Empire. Jesus not only accused the Jerusalem Temple and Judean political leaders of being the puppets of the Roman Empire against the kingdom of God, but also declared that the new kingdom of God was based on repentance and forgiveness. His prophetic voice was different from the past Israelite prophets' apocalyptic ministry because Jesus preached the imminent kingdom of God.²⁸⁾ Israelite prophets proclaimed judgment and only Israelite renewal as the chosen-nation of God; whereas, Jesus' kingdom concerned the imminent kingdom for the whole world as a form of social revolution. Therefore, Jesus performed his role as the prophet for the kingdom of God beyond Roman Imperialism which was the main cause of all social, and religious conflict in the Palestinian society.

Jesus was the prophet who claimed the kingdom was beyond the religious and social system under the Roman Empire and developed a new social community based on repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation around all Palestinian society. Moreover, his prophetic ministry became the basis of the early churches' spirit for the new social community. Jesus tried to destroy the Jerusalem Temple and high priesthood²⁹⁾ as the puppets of the Roman Empire because they exploited their power and abused all Judean common people for the Roman Empire. Richard A. Horsley says:

The Temple and high priesthood were also traditionally the ruling institutions of Israel. A prophetic program of God's judgment against the imperial order in order to advance the renewal of the people of Israel would, in the first instance, have to focus on the Roman client rulers of Israel, the high priesthood based in the Temple.³⁰⁾

Moreover, Jesus condemned the Herodian kings and the Roman Empire throughout his ministry.³¹⁾ Herod became Emperor Augustus' favorite client king and

his work because I want to emphasize Korean churches' movement for *Tong-il*.

Further reading about Rev. Moon's *Tong-il* movement: IkWhan Moon, Moonikwhan Collections, vol 3-5 of *Tong-il* (Seoul: Four Seasons Press, 1999).

28) Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, Richard John Neuhaus ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1952), chap., 1.

29) Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-46; John 2:13-20.

30) Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 86-87.

successfully retained the high priesthood and Temple as part of his regime. Therefore, Jesus did not only condemn the kingship of the Herodian kings and the Herodian faction,³²⁾ but also condemned the Roman Empire indirectly when Jewish leaders tried to snare him.³³⁾ Furthermore, Jesus prophetic voice did not stay in the areas such as the political and religious ground, but touched deeply the human mindset which was another structural cause of the imperialism in the Judean common people as well as the social leaders. Jesus declared, "Repent! The kingdom is at hand."³⁴⁾ The depoliticizing of Jesus in the Western individualistic society³⁵⁾ reduces Jesus' declaration about repentance to only the individual level of Christian faith; however, in the middle of the kingdom movement, the meaning of repentance is important for the Palestinian society because structural sins overwhelmed Palestinian society under the Roman Empire. Not only did Jesus declare repentance at the beginning of his public ministry, but he also announced the forgiveness of sin when he healed Palestinians. This tendency to forgive sin by Jesus caused another conflict between Jesus and Israelite religious leaders³⁶⁾ because I think the authority of forgiveness by the religious institution was denied, but Jesus declared his authority of forgiveness for all Judean people under the structural sin of the Palestinian society as well as the Roman Empire. Furthermore, there is no reconciliation in a society without repentance and forgiveness. I think that Jesus' declaration of repentance to all Judean people was based on this connotation of the kingdom of God to renew the Palestinian communities through repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

b. The prophetic voice of the Korean churches' *Tong-il* Movement

Korean churches have developed Jesus' kingdom movement for the Korean community in terms of the Korean *Tong-il* movement. One of the most critical movements, which absolutely acted in a prophetic role for Korean churches as well as societies,³⁷⁾ was the Korean Church Declaration for National *Tong-il* and Peace of KNCC in Feb. 29.

31) Ibid., p. 34, pp. 98-104.

32) Mark 8:15; Luke 13:31-35.

33) Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26. Furthermore, Dr Richard A. Horsley argued that the exorcism of expelling the Legion Devils was a kind of symbol about overcome the Roman Empire's militarism in his book, *Jesus and Empire*, 99-103. I agree with him because the Roman Empire ruled over the colonials with military might based on the legion system. See the Bible: Mark 5:1-20; Luke 26-39.

34) Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15.

35) Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 6-9.

36) Matthew 9:1-7; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26.

37) ManYeol Lee, *Korean Christianity and the Tong-il Movement* (Seoul: Korean Christian History Research Institution Press, 2001), 410.; JongWha Park, "88 Declaration the significance, the practical way for development, and the practice for Korean churches" *Christian Thought*, 474, June. 1998, 31-42; and HyukYeul Kwon, "The Starting Signal for the Christian *Tong-il* movement 88 Declaration" *Christian Thought*, 498, June. 2000, 104-117.

1988.³⁸⁾ The '88 Declaration was a historical work because it was not only the first declaration of the Korean churches, but it also affected all Korean society in terms of the *Tong-il* movement. The '88 Declaration, finally, helped the leaders of Korean churches to start to meet North Korean church leaders such as Rev. IkWhan Moon who visited North Korea as a civilian. World churches addressed the issue of Korean *Tong-il* together with various international church conferences.³⁹⁾ Moreover, the content of the '88 Declaration had a prophetic message for the kingdom of God for Koreans as Jesus did. There was the message of repentance and forgiveness for reconciliation. There are two messages for the Korean *Tong-il* movement in the '88 Declaration as the prophetic ministry: repentance and five ways for *Tong-il*.

The '88 Declaration is the first statement of national repentance about the Korean War and division related to the structural sin of Korea. The Korean churches have never repented of this sin for their own nation like Jesus' lament for Jerusalem.⁴⁰⁾ Actually, Koreans have had no chance to reflect about their own structural sins because they need to overcome the Korean War's adversity. Koreans have been trying to establish new economic prosperity for themselves, and have succeeded at it due to their sacrifice for themselves as they worked for their nations; however, various social conflicts have been rising as they established a name for themselves. I can say that Korean people have tried to heal their outer problems such as materialistic economic issues, but they have failed to cure their inner hurt due to the Korean War and division under the imperialistic society. On the other hand, even though South Korean people can accomplish their economic development, they have failed to address issues of social justice. There are still human rights issue, social un-equality, educational imbalance, and other materialistic issues under capitalistic imperialism. Moreover, Korean churches' portrait has reflected on the social conflicts without giving hope to Korean people. In many cases, they seem to be a puppet of the unjust military regime under imperialism like the Palestinian religious institutions.⁴¹⁾ Therefore, the '88 Declaration created a paradigm shift for all Koreans as well as for all Korean Christians because of the message of national repentance for all Koreans and the five ways to *Tong-il*.

The '88 Declaration is divided into six parts: the church's tradition of justice and peace, the reality of national division, the confession of national sin about division and hatred,

38) Because it was declared in 1988, I will call the '88 Declaration.

39) There were three main world church's conferences after 88 Declaration to advocate it: The World Church Conference for Korean Peace at Inchon of Korea, in April. 25-29. 1988; the third Gleeson Conference of the World Church for Korean Peace and *Tong-il* at Gleeson of Swiss in Nov. 23-25. 1988; and the 1989 World Church Council advocated 88 Declaration at Seoul of Korea in Oct. 15-26. 1989.

40) Matthew 23:37-39; Luke 13:34-35.

41) ManYeol Lee, *Korean Christianity and the Tong-il Movement* (Seoul: Korean Christian History Research Institution Press, 2001), 351-352.

the basic doctrine of the church for *Tong-il*, the suggestion of the Korean church to the South and the North Korean governments, and the Korean churches' task for *Tong-il*.⁴²⁾ Above all, the '88 Declaration makes Christian faith a foundation for the *Tong-il* movement before it starts to address these six main categories. I think that the confession of faith of the '88 Declaration is very important as the voice of prophetic ministry for Korea because Korean Christians' faith system has had a very individualistic tendency, and has neglected to think of the world outside itself. The '88 Declaration says:

Jesus Christ came to the earth as 'the servant for peace' and declared the kingdom of God for peace, reconciliation, and liberation against the history of division, conflict, and oppression of all human beings... We believe that God makes us participate in the God's ministry for his kingdom as the Holy Spirit help us see the eschatological future of human history...⁴³⁾

The basis of the '88 Declaration is Christian faith and the ministry of the triune God for the kingdom. Without resolute faith about the kingdom of God by the triune God, the '88 Declaration cannot become a statement about the *Tong-il* movement; moreover, the '88 Declaration becomes the historical statement for Korea because it begins with the faith statement about the kingdom of God in human history as did Jesus. Namely, the '88 Declaration begins with the faith of *Tong-il*.⁴⁴⁾

The '88 Declaration repents for the structural sin caused by the Korean War and division under imperialism as Jesus announced the kingdom of God. This is the first moment that Koreans have reflected on their structural sin, and that Koreans have started to think about the meaning of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation for their nations. The '88 Declaration says:

The national division of Korea is the result of the cold war by the two super imperialistic powers, and it becomes the main reason of the structural sin of South Korean society. Because of this division, we have committed the God's commandment about the love for our neighbors as Jesus said... We repent that South Korean Christians, especially, make the anti-communism ideology be another idol for their religious belief and commit the sin of hatred and curse North Korean common people even though they are the same nations...

The '88 Declaration not only gives Korean churches a clear identity of Christianity for their nations, but also helps Korean history re-build itself with new historicity about the issues of the Korean War and division under imperialism. Korean

42) Ibid., 403.

43) JongWha Park, "Material collections about the practical way of Korean churches for Korean *Tong-il*," *The Meeting of South and North Korean churches and the Peace Tong-il Theology* (Seoul: KNCC, 1990), 20-27. the following quotations about the '88 Declaration are based on this article.

44) ManYeol Lee, *Korean Christianity and the Tong-il Movement* (Seoul: Korean Christian History Research Institution Press, 2001), 402.

churches have never confessed their anti-national and anti-democratic sins under imperialism and several unjust regimes using military power; however, the '88 Declaration makes them repent of their sins under imperialism. Therefore, this is the prophetic ministry for Korea as well as for world peace.⁴⁵⁾

The '88 Declaration shows not only the basic blueprint for Korean *Tong-il* throughout Korean historical documents and thoughts, but it also proposes a concrete method, the *Tong-il Jubilee*, for *Tong-il* for the South and North Korean churches, as well as for the world churches. There are the five basic doctrines for *Tong-il* by the '88 Declaration: the way of independence, peace, national solidarity, humanity, and the thorough participation by all national members.⁴⁶⁾ All of them have the prophetic voice for Korean society as Jesus did for his nation as well as for all nations for the kingdom of God. Most of all, thorough participation by all national members is the first and most important because the common people's participation is necessary for *Tong-il*, but the way had been blocked by unjust regimes under imperialism. Due to this Declaration, Rev. IkWhan Moon had the courage to visit North Korea and met the president of North Korea. After this Declaration, many civilians began to visit North Korea and co-work with the North Korean government.⁴⁷⁾ Moreover, the Korean churches' prophetic ministry for *Tong-il* developed their ministry as they suggested in the *Tong-il Jubilee* for Korea in 1995, after fifty years of being divided,⁴⁸⁾ and began to co-work with North Korean churches for this year in various social areas such as education, civilians visiting the North Korean churches, and so on. In an effort at *Tong-il*, Korean churches had been trying to reconcile South and North Koreans for the *Jubilee*. Many Koreans came to realize the meaning of *Tong-il* and, finally, Korean conservative churches began to realize their position in Korean society, and then they started to join in the *Tong-il* ministry for Korea as well as for world peace. All in all, the '88 Declaration is the prophetic ministry of Korean churches for the kingdom of God in terms of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

45) Ibid., 404-405.

46) The former three of them are based on the basic doctrines of '7.4 South and North Declaration for Unification' by the regime of president JeongHee Park. Even though it talks about keeping this military government, the content is very important for *Tong-il*. The latter two of them are added in the '88 Declaration for the first time in Korean history.

47) Even though visiting North Korea was illegal, the '88 Declaration breaks this illegality in two ways. Some Koreans visit North Korea the illegal way such as Rev. Moon, SooKyung Lim, and other civilians; however, the Korean government has given religious or economic leaders permission to visit. This is historical irony. The '88 Declaration, however, helps to open the eyes of common people and they began to see South and North Korea a little bit differently.

48) Historically, Korean division began on the right after liberation from the Japanese Empire because the western empires decided to divide Korea into two parts, South and North, in hopes of restoring Korea's social situation. Therefore, KNCC decided that 1995 was the *Jubilee* for Korean re-unification.

D. The Priestly Ministry of Jesus' Kingdom Movement and Korean churches' *Tong-il* Movement

The second part of Jesus' kingdom ministry is the healing and feeding ministry as the priestly work for all Palestinian society. The Israelite priesthood had ministered on behalf of God by following God's law for the kingdom in terms of the sacrifice for the community, and healing and feeding the common people. As time went on, however, they forgot their work and then became the puppets of the Roman Empire with the Herodian kings. When this situation worsened in Palestinian society, Jesus started his priestly ministry for Judean community. Jesus not only healed his people against the Roman Empire, but he also fed members of his community which the religious and political leaders did not do.⁴⁹⁾ Furthermore, right after Jesus' death, the new community began to do ministry instead of Jesus' kingdom movement throughout the Mediterranean territory under the Roman Empire. Thus, Jesus' priestly ministry for the kingdom of God succeeded in the South and North Sharing Movement of Korean Churches' *Tong-il* movement, because this movement also heals and feeds the Korean community in an effort at building a new community. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how Jesus did his priestly ministry in the Palestinian community, and how the South and North Sharing Movement of Korean Churches affected the Korean *Tong-il*.

a. Jesus' priestly ministry for the communities

Jesus' kingdom ministry embodied the healing and feeding ministry for the Judean community, which was oppressed by the Roman Empire and its puppets. The whole Judean communities of common people were totally destroyed by the spiral violence of the Roman Empire.⁵⁰⁾ There were three main points of Jesus' priestly ministry throughout his public life; the healing of all Judean common people, even women, lepers, and Gentiles; sharing his life; and feeding all Judean commoners. Moreover, Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and resurrection was the summit of his priestly ministry because it became an extreme resistance movement against the Roman Empire through the successors for Jesus' kingdom movement.

In many cases of his healing miracles, Jesus proclaimed the forgiveness of sin even though many Palestinian people thought that it was a kind of blasphemy against God, which gave religious leaders a direct reason to decide to kill Jesus. Jesus' healing ministry, however, was vibrant because Jesus thought his healing ministry was for the kingdom of God for all Judean communities against the Roman Empire.⁵¹⁾

49) Jesus sacrificed himself on the cross as the offering of sacrifice for repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation for the Israelite community and for the people of the world. This point, however, is related to another theological perspective about Jesus which is not related to my thesis.

50) Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), chaps. 1-2.

51) Richard A. Horsley and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Message and the Kingdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), chap. 3.

Furthermore, Jesus' healing ministry broke with Israelite traditions which had been oppressing common people such as the leprosy tradition,⁵²⁾ the cleanness tradition,⁵³⁾ healing on the Sabbath,⁵⁴⁾ even the healing of the Gentile woman's daughter,⁵⁵⁾ and so on. Jesus' healing ministry was in the middle of the Israelite priesthood tradition under the Roman Empire; therefore, Jesus' priestly ministry was for the renewal of Judean community, which had political implications.⁵⁶⁾ Furthermore, his renewal ministry for the community was evident in his feeding ministry for the Palestinians. The new community began to share their meals together, which is the main concern of common people because the Roman Empire and its puppets exploited Palestinians with various taxes. Therefore, Jesus' sharing and feeding ministry was a kind of revolutionary movement for the Judean community.⁵⁷⁾ Jesus' new community became the meal-sharing-community, called open commensality,⁵⁸⁾ for the renewal of the common people's community.

b. Korean Churches' *Tong-il* ministry

As Jesus healed and fed the Palestinians, Korean Churches began their priestly kingdom movement for the Korean community in April 27, 1993. Due to the '88 Declaration, South and North Korean churches started to work together for Jubilee in 1995; however, the meeting of both churches was not easy because of the political restrictions. Therefore, Korean churches needed a more practical movement for *Tong-il* with all Korean churches including many conservative churches of South Korea. Even though many conservative churches of South Korea have been criticizing any kind of *Tong-il* movement because of their ideological bias, this South and North Sharing Movement of Korean Churches⁵⁹⁾ is the new movement for Korean churches and Korean society because it works for healing and sharing for both Koreas.

52) Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 4:38-41.

53) Matthew 9:18-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:42-48.

54) Matthew 19:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11.

55) Matthew 15:22-28; Mark 7:24-30.

56) Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce J. Malina, and Gerd Theissen, ed., *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), chaps. 5 and 12.

57) Ibid., chap. 10.

58) *MinJoong* theologian, ByungMoo An, uses a Korean concept to describe Jesus' meal-sharing-community. He names it *Babsang*-community. *Babsang* means the meal table. I think that *MinJoong's* theological analysis is legitimate for my argument which is related to Jesus' feeding ministry for the Israelite common people. This theology argues that *MinJoong*, which means common people or the oppressed, is the main theme in Jesus theology because Jesus was in the middle of the political situation under the Roman Empire. Jesus' ministry is only for *MinJoong*, therefore, there might be another Jesus in terms of the political theology about Jesus Christ. Further reading about *MinJoong* Theology: ByungMoo An, *History and Interpretation* (Seoul: Korean Theology Research Institution, 1992).

59) I will refer to this movement as "the Sharing Movement."

South Korean progressive and conservative churches had never had the chance to discuss anything about *Tong-il* because of their ideological differences until the Sharing Movement in 1993; however, when they began to discuss the national future as the form of the kingdom of God, they could finally confess about structural sin through the Sharing Movement for healing of South Korean communities. I think that the beginning of the Sharing Movement is the right time for all Koreans to be healed as Jesus' healing was for all communities and was against the wrong traditions under the Roman Empire. There was no healing without the confession of Korea's structural sin caused by the Korean War and division under imperialism. JeongGil Hong, who is the general secretary of the Sharing Movement said at the day of the initiation conference of the Sharing Movement:

...Korean society in the middle of luxury, indulgence and extreme egoism needs the self-training and preparing to live together with North Koreans because Korean *Tong-il* at hand...therefore, this Sharing Movement is not only the concrete way of repentance, but also the practical way to love our neighbors...⁶⁰⁾

Furthermore, there was another collaborative repentance prayer by all attendees at the Sharing Movement conference:

... God, please make us reflect on our shameful stance which aims our guns to other brothers until now, and, please, help us meet our brothers with forgiveness and reconciliation... Heavenly Father, lead us to accomplish peaceful *Tong-il* with your peace, joy, and love...⁶¹⁾

This is the first participation of Korean conservative churches in social issues related to the Korean War and division by imperialism. Even though their political consciousness is not the same as reformative churches', their participation is very important because of the historical meaning of the Sharing Movement of all Korean churches. Before that moment, no Koreans had expected that conservative Christians could join in the reformative *Tong-il* movement.

The Sharing Movement made four sharing doctrines the seeds for *Tong-il*: 'Spiritual Sharing,' 'News Sharing,' 'Prosperity Sharing,' and 'Daily Life Sharing.'⁶²⁾ The following is the statement of these doctrines:

60) I got this article from <http://www.sharing.net>. ManYeol Lee presented this article, "Korean Churches' *Tong-il* Movement and South and North Sharing Movement" at the conference for the Sharing Movement at the 10th year anniversary of this institution in April 28, 2003. The conference's main topic was "The Ten Years of Sharing Movement and the Korean Churches' Task." I will refer to this article from now on as "Conference Material." Conference Material, 25.

61) Ibid., 26.

62) Ibid., 27.

1. We will begin "the Daniel Prayer Movement" as the spiritual sharing movement.
2. We will publish "Joyful Sharing" as the news sharing movement to broaden the mindset for *Tong-il* for all Koreans.
3. We will start "the Powdered Milk Sending Movement to North Korea" as prosperity sharing movement between South and North Korea.
4. We will do "Piety and Self-restraint Movement" for the daily life movement.⁶³⁾

These four categories are the main work of Korean churches' priestly ministry for *Tong-il* as the kingdom movement because they decided to begin with the actual work for *Tong-il*. In many areas, the Sharing Movement has been helping North Korean common people because they have been suffering under economic difficulties. These endeavors can help heal and feed North Koreans as Jesus did his healing and feeding ministry. Moreover, the Sharing Movement has been cooperating with the North Korean churches⁶⁴⁾ to help North Korean people. The Sharing Movement has broadened its work on various issues: refugees, starving, education, and so on. Even though some extreme conservative churches have not joined in this movement because of their ideological bias, most Korean churches have been participating in this movement in order to build their new community with a healing and sharing ministry. The Sharing Movement is the priestly ministry of Korean churches because it is curing both Koreans mindset and helping to rebuild communities in the Korean peninsula for the kingdom of God.

III. CONCLUSION

In my thesis, I proved that the Korean *Tong-il* movement is another kingdom movement focusing on the Korean churches' two *Tong-il* movements, the '88 Declaration and the Sharing Movement, comparing them with Jesus' kingdom movement against the Roman Empire. As Jesus' kingdom movement needs to keep going on for human beings in the future, the Korean *Tong-il* movement is also on-going. Both *Tong-il* movements, the '88 Declaration and the Sharing Movement, are not complete until the kingdom of God comes true on earth; furthermore, they need to develop in order to help the kingdom of God for the Korean peninsula as well as for the world.

For the prophetic and priestly ministry of Korean churches, now is the time when Korean churches need to think about imperialism in the middle of Korea, not only

63) Ibid., 27.

64) There are two churches under the Alliance of *ChoSun* Christ Church in North Korea: *BongSoo* church and *ChilGol* Church. And there are about 500 family churches in North Korea with 20 reverends and 130 pastors in the 1993's data. The North Korean government manipulates North Korean churches; however, they are churches because they are preaching the Bible and doing Sacraments for their congregations.

in South, but also in North. Moreover, North Korean people are in the middle of dual problems such as imperialism and dictatorship. North Korean dictatorship has not opened to the outer world. Therefore, South Korean churches have to study about North Koreans and help them effectively with the priestly ministry in order to make North Korean open up to the outer world. I think that this is very important ministry for all Korean churches. That is because the North Korean government needs to be changed for its common people, all Korean churches need to do their ministry more effectively by using the prophetic ministry to speak against imperialism as well as by using the priestly ministry for rehabilitation of the all Korean communities.

Furthermore, I think that all Korean churches need to synthesize both these movements as one ministry for the kingdom of God as Jesus balanced his ministry; we should make all churches know that Korean *Tong-il* movement is for world peace against neo-imperialism; and we should develop a more concrete alliance with other churches throughout the world for world peace such as other NGOs throughout the world.

All in all, I think that Korean *Tong-il* will come true someday because it is the kingdom movement for world peace; therefore, all world churches should cooperate in the Korean *Tong-il* movement for world peace. To aid my further study about this issue, I want to do more research not only about the early churches' resistance movement against the Roman Empire by looking at more historical documents, but about the international relationship and dynamics for world peace as well.

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