

**The Practice of Hereditary Succession
in Korean Church
from the Perspective of Karl Barth's Ecclesiology**

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Bumseok Ko

Drew University

Madison, New Jersey

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Introduction

In the past one hundred years, the Korean churches have accomplished rapid growth. This phenomenon has attracted the attention of churches and denominations throughout the world. However, the total number of Christian congregations among the Korean churches has shown a clear decreasing trend. One of the reasons may be due to the current trend of hereditary succession that is prevalent in Korean churches. As a result of this trend, many disappointed congregation members leave their churches. Therefore, Korean churches need to find solutions to deal with this growing phenomenon characterized by a more secularized perspective.

The primary purpose of this thesis is to explore the ecclesiology of Karl Barth as one of the appropriate sources for dealing with the problems facing Korean churches specifically, his doctrine of ecclesiology, which he describes as being in communion with Jesus Christ. By studying, *Church Dogmatics*, an effort will be made to analyze how Barth's doctrine of the church can be applied to Korean churches to solve the problems that reflect secularized attitudes, especially the issue of hereditary succession that can be traced historically to the powerful influence of Confucianism in the Korean culture.

Though Barth's theology grew out of the context of the European environment, an adaptation of Barth's Christocentric theology can be applied to Korea's tradition of Confucianism. In fact, the Presbyterian Church, especially that of the Tong-Hap denomination that occupies more than half of all Korean Christianity, embraces the

thinking of Karl Barth. It is precisely because of that reason that the Tong-Hap Presbyterian denomination was established basically on the theology of the reformer, John Calvin. Similarly, as the interpreter of Calvin's theology, Karl Barth's thinking is frequently taught in Korean Presbyterian seminaries.

According to Heup-Young Kim, a Korean scholar whose work deals with the Confucian influences on Korean Christianity, "Karl Barth has influenced Korean Calvinist or Reformed Theology seriously...."¹ Consequently, this thesis attempts to address the problem of hereditary succession in Korean churches by exploring Karl Barth's theology. To do so, the thesis is divided into four chapters.

Chapter one is laid out as an introduction to the problem of hereditary succession in Korean churches. The practice of hereditary succession refers to the succession of the Senior Pastor's position in the church that resembles the succession of the holdings and wealth of an ancient king or in modern society, of a company or corporation. While the Korean churches have received great attention due to their remarkable growth, Korean churches have also received biting criticism because of their improper conduct. A particularly egregious example of this misconduct is, in fact, the hereditary succession that is gradually increasing in the Korean churches. This practice reflects well the corrupt status of contemporary Korean churches. In other words, the hereditary succession of the Korean churches has caused much disappointment to Christians both inside and outside the churches.

The rapid growth of the Korean church has distracted the Senior Pastors and

¹ Hub-young Kim, *Wang Yang-ming and Karl Barth: A Confucian-Christian Dialogue* (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1996), 195-196.

congregations from seeing what the church should essentially be and how it should focus not only on the spiritual growth of its members but also on its social response to the gospels of Jesus Christ. In this chapter, some statistical data gathered by anti-succession groups in Korea is included.

In the second chapter, some of the causes for the increase in the number of cases of hereditary succession that have occurred in contemporary Korean churches will be discussed. Among the possible main reasons for the practice of hereditary succession are the secularization of churches and the influence of Confucianism. First, the secularization of the churches often reflects a "dechristianization which unequivocally describes the spiritual corruption of the churches through the introduction and toleration of a worldly spirit, including contemporary ideologies, popular trends, and religious syncretism."² Korean churches have been trying to imitate the practices of secular, commercial businesses, because the systems of such businesses appear confident and present stable practices and methods for the churches to follow. The hereditary succession of companies may be the best way to sustain the companies' stability, but this is not true for the Korean churches.

Secondly, the influence of Confucianism facilitates and validates the implementation of the hereditary succession in the Korean churches. In fact, my research has revealed that Korean Confucianism is a significant factor for the rapid growth of the Korean churches and has contributed to the prevailing attitude of the Korean society.

Before the Good-News arrived in the Korea, shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism

² Jung Suck Rhee, *Secularization and Sanctification: A Study of Karl Barth's Doctrine of Sanctification and Its Contextual Application to the Korean Church* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: VU University Press, 1995), 2.

played a significant role in setting up Korea's religious and cultural background and foundation. Daniel J. Adams, a North American Presbyterian pastor and Professor of Theology at Hanil University and Presbyterian Theological Seminary, in South Korea explains more about this phenomenon, "Christianity's arrival in Korea was relatively late and there were already three religious and ethical traditions that were firmly established as an integral part of Korean culture. These were shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism."³ Meanwhile, Confucianism was the main contributing factor to the success and growth of Korean Christianity. This is because, it impeded the formation of a horizontal relationship between the senior pastor and congregation in the Korean church. In other words, it fostered a hierarchical church system that has enhanced the efficient working of the Korean churches.

In the third chapter, the discussion will be focused on Barth's Christocentric ecclesiology. Karl Barth's theology can be simply summarized as a Christocentric theology, in which he describes the "gathering, the upbuilding, and the sending" of the Christian community. I propose that we can properly suggest possible answers for the hereditary succession of the Korean churches through Barth's Christocentric ecclesiology. Colm O'Grady, explains in his book, *The Church in the Theology of Karl Barth*, about three main themes of Barth's church theology as follows: "Barth describes the subjective realization of the Church from three aspects: it is the community of men awakened and gathered by the Holy Spirit in faith, quickened and built up in love, called and sent in

³ Daniel J. Adams, *Korean Theology in Historical Perspective* (Delhi: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2012), 1.

hope."⁴ In short, the Church is gathered by the Holy Spirit and developed in love, and sent forth in hope. According to Karl Barth, these three concepts—the "gathering, upbuilding, and the sending" forth of the Christian community, are the keywords of his ecclesiology.⁵ In *Secularization and Sanctification*, Barth's theology of church consists of three components and the main theme of his ecclesiology is the effect of reconciliation.⁶ In other words, the Holy Spirit builds the Christian community for the mission task of reconciliation between people and God. Thinking about reconciliation is a valuable result of Barth's ecclesiology because Jesus Christ came to us for the very purpose of reconciliation.

In the fourth chapter, I will investigate the availability of the adaptation of Barth's Christocentric theology to Korean churches. This is because Barth's theology derives from the European context. That is to say, we should ask whether Barth cares about other cultures and religions or not.⁷ In fact, the evaluation of Barth's opinion about other cultures is not always steadily the same. One of the appraisals of Karl Barth by other theologians is that his work is not easily adapted to the thinking and contexts of other countries. The famous example of Barth's strict view for other circumstances is his work entitled, "Nein," written to Emil Brunner on the matter of natural theology.⁸ However, the misapprehending of Karl Barth reveals his thinking as too conservative and not caring about other theological thinking which, in fact, is not true. Thus, I will suggest some

⁴ Colm O'Grady, *The Church in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Washington: Corpus Books, 1968), 250.

⁵ Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea: Focusing on Ecclesiology in Relation to Korean Christian Thought* (Bern: P. Lang, 2003), 128.

⁶ Jung Suck Rhee, *Secularization and Sanctification*, 212.

⁷ Waldron Scott, "Karl Barth's Theology of Mission" *Missiology: An International Review* 3, no. 2 (1975): 209-223.

⁸ Heup Young Kim, *Wang Yang-Ming and Karl Barth*, 64.

solutions to the problems of the Korean Churches by applying Karl Barth's Christocentric ecclesiology to the Korean context. Further study of Barth's ecclesiology will be offered through an analysis of the Church and its mission in the Korean context. I would also like to suggest some possible ways to discuss the ecclesiology of Barth in relation to the current situation of the Korean Church.

The conclusion summarizes the results of my investigation of the application of Karl Barth's ecclesiology in Korean churches. In this section, I will recapitulate how Barth's Christocentric ecclesiology can illuminate and help to solve some of the more pressing problems facing the Korean churches, regardless of denominations. Through the conclusive remarks, suggestions will be offered as to how to best proceed in dealing with this situation.

Chapter I

Korean Church's System of Hereditary Succession

A. Current Status of Hereditary Succession in Korean Church

The Korean churches definitely have grown in a short time since the Good News arrived in Korea. This amazing development of the Korean Christian community has generated considerable curiosity among the churches throughout the world. Numerous scholars have studied the reasons for the rapid growth of the Korean churches in the theological seminaries of the world. However, despite the significant growth of the Korean Church, there are many Christians who have suffered from the lack of sound moral leadership in the Korean churches for several years. This improper conduct cannot be fully explained as there are numerous complicated and distinct reasons. Among the reasons, however, is the issue of the hereditary succession of leadership in many churches. The hereditary succession in a church means a son inherits the position of his father's position in a church.

From recent surveys of Korean churches, it is possible to find out on where the Korean churches stand. When one examines the location of churches where the hereditary succession generally occurs, it is possible to better understand the implied meanings of hereditary transfer in the church. For instance, if a pastor engages his ministry in a rural area or in a small-sized church, generally this church is not well-known and the senior pastor is not famous. Consequently, there are not many applicants who want to assume the leadership of such a church. Therefore, if a son inherits the Senior Pastor position in such a church, people inside and outside churches can

understand the motives of this hereditary succession and normally do not express any criticism of it. However, the hereditary succession has happened concentrically around the capital city, Seoul.⁹ According to the survey which was carried out from Mar. 12nd, 2013 to Feb. 18th, 2016 by the Anti-Succession United Association of Korea, one hundred churches in the vicinity of the capital area can be identified as experiencing the hereditary succession of the church's leadership, whether it happened between father and son or other illegal structures.¹⁰ This number of one hundred instances is much larger than the twenty- eight hereditary successions of other regions outside of the capital area. From this statistical data, we can conclude that the hereditary successions usually are focused on matters of the obsession for wealth, power, and authority rather than on any other aspect of one's spiritual commitment or sacred vocation.

One can ask what characteristics can be identified as common factors in relation to the hereditary succession of church leadership. Upon examining the size of the churches that intended to practice hereditary succession, it becomes clear that the size of a church does not matter at all in terms of whether hereditary succession will occur. In other words, the size of the churches that have experienced hereditary succession were usually big enough for inheritors to aspire to the succession several years prior to the occurrence, but even the pastors of small churches gradually became interested in the

⁹ Deok Man Bae, *History Theological Consideration on the Hereditary Succession of Church* (Seoul: Anti-Succession United Association, 2013), 2.

¹⁰ Anti-Succession United Association, *The Status of Hereditary Succession of Korean Churches*, Accessed April 3, 2016, http://www.seban.kr/home/sb_what_map

hereditary succession.¹¹ This phenomenon indicates that the perceptions of those associated with the hereditary churches are not conscious of the eyes of others both in and beyond the churches. Sadly, they only care about the benefits that will be received from the hereditary succession.

The hereditary succession in Korean churches is not a new phenomenon among Christian churches and is not specific to any particular denomination. Because the succession of churches has happened almost every year since 2000 when hereditary succession occurred in Bethany Church, located in Seoul. Today, many Christians are well aware that the phenomenon of hereditary succession prevails in Korean churches.¹² This hereditary succession has caused significant criticism both inside and outside the Korean churches. However, some conservatives defend it by indicating that it might contribute to the stable growth and maintenance of Korean Protestant churches. Unfortunately, these excuses that appear to be reasonable to some have caused even more anti-Christian sentiment in Korea. One of the newspapers, Dangdang News, refers to the situation of hereditary succession within the Korean church as a social problem,

The decision banning hereditary succession of the head pastor position should not be justified on a lame pretense. It is an undeniable proposition in view of God's calling on our age and faith. Some second-generation pastors enjoy wealth and prestige inherited from their fathers. But the majority of pastors face harsh realities. Out of a total of some 50,000 Protestant churches across Korea, more than 40,000 are classified as financially unstable. These days, even hereditary succession of corporate management positions becomes a subject of controversy. A church is not a company. A pastor should not turn a church into his "kingdom on the earth" and bequeath it to his son like a self-made

¹¹ In-sung Bang, "The Announcement of the Hereditary Succession of Korean Churches" *Press Conference of Anti-Succession United Association*, Dangdangnews.com, Accessed April 21, 2016, <http://www.dangdangnews.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=21539>

¹² Deok Man Bae, *History Theological Consideration on the Hereditary Succession of Church*, 1.

businessman. For the sake of his own son as well as the church, a pastor should guide his successor to a thorny path.¹³

According to this article, one can recognize that not only the Christian community of Korea but also the Korean society, in general, has serious concerns regarding the phenomenon of the hereditary succession of church leaders. In other words, the improper transfer of church leadership is a problem for the Korean society as well as for the Korean church.

B. Reason Why We Care Hereditary Succession is a Problem

When Korean people hear about the issue of hereditary succession, because we are aware of the situation of North Korea, we usually recall the situation of North Korea's succession of dictators. In fact, the reality of hereditary succession may be a negative phenomenon to people, in general, in South Korea. That being so, we need to examine the reasons why this phenomenon of hereditary succession is a problem.

1. An obstacle of God's Mission

Regretfully, the Korean Protestant churches have been losing the trust of society for many years. According to the survey regarding the credibility of Korean Christianity by the Christian Ethics Movement, the degree of credibility that Korean Christianity

¹³ Gap-Sik Kim, "Pastoral Succession from Father to Son: Blessing or Privilege?" *The Hereditary Succession of Korean Church*, Koreafocus.com, Accessed May 21, 2016, http://www.koreafocus.or.kr/DEV/culture/view.asp?volume_id=150&content_id=105305&category=C

enjoyed among the Korean people fell 11.5 percent of credibility from 2010 to 2013,¹⁴ implying that Koreans are gradually losing confidence in the Korean Protestant churches of Korea.

Regretfully, the issue of hereditary succession has played a significant role in bring down the social trust of Korean churches. In other words, the reduced credibility of the Church also contributes to the fact that the mission of the Church is becoming increasingly difficult to execute. The reason is that if the people of the world have lost their trust in Korean Christianity, there is a greater possibility that they do have a desire to not to open their minds to the Church. As a result of this point of view of losing the trust of the Church, the Church cannot complete one of its most important tasks.

Therefore, the issue of hereditary succession has become a serious obstacle for the Korean churches to undertake their missionary work. There is a verse in the Bible (1Tim. 4:2) for the Korean pastors who are willing to pass the leadership of the churches to those who are inheriting the leadership, "To preach God's message, do it willingly, even if it isn't the popular thing to do. You must correct people and point out their sins. But also cheer them up, and when you instruct them, always be patient."¹⁵ In short, in order to deliver God's message, the Church should take any chance to spread the Gospel.

However, the pastors of hereditary succession give up their sacred vocation to lead their congregations for their own merit.

2. A Mistaken Theology

The phenomenon of hereditary succession is in conflict with the Word of God

¹⁴ Jung-gil Hong, "The Survey of Credibility of Korean Church" (Seoul, Christian Ethics Movement, 2014), 12.

¹⁵ Bible, 1Tim 4:2

which is that the Church belongs to Jesus Christ. There is a verse which can support this idea in the Bible (Matt. 16:18), "On this rock I will build my church, and death itself will not have any power over it."¹⁶ Therefore, if Christians confess that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, they cannot acquiesce to this hereditary transfer of leadership in the Korean churches. The hereditary succession rooted in the theme of the growth ideology of the Church implies that the growth of the Church is the most significant and urgent agenda of the Church. In other words, if the succession of a senior pastor's position results in the stable growth of a particular church, the church does not care about any blame on the illegal succession. However, God does not ask for the escalation of the size of a Church in the Bible. Rather, the growth of the Church represents the greed of the Christian community. There is a warning against greed in the Bible (Col. 3:5) that states, "Don't be greedy, which is the same as worshiping idols."¹⁷ In this way of thinking, the phenomenon of hereditary succession can be viewed as one of the worshiping idols. Therefore, the hereditary succession is a problem from the perspective of Theology and the Bible.

As discussed above, the hereditary succession within the Korean Protestant Church is an attempt to take possession of sovereign power within the Church, only by the specific pastor and his family. Thus, this method of succession within the church hurts Jesus Christ's possessive right to the Church. Furthermore, the hereditary transferring damages the (heavenliness) sacredness of the Church which is given by God. On the other hand, the succession eventually empowers and helps the minister's privatization of the Church. A family's privatization of a Church moves away from the

¹⁶ Bible, Matt 16:18

¹⁷ Bible, Col 3:5

Bible (1Pet. 2:9), "But you are God's chosen and special people. You are a group of royal priests and a holy nation. God has brought you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Now you must tell all the wonderful things that he has done."¹⁸ In this verse, God's indicate to the faithful that everybody is chosen by God and enjoys the royal priesthood. In other words, God wants every Christian to be an apostle who is sent by God for the purpose of sharing the Good News. Therefore, the privatization of one family is not responding to the mission of God with the Word of God.

3. Damage to Social Fairness

The matter of the hereditary succession of the Church is not fair to some pastors who want to secure a position within the Church to be able to carry out the tasks of his vocation. This situation exists because of the existence of pastors who already have the power of church leadership and want to pass over their power to those to whom they wish will inherit their positions. As a result, all young aspiring pastors are not able to position themselves at the same starting line as other pastors. While the process of appointment looks fair to people outside the Church, in reality, it is not fair and just for applicants if the Church is willing to condone the practice of hereditary succession. This unfairness is also the problem of a social system which seeks its merit, but even less so for the Protestant churches of Korea. Holiness should be the main feature of the Church, but this current problem of hereditary succession is a behavior that is pushing back the clock in terms of the development of the Church. The unfair succession possibly makes many young pastoral candidates feel a sense of the futility and also narrows down the kingdom of God. According to the survey by the Christian Ethics Movement, the hereditary

¹⁸ Ibid.

succession represents 8.3 percent of the reasons why people do not place trust in Korean Christianity.¹⁹ This 8.3 percent is actually lower than many expected actually. However, it is certainly connected to other reasons such as 'discordance between words and actions' and 'an ethical issue,' reasons stated for lack of trust in Korean Christianity. Therefore, the hereditary succession of one Church contributes to the causes other problems of society.

¹⁹ Jung-gil Hong, "*The Survey of Credibility of Korean Church*," 24.

Chapter II

Causes of the Hereditary Succession in the Korean Church

The issue of hereditary succession within the Korean Protestant Church is one of the principal sources of difficulties in Korean Protestant churches. It is common sense that in order to heal a disease, we should first find out the reasons causing the disease. Therefore, in the case of hereditary succession, we should investigate the reasons for its causes first. Scholars both in South Korea as well as internationally have examined this increasingly problematic issue that is present in many arenas of the institutional structures of South Korea. In this chapter, discussion focuses on the root causes of this notion of hereditary succession and its presence in a variety of key institutional structures.

A. Secularization of the Korean Church

Samsung is the largest multi-national *chaebol* (business conglomerate), headquartered in Seoul, South Korea. However, in 2007, its corporate head, Kun Hee Lee, was accused of regularly giving bribes.²⁰ That is, he regularly bribed "politicians, government officials, tax collectors, prosecutors, judges, journalists and scholars."²¹ In addition, the local news published information that the Samsung Group chair attempted to transfer corporate wealth and leadership of the multinational *chaebol* to his son, Jae Yong Lee, via dealings reflecting personal transactions. This news exposed the dealings

²⁰ Jeehye You, *Legal Perspectives on Corporate Social Responsibility: Lessons from the United States and Korea* (New Delhi: Springer, 2015), 9.

²¹ Sang-Hun Choe, *Corruption Scandal Snowballs at South Korea's Samsung Group*, The New York Times, Accessed May 21, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/06/business/worldbusiness/06iht-samsung.1.8210181.html?_r=0

of corruption within the largest business organization of South Korea. Lee's family wanted to engage in the practice of hereditary succession through illegal methods, even by giving bribes to powerful and influential individuals in various positions in Korea. The Samsung organization was blamed and held accountable for this irresponsible behavior.

However, the sadder news is that the issue of hereditary succession within the Korean Protestant Churches resembles this scandal of the largest multinational business organization in the nation. This unwanted practice that has gradually become apparent in the Korean Protestant churches has also been referred to as the process of the secularization of the Church. Generally, we define the secularization of church as a status within the Church when the Church moves away from the spiritual and biblical way of life that is God-centered. What can be said is that it is very clear that the matter of hereditary succession is not God-centered nor are there biblical reference or mandates for such practices. Therefore, we can regard the practice of hereditary succession within the Church as a tendency toward the secularization of the Korean Protestant Church.

However, the secularization of the Church is not an unexpected event for the Korean church. In 1988, Leo Oosterom, stated that "Secularization is the subject that every church of Korea will encounter in the near future."²² Just as he said twenty years ago, we are facing in the Korean church similar results to the practice of hereditary succession occurring in the major multinational companies. Thus, we need to ascertain the precise roots and influence of secularization in South Korea so that recommendations for ways of recovery from the ongoing presence of aspects of secularization that are

²² L. Oosterom, *Contemporary Missionary Thought in the Republic of Korea: Three Case-Studies on the Missionary Thought of Presbyterian Churches in Korea* (Utrecht-Leiden: IIMO Research Publication 28, 1990), 115.

growing within the Protestant churches of South Korea can be undertaken.

1. Definition of Secularization

First of all, the definition of secularization in the Bible is helpful for our understanding of the term. In *Church Dogmatics*, Barth expresses his idea on secularization, stating, "Secularization is the process at the end of which it will be only a part of the world among so much else of the world; one of the religious corners which the world may regard as necessary to its fullness but which do not have the slightest practical significance for its manner and way. Secularization is the process by which the salt loses its flavor."²³ In short, for Barth, secularization occurs in the Church when the Church does not do the work that it is supposed to do and, at the same time, it does not understand how best to engage religious practices that are needed in the Church.

On the other hand, thinking biblically, secularization began with Adam's fall and his consequent sinfulness. It was the first time for human creatures to choose to be away from God.²⁴ From the era of Adam until the birth of Jesus Christ, there was no chance to restore the broken relationship between humans and God. Therefore, Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, came as the Redeemer to struggle with the world's secularization. In fact, since Jesus Christ's first coming, the word, "world," is used for explaining the status of that which is negative.²⁵ That is, the negative use of the term, "world," in the Scripture does not refer to concrete matters but makes reference to spiritual meaning. However, from the beginning, the world was not created with a negative status. As mentioned

²³ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. IV/2, Edited by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936-1969), 668.

²⁴ Jung Suck Rhee, *Secularization and Sanctification*, 7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

above, Adam's sin caused the world to be separated from God. In spite of this separation between the world and God, God did not forsake the world because God made this world and God loves God's creatures all the time. Therefore, Jesus' coming to the world was for the reconciliation of the world.²⁶ Though Jesus came into the world, people in the world walked away from God.

Therefore, for the Church, it is necessary for people to choose the way between not being separated from God or engaging in the world. On the other hand, the way in which the Church is separated from the world implies sanctification. Commenting on sanctification, Bonhoeffer stated, "Sanctification will be maintained by their being clearly separated from the world."²⁷ While the world has lured the Church to follow the flow of secularization, it is hazardous for the Church to lose its flavor in terms of what God commands to the Church, found in the gospel of Matthew 5:13, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot." God wants the Church to be the salt in the world and gives warning about losing its taste. In this verse, losing its flavor can be described as a characteristic of secularization. Conversely, the sanctification of the Church is a way to recover the desirable place of having the Church find itself beside God.

2. Karl Barth's Secularization

For Barth, when the Christian community follows the way of the world, instead of God's direction, it is "acclimatizing and being fitted to the world means belonging to the

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 314.

world."²⁸ These characteristics of lack of respect and listening, hankering, fear and unwillingness imply the secularization of the community.²⁹ Furthermore, from Barth's perspective, it may be misleading at first, even though the people of the Christian community are willing to recover the gap between the church and the world.³⁰ Unfortunately, the first mistake of the Christian community on the way to recovery is self-deception that may develop eventually into secularization.³¹ In other words, whether the intention of Christians is holy or secular, the attempt for recovery results most often in secularization.

Furthermore, for Barth, there is another threat that the Church, by itself, disobeys the order of its head, Jesus Christ.³² This issue of the head of the Church is discussed in Chapter III through focusing on Karl Barth's ecclesiology. However, it is necessary to deal with the notion of the head of the Christian community as the Law of the Church at this time. For Barth, the Church should be aware of the threat of secularization when the Church is in conflict with the true Law, Jesus Christ.³³ In His Christian community, there is only one Law which rules over the whole Church and it is Jesus Christ, Himself. Nevertheless, if the Church makes the converse Church by-law that accommodates the hereditary succession without any intention to obey the mandate of Jesus Christ, the true order of the Church is compromised. Eventually, we cannot help but to define it as secularization.

According to Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, the Holy Spirit gathers and constructs

²⁸ CD IV/2, 667.

²⁹ Ibid., 668.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 669.

³³ Ibid.

the Christian community.³⁴ In fact, without the help of Holy Spirit, the Christian community cannot be reminded that Jesus Christ is the head of the Christian community.³⁵ If there is no perception or acknowledgement about the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Christian community in the Church, the Christian community will be out of order. Besides, the world inputs its misunderstanding of the Church that the Church is constructed not by Jesus Christ, alone, but by the Church, itself, which may enhance the growth of the secularization when the church embraces this worldly view.³⁶ Therefore, the Christian community should try maintain the balance between the law and thinking forced by the world and the Church's law.³⁷ If the Church accepts to break the equilibrium and adopts the laws which are forced by world, the secularization is waiting to be embraced by the Church. Therefore, the Church tries to admit Jesus Christ's ownership and follows the mandate of Jesus Christ to the Church. In other words, Barth argues, "The church has to keep itself a free church and declare that Jesus Christ is the only head and Lord of the church."³⁸

When the leader or leading group of the Christian community easily accepts the styles of the world, the Church is easily opened to secularization.³⁹ For example, if the leader of the Church loves to play the music of the world, although they think it is only a kind of contemporary Christian music (CCM), the result can be that they become secularized by other fashion aspects of the world. For Barth, this secularization can be caused by "a kind of baptism of non-Christian ideas and customs and enterprises by new

³⁴ Colm O'Grady, *The Church in the Theology of Karl Barth*, 250.

³⁵ CD IV/2, 706.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 687.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 688.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 689.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 668.

Christian understandings and the giving of the community is one of the reasons for the secularization becoming part of the Christian community. That is to say that the Christian community should try to make its own culture rather than to follow the way of the world.

For Barth, it is when the Church is greedy for the power of world,⁴⁰ that the Church gradually brings secularization into the Church. It is only the Holy Spirit that sustains the Christian community. When it is maintained by other means of power, the Church encounters and eventually engages other forms of secularization. If the power of the world breaks into the Church, the Church will experience an internal breakdown of the community of the faithful within the Church resulting in regression toward the outside. Therefore, the Church should long for the Holy Spirit who engages in intercessory prayer for the Church.

3. Influence of Secularization on Hereditary Succession in Korea

As we mentioned above, the hereditary succession of the Korean church is similar to the inheritance of positions that occurs in Korea's leading company, Samsung. In other words, the way of thinking of the Church is the same as the ideas of the world. Therefore, the Church of Korea is no longer the inviolable place that it once was and is even more open to the dangers of secularization. Walbert Buhlmann gives a warning about the dangers of secularization, "If anyone thinks that secularization is a European matter and that Africa and Asia should be left in peace, he is deceiving himself."⁴¹ For Buhlmann, the secularization of Korea is a relatively new phenomenon. Consequently,

⁴⁰ Ibid., 679.

⁴¹ Walbert Buhlmann, *The Coming of the Third Church: An Analysis of the Present and Future of the Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1977), 303.

Koreans are not familiar with the term, secularization, and do not know how to recognize it or deal with it in the Church. As a point of fact, the Church of Korea now counts on the question of how it can successfully overcome this increasing threat of modern secularization.

The term, "secularization," has been used frequently in sociology since long ago. In addition, secularization has been used in the Bible, in order to be aware of the dangers of the ideas of the world.⁴² The existence in the Church of secularization is undeniably much serious than its sociological understanding. This is a very acceptable situation for the Church because a more sensitive consciousness regarding secularization is required so as not to lose relationship with Jesus Christ.

However, in the church of Korea, there is a tendency to engage the ideas of world in the process of practicing hereditary succession. This occurs because Korean churches are of the opinion that the programs and ideas of the world are more comprehensive and sensitive than those of churches that are attempting to respond to the needs and demands of the people. In fact, this is only part of the undisputable excuse for the inheritance. As previously mentioned above, Kun Hee Lee, the chief executive of Samsung tried to hand over his wealth and position to his eldest son. Currently, the Korean churches imitate the practice of hereditary succession of the secular world in ways that are similar to the practices that occur in large organizations such as the practices of Samsung. In other words, the wealth and position of the senior pastor is generated by inner transactions that are blamed on the hereditary succession practices within the Church that actually are the result of the growing secularization of the church. Regretfully, because the purpose and the process of this practice of hereditary succession are increasingly secularized, the

⁴² Jung Suck Rhee, *Secularization and Sanctification*, 6.

process of hereditary succession results in the reality that the church no longer follows the guidelines of its head, Jesus Christ.⁴³

Many argue that for the stable growth and further missionary work of the Church, the Church does need the advanced thinking and practices of the world that include the practice of hereditary succession. This perspective can be very persuasive for the successful mission of the Church and for the reconciliation of the world. For many, it sounds acceptable.⁴⁴

However, Barth's perspective can be contradictory to this general view of secularization because, in his view, the hereditary succession is "acclimatizing and being fitted to the world"⁴⁵ and in conflict with Jesus Christ's way.⁴⁶ With the influence of the secularization of the Church, Korean churches began to make their own policies for the Church, such as that of hereditary succession which does not include the mandates or guidelines of the real head of the Church, Jesus Christ. Yet, there are many who argue that the Church of Korean Protestantism should follow the thinking of Barth who insists, "The church has to keep itself a free church and declare that Jesus Christ is the only the head of the church."⁴⁷ After all, in the latter manner of thinking, it is the duty of the Korean Church not to permit the hereditary succession practices to be institutionalized, so that the secularization of the Korean Church not take place when those outer threats of pressures, focused on the world, are rejected.

⁴³ CD IV/2, 691.

⁴⁴ Jung Suck Rhee, *Secularization and Sanctification*, 9.

⁴⁵ CD IV/2, 667.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 695.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 689.

B. Influence of Confucianism

The practice of hereditary succession found in the Korean Church is a problem unique to Korea. It is not a problem found in churches in other parts of the world. One of the reasons why only Korean churches permit the practice of inheritance in relation to the position of reverend is the influence of Confucianism. The main theme of Confucianism is respect and to be obedient to the leader.⁴⁸ In the context of Korean churches, the leader is the senior pastor of Church. Therefore, if the leader sets a policy such as that of inheritance in the Church, the response and attitude of the congregation tend to respect the plan.

1. Korean Church's Traditional Context

In this section of this chapter, I will explain the history of Korea Confucianism in order to understand the context of the growth of Korean Christianity from its earliest days. Heup Young Kim who studied about the history of Korean churches, writes about the earliest days of the Korean Church; "Within a century, the Korean Presbyterian Church has become the largest Christian denomination not only in Korea, but also among the allied Reformed Churches in the world. It is a Presbyterian success story in mission history."⁴⁹ As a result of this miraculous rapid growth, the Korean churches have attracted the attention of churches throughout the world. Including Heup Young Kim, almost every historical theologian is of the opinion that this rapid growth is the result of

⁴⁸ Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea*, 26.

⁴⁹ Heup Young Kim, *Wang Yang-Ming and Karl Barth*, 5.

characteristics that are foundational with the Korean Confucianist environment.⁵⁰ The religious history of Korea before the arrival of the Good-News can be classified into three religious groups: Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.⁵¹ The spirit of the diverse religious environment permitted Korea to be open to new religious thinking in the form of Christianity. Actually, the seeds of Christianity were sown into Korean religious soil in this diverse environment of strong syncretism.⁵² Among these religions, Confucianism was the most influential religion because it impacted not only Korean Christianity but also the entire Korean society.⁵³ In other words, Confucianism has socially and historically influenced Korean society. Thus, it is meaningful to view Confucianism as the main religious and philosophical influence on Korean society. That is, Confucianism influenced the lives of Korean people for prolonged periods and has pervaded the common culture of Korean society profoundly.

(1) Reception of Confucianism

The Christian missionaries had to respect traditional aspects of cultures, especially religious circumstances, to deliver the Gospel effectively. In Korea, this factor was particularly important since the religions of Korea were very strongly immersed in Korean life. In other words, the Bible could not be planted without the help of traditional characteristics and conditions and almost every cultural condition comes from traditional religions in Korea. Therefore, the initial stage of Christianity of Korea occurred at a very significant moment in history and the circumstances of that period in Korean history is

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Kyung J. Kim, *The Korean Theology of Culture*, (Seoul: Korean Theology Research Institute, 1983), 106.

⁵² Ibid., 232.

⁵³ Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea*, 4.

very important to understand the basic structures of the Korean churches.

Confucianism was one of Korea's main religions because it occupied a crucial position in helping the Koreans accept Christianity. In fact, the Bible was translated and delivered by the Korean Confucian scholars, who worked cooperatively with the missionaries, establishing the first stage of Korean Christianity.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Heup Young explains, "The Korean Protestant Bible, which is still most favored by conservative churches, is full of Confucian concepts. Korean Protestant Christianity also has been introduced and developed through Confucian conceptual categories."⁵⁵

2. Characteristics of Korean Confucianism

(1) Traditional Patriarchal Family System

Edward B. Adams insists that the family is the principal foundational concept of Confucianism of Korea. As a social unit, it is structured by cooperative relationships.⁵⁶ In fact, the Korean society is based on the family, the family kinship, and originates from the same ancestor.⁵⁷ The familial relationship is the crucial keyword to understand Korean society because the word 'family' can explain all ideas and practices of the Korean Society as ethical and formal ways.⁵⁸ Moreover, there is a different virtue in the Confucian family from other families, meaning that the Confucian family tries to engage mutual respect between elder family members and younger people at all times, which is

⁵⁴ Heup Young Kim, *Wang Yang-Ming and Karl Barth*, 4.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁶ Edward Ben. Adams, *Korea Guide: A Glimpse of Korea's Cultural Legacy* (Seoul: Seoul International Pub. House, 1986), 240.

⁵⁷ Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea*, 27.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

expanded to also include the whole of Korean society.⁵⁹ In other words, this respect is based on human harmony in the Confucian family as well as in Confucian society, which implies having faith and trust in all relationships. Therefore, the word 'respect' is centered on the familial understanding of Korean society. This virtue of mutual 'respect' plays a role in maintaining the family in the Confucian community. However, the respect of the younger toward the elderly and those who are older is greater in another way. Frederick J. Luhmann explains more about the younger's respect as obedience that family order was supported strictly by Confucian norms that required unconditional obedience to the family-head and respect for the aged.⁶⁰ This unconditional obedience is not only a very effective virtue to manage a group but also is quite when it is used by a dictatorial leader. Therefore, because of these reasons, the availability of unconditional obedience has been demanded for a long time.

(2) Five Virtues, Three Fundamentals, and Five Moral Rules

Almost every Korean student learns about the five virtues of Confucianism in the required class of ethics in school. Therefore, undoubtedly, '*five virtues*' is the fundamental concept in Confucian thinking. Commonly, we define the five virtues of Korean Confucianism as follows: charitable love, righteousness, appropriate conduct, wisdom, and fidelity.⁶¹ These virtues focus on the individual life and the relationships among others in each life. According to Quee Young Kim, "The people in Confucianism believe if people follow these virtues, the world will be in harmony; there will be peace,

⁵⁹ Ibid., 26.

⁶⁰ Frederick J. Luhmann, "Respect for Older Persons: A Confucian Perspective," *Journal of Religion and Aging* 3, no. 3-4 (1987): 84-86.

⁶¹ Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea*, 24.

and order. A central principle of Korean Confucianism is the high value of the individual life and its social relations."⁶² In accordance with the main concept of Confucianism, Korea society has treated harmony as the significant goal of Korean people. Thus, in order to achieve its purpose, Koreans should accept the five virtues.

Besides the *five virtues*, through *three fundamentals* and *five moral Rules*, we can figure out the traditional features of Confucianism. The *three fundamentals* are (1) The king is the mainstay of the state; (2) The father is the mainstay of the son; (3) The husband is the mainstay of the wife.⁶³ It is within bounds to say that the most traditional patriarchal values originated in these three fundamentals that focus on obedience to the king, the father, and the husband. In other words, the harmony of the community is based on the obedience of the state, the son, and the wife.

The five moral rules of Confucianism are similar to the three fundamentals but more specific in definition. They explain about the relationship of both familial and societal aspects which focus on the construction of society with intimate relationships and moral obligations. The five moral rules are “(1) Loyalty, between king or ruler as a head and ministers as a body; (2) Intimacy, between father and son; (3) Distinction in position, between husband and wife; (4) Respect, between elder and younger brother; (5) Trust, between friends.”⁶⁴ In fact, the structure of these five moral rules symbolizes a vertical social class of Korean society. Therefore, each class requires a proper moral attitude according to one's level. For example, people should respect the ruler as well as a son respects his father. The entire system of Korea society treats these virtues as the guide

⁶² Quee-Young Kim, "Korea's Confucian Heritage and Social Change," *Journal of Developing Societies* 4, (July 1988): 260.

⁶³ Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea*, 26.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

line of people's ethical life. Children learn these concepts from their childhood and are equipped with these moral virtues to live together harmoniously.

3. Influence of Confucianism on Hereditary Succession in Korea

According to Heup Young Kim, "Korean Christianity is basically a Confucian Christianity. Both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Korea originated from Confucian social concern and has developed on Confucian conceptual foundations."⁶⁵ In other words, the Confucianism of Korea greatly influenced the Korean people's way of thinking and social behavior. Martha Huntley has suggested that, from the beginning of the early Catholic and Protestant missionary activities, Confucianism played an important role in the growth of Christianity in Korea.⁶⁶ Therefore, it is undeniable that the hereditary succession of the Korean Protestant Church is developing and emerging from the influence of Confucianism.

Moreover, Grayson insists that, "Confucianism still influences Korean society in the social sphere on both the structural and cognitive levels. Korea may still be called a Confucian society."⁶⁷ However, the influences of Confucianism are not simple but diverse, both positively and negatively, when we consider the result of the reception of Confucianism. First of all, James B. Palais comments on the positive aspects of the Confucian influence that are "... making Korean people respect learning and academic achievement, politeness to others, native intelligence and quickness of mind, integrity,

⁶⁵ Heup Young Kim, *Wang Yang-Ming and Karl Barth*, 4.

⁶⁶ Martha Huntley, *To Start a Work: the Foundations of the Protestant Mission in Korea, 1884-1919* (Seoul: Presbyterian Church of Korea, 1987), 407-408.

⁶⁷ James Huntley Grayson, *Korea: A Religious History* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 215-6.

scientific thinking, and social awareness."⁶⁸ The positive effects on Korean society have contributed to the background of the reception of the Good-News of Christianity. This influence contributed to the rapid growth of the Korean church. The Korean people respected the Bible as learning new knowledge and wanted to establish their community by themselves with the doctrine of Christianity. Furthermore, Koreans showed the obedience to the religious leader based on what they had learned in the Confucianism classroom. These attitudes surely are based on the influence of Confucianism.

But, there is also a negative impact from the influence of Confucianism in Korea. That is, there are two sides of the same coin when speaking of Confucianism and one can also say that Confucianism has a double-edged sword. In other words, Korean people cannot avoid the destructive effects of Confucianism while at the same time, Koreans have been happy with the constructive influences of Confucian ideas. In fact, the influence of Confucianism impeded the formation of a horizontal relationship between pastors and their congregations in the Korean Church. In many ways, it has fostered a hierarchical church system that quite possibly may be the reason for the stable fast growth of Protestant churches in Korea. Korean churches' accommodation of the traditional context helped its rapid growth; but this context does not appear to be helping the Korean churches' development any longer. Furthermore, this character of Confucianism has contributed to the development of the background that has made the issue of hereditary succession possible in the Korean churches. On the other hand, the negative effects began with the notion that there was no concept of equality in Korean Confucianism. In fact, one of the most negative aspects of Confucianism in Korea is the

⁶⁸ James B. Palais, 'Confucianism and the Aristocratic/Bureaucratic Balance in Korea' *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 44 (1984): 458.

fact that it is a very hierarchical and unequal system, particularly with regard to the relationship not only between old age and young people, but also between the social leaders and followers. In fact, it contributes to the negative atmosphere in the Korean Church. If the leader of the Church has any problem nobody bravely cares to deal with it. James S. Gale supports this opinion, "Within this vertical concept of Confucian ideas, the family is represented as patriarchal and hierarchical, so that parents are authoritative in relation to their children, but children must obey to their parents."⁶⁹ The reason for such a hierarchy is due to the traditionally- oriented patriarchal family form and this allows the hereditary succession to happen in the Korean Church.

⁶⁹ James S. Gale, *Korea in Transition* (New York: Young People's Missionary Movement of the United States and Canada, 1909), 101-102.

Chapter III

Karl Barth's Ecclesiology

The focus of this chapter is Karl Barth's ecclesiology which he explains as the "gathering, the upbuilding, and the sending" of the Christian community. The first feature of Barth's ecclesiology is the "*gathering of the Christian community*." The "gathering" of Christians means that "the church is gathered by the Holy Spirit in faith."⁷⁰ Therefore, for Barth, the Church is not the group which is gathered by the people's intentions but by that of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the community begins with Jesus Christ and ends with Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Korean Church does not have to provide the secular programs to satisfy its congregation. People come to the church by the Holy Spirit. However, the Church has misunderstood its purpose for its being established and has instead focused on amusing its members with the cultures features of the world.

The second theme of Barth's idea of church is the "*upbuilding of Christian community*." For Barth, the "upbuilding" of church means that the "Christian community is upbuilt in love and works with God."⁷¹ Therefore, "upbuilding" involves a combination between God and God's people in the Christian community. Those who want to rely on hereditary succession to build up the Korean church have made a significant mistake because such a practice represents a misunderstanding of the nature of this "upbuilding".

The last aspect of Barth's doctrine of church is the "*sending of the Christian*

⁷⁰ Colm O'Grady, *The Church in the Theology of Karl Barth*, 250.

⁷¹ Ibid.

community." The "sending" of the Christian community is delivering the Gospel to those who do not know about God' love and grace. That is, men and women need to know about God so that they have any proper chances to believe in and have a reconciliation with God. In his *Church Dogmatics*, Barth insists that the "Christian community has to implement its mission which God commanded to the world by delivering and explaining the Gospel as the Word of God."⁷² Furthermore, Barth urges the Christian community not only to help to unite Jesus' community with other members, but also to make non-Christians realize that God who loves them forever and has sent God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to save them.⁷³

A. Christian Community in Barth's Ecclesiology

In developing an understanding of Karl Barth's ecclesiology, it is necessary to define and discuss the concept of Barth's Christian Community in order to understand Barth's theology of Church. To do so is important because Barth usually uses the term, *Christian community*, rather than *Church* in his seminal work, *Church Dogmatics*.⁷⁴ For Barth, the Christian community is Christendom, that is, "the gathering of the community of those whom already, before all others, Jesus Christ has made willing and ready for life under the divine verdict executed in Jesus' death and revealed in His resurrection from the dead."⁷⁵ In other words, the Christian community is the group of congregations or Christendom which exists by the "gathering" of the Christian followers under the Cross of Jesus Christ by means of the Holy Spirit.

⁷² Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 874-878.

⁷³ Karl Barth, *The Faith of the Church: A Commentary on the Apostle's Creed According to Calvin's Catechism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), 145.

⁷⁴ Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea*, 129.

⁷⁵ CD IV/1, 643.

On the other hand, the community represents the basic structure of Christians who want to participate in reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ.⁷⁶ As mentioned above, reconciliation is the reason for Jesus Christ's coming into world. Therefore, the Christian community is the group who wants to reconcile with God by following the mandates of God's only begotten Son. Colm O'Grady further states, "The basic point of scripture's witness to [hu]man[kind]'s subjective participation in reconciliation is that he/[she] is as such distinguished not only inwardly and invisibly but also outwardly and visible."⁷⁷

Furthermore, for Karl Barth, Jesus Christ is the alpha and omega. In other words, Barth's ecclesiology begins with Jesus Christ and ends with Jesus Christ. Therefore, Barth's theology of Church is a Christocentric ecclesiology.⁷⁸ According to Karl Barth, the community is the place for the reconciliation of Jesus Christ's believers. The reconciliation takes place by or in the community.⁷⁹ In other words, the role of the community is to bring the reconciliation between God and God's people thorough Jesus Christ's name. However, this does not mean that the human community, alone, is able to bring about mediation in salvation.⁸⁰ Colm O'Grady comments further on this matter saying, "Christ is not bound to the mediation or ministry of the community. The community itself is. The necessity of the Church is simply that it provides the necessity of the presence of Christ who meets us in the Church."⁸¹ In short, the Christian community is the place where reconciliation occurs according to the thinking of Karl

⁷⁶ Ibid., 645.

⁷⁷ Colm O'Grady, *The Church in the Theology of Karl Barth*, 243.

⁷⁸ G. Wayne Glick, 'Karl Barth and the Theology of the Word of God', in *Brethren Life and Thought* 5 (Spring 1960): 29-30.

⁷⁹ Colm O'Grady, *The Church in the Theology of Karl Barth*, 246.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Barth.

B. Gathering of the Christian Community

1. Head of the Christian Community

As mentioned above, Jesus Christ is the most significant factor in Karl Barth's ecclesiology. For Barth, in *Church Dogmatics, Volume IV*, Jesus is the Head of the Christian community.⁸² In order to explain, Barth uses the concept of the 'Body of Christ' (1 Cor. 12:7) as his description of the Church. According to 1 Cor., the Head of the Church is Jesus Christ and all of the members of the Church are the parts of the body of Christ. In other words, the parts of the body should follow the mandate of the Head, Jesus Christ. In fact, for Barth, Jesus became the Head and the servant of all human beings. Therefore, the community, as the body of Christ is, "the earthly-historical form of the existence of Jesus Christ Himself."⁸³ That is to say, the community consists of the witnesses of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the Head of the community, Jesus Christ lives as the Crucified and Risen Lord.⁸⁴ For the purpose of understanding Jesus Christ, the Bible verse, John 3:16, explains, "God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die." In short, Jesus was sent because God loved humankind so much that He sacrificed His innocent life for our sins.

According to Colm O'Grady's explanation, Barth describes that the Church is

⁸² CD IV/1, 666.

⁸³ Colm O'Grady, *The Church in the Theology of Karl Barth*, 258.

⁸⁴ CD IV/3, 756.

gathered by the Holy Spirit in faith.⁸⁵ Therefore, the Church is not the group that is gathered by one's will but by the power of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, for Barth, the center of the community is Jesus Christ. The existence of the community totally depends on the existence of the Head, Jesus Christ. That is, if the Head is out of existence, the body ceases to exist. Therefore, we can state, 'The community is not Jesus Christ. But Jesus is the community.'⁸⁶ However, we cannot state it reversely since God's begotten Son does not rely on the community to exist. Jesus Christ is more important than the Christian community. Therefore, if Christians do not honor and obey the Head of Christian community, the Church no longer exists.

2. Authority of the Bible

In fact, Barth regards the Bible as a primary source for his theology and his Christocentric ecclesiology. In other words, all of Barth's theology is established, based on the Bible and developed in close dependence on Scripture.⁸⁷ This means that Barth respects the Bible and regards the Scripture as God's Word. Therefore, Barth cannot help but acknowledge the Bible's authority as the source and the order of the Church.⁸⁸ As Christina Baxter notes in her article, "*Barth – A Truly Biblical Theologian?*" there are 4,648 references to the Old Testament and 12,270 to the New in *Church Dogmatics*.⁸⁹ Thus, Barth tried to make Jesus Christ be core of his theology by accepting the authority of the Bible. Christina Baxter adds to this notion, stating, "Barth is a biblical theologian,

⁸⁵ Colm O'Grady, *The Church in the Theology of Karl Barth*, 250.

⁸⁶ Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea*, 135.

⁸⁷ Christina Baxter, 'Barth – A Truly Biblical Theologian?' *Tyndale Bulletin*, 38 (1987): 6.

⁸⁸ CD IV/1, 721.

⁸⁹ Christina Baxter, "Barth," 3.

for he is extremely concerned to discover the original meaning of the biblical texts."⁹⁰ Following this trend, Karl Barth insists that the Christian community is sustained by Scripture and must do its best to formulate its thinking based on the Bible. Barth speaks of the authority of Bible, stating, "As Scripture is heard and read, He Himself is present to speak and act as the living Lord of the Church."⁹¹ That is to say, Jesus Christ is the fundamental center of the Bible for Barth, in both the Old and New Testaments.⁹² We can make sure of this point in the Bible through John 1:14, "The Word became a human being and lived here with us. We saw His true glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father. From Him, all the kindness and all the truth of God have come down to us." In other words, we refer to this as the Incarnation. That is, through the verse, John 1:14, we believe that Jesus is the Word who was sent to us by God. Therefore, for Barth, the Bible is the primary and basic source of the Church as the Christian community, and is with the Church today.⁹³

For Barth, it is so natural to say that the Church should respect the authority of the Scripture and follow its order. Through the Bible, Jesus is present, and His Word is expressed. For Barth, the Word of God is not only the book of law of the Christian community's faith and order, but also mandates witness to the Word that reflects awareness, respect, and obedience.⁹⁴ Thus, the Christian community must understand the Bible and accept the role of Biblical witness. Barth mentions about the authority of the Bible in his theology, "The Church should accept the direction of Scripture that always

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ CD IV/2, 675.

⁹² Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea*, 143.

⁹³ Robert T. Osborn, 'Christ, Bible and Church in Karl Barth', *The Journal of Bible and Religion* 24 (April 1956): 97-98.

⁹⁴ CD IV/1, 723.

gives to its preaching, doctrine, instruction and theology a strict concentration on the recognition of Jesus Christ."⁹⁵ In other words, the Christian community should admit the authority of Bible and the living Jesus Christ as the main subject of the Scripture who is with the Christian community.

C. Upbuilding of the Christian Community

The "upbuilding" of the Christian community is not the same as the "gathering" for Barth. The "gathering" is the first stage for the Christian community but the "upbuilding" of the Church is a matter of maintenance. For Barth, the Christian community is upbuilt in love and works with God.⁹⁶ Barth thinks, "upbuilding" is practiced through the combination between God and God's people in Christian community. On the other hand, for Barth, "upbuilding" means the love relationship of all congregation members of the Christian community.⁹⁷ This character of method as preservation is very distinct from the "upbuilding" of a social community. This is because a social community works only for its own merit and does not focus on love. At times even a company insists on love that is usually a marketing strategy for its advantage. On the other hand, the mutual love that exists among members of the Christian community is the power of sustainment for the system of the Christian community. In short, the main purpose of this "upbuilding" of the Christian community is "the spiritual growth of the communion of Christians in the community."⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Colm O'Grady, *The Church in the Theology of Karl Barth*, 250.

⁹⁷ Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea*, 145.

⁹⁸ CD IV/2, 650.

1. Center of the Christian Community

As noted in the previous discussion of the "gathering" of the Christian community, Jesus Christ is the Head of His community. This is the central theme of Barth's ecclesiology.⁹⁹ Therefore, in the "upbuilding" of the Christian community, the subject of the Head is still available to explain the theology of Barth. Barth puts more weight on the order between Jesus Christ and the Christian community, which is that the Christian community needs the existence of Jesus Christ to survive. The existence of Jesus Christ is required in the "upbuilding" as well as the "gathering."

Furthermore, there is nobody to approach God without the Son of God, Jesus Christ. This is because Jesus Christ was sent as the Reconciler between people and God. For Barth, Jesus is the kingdom of God and the community can grow in the kingdom of God by listening and declaring witness to Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁰ This statement sounds very simple and obvious but it is foundational and very important in Barth's ecclesiology. The key point of this statement is that the kingdom of God depends on Jesus Christ completely and grows by the power of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing for a community of believers to do without the Head, Jesus Christ. This is because Jesus Christ is the internal power of life and growth which is indwelling in the community.¹⁰¹ Thus, only Jesus Christ can defend all sinners in the world and create the power of the "upbuilding" and "sending" forth, for the growth of the Christian community. That is to say that Jesus Christ is the only one who can reign over the Christian community so that it can grow in

⁹⁹ Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea*, 110.

¹⁰⁰ John Bolt, 'Church and World: A Trinitarian Perspective', *Calvin Theological Journal* 18/1 (April 1983): 30-31.

¹⁰¹ CD IV/2, 657.

the absolute power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Upbuilding Under Pressure

For the Christian community, suffering is supposed to be encountered while Christians carry on their mission. This persecution is inevitable because the Head of the community, Jesus Christ, has walked the way of the Cross already. Barth also discusses the persecution that the Christians have to endure in order to participate in communion with Jesus Christ.¹⁰² This suffering can help with the "upbuilding" for Christian community because Christianity has grown with persecution in the past. For this reason, Barth states that 'the community is reinforced under pressure'.¹⁰³ There is a verse in the Bible, Rom. 8:17, which reminds us of the necessity of suffering: "His Spirit lets us know that together with Christ we will be given what God has promised. We will also share in the glory of Christ, because we have suffered with Him."¹⁰⁴

3. Secularization, the Real Threat

Barth gives a warning of the dangers behind suffering, by insisting that 'the community in its achievement is a part of the world'.¹⁰⁵ Barth defines this kind of danger as secularization, "which is the process at the end of which it will be only a part of the

¹⁰² Ibid., 664.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Bible, Roman 8:17

¹⁰⁵ CD IV/2, 666.

world among so much else of the world."¹⁰⁶ That is to say, the secularization is a matter of a degraded situation, distinct from Jesus Christ, and in opposition to the Word of God.

Actually, the world has been separated from God since Adam's original sin. We can define this phenomenon as the beginning of secularization. However, God sent God's only begotten Son for our salvation, even though humans have lived lives of unforgivable sinfulness. Jesus Christ carried out this recovery of our separation from God. On the other hand, secularization is a return back to the time when the Christian community began to rely on others instead of God. Therefore, the Christians must keep reminding itself of its significant mission which was commanded by God and must try to stay in God's shadow.

Therefore, the secularization is the real threat for the Christian community when it is striving for "upbuilding" by the Holy Spirit. While the members of Christian community are willing to maintain the church, there are some temptations for them to use the idea of world. At the outset this may impact the community seriously, but eventually it will change the view of value of the Christian community to the interpretation of the world. However, there is a question for Barth to think about, "the translation of the Christian into the secular at the command of love; or conversely of a translation of the secular into the Christian."¹⁰⁷ In other words, this is the matter of having a balance between delivering the Good News to the world and "upbuilding" the Christian community with only the Word of God.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 668.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

D. Sending of the Christian Community

Barth's ecclesiology can be classified broadly into the "gathering, upbuilding and sending" forth of the Christian community. In this formulation, the "sending" of the Christian community is the last piece of Karl Barth's ecclesiology in this classification. For Barth's ecclesiology, the Holy Spirit plays a significant role all the time. In the last aspect of Barth's ecclesiology, the Holy Spirit works for the Christian community by illuminating Jesus Christ's mission. According to Barth, "The Holy Spirit in the "gathering and upbuilding" of the Christian community draws and impels the Christian community of Jesus Christ."¹⁰⁸ For Barth, the last work of the Holy Spirit is the "sending" forth of the Christian community. For example, if Jesus is the Head of the Christian community, the body of Jesus Christ should execute the command of the Head. The Holy Spirit is impelling the members of the Christian community to do the mission from the Head, Jesus Christ. Therefore, the "sending" forth is one of the reasons for the "gathering and upbuilding" of the Christian community. In short, the command of Jesus Christ is the last feature of Barth's ecclesiology, that is, the "sending" forth of the Christian community, itself, to the world.

1. Mission as a Primary Task

Jesus was sent by God to make people become Christians, the people of God. As people who want to believe in Jesus Christ, their crucial vocation is to be Christians.¹⁰⁹ Marcello De C. Azevedo states that Barth defines the vocation of Christian as a calling

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 764.

¹⁰⁹ Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea*, 168.

into 'the living community of the living Lord Jesus Christ'.¹¹⁰ There is a verse about this calling of Christian in the Bible (Matt. 28:19-20), "Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have told you. I will be with you always, even until the end of the world." Jesus Christ commands the people of the Christian community not only stay with God but also to go into the world with the Word of God. Barth also mentions about this vocation of Christians, "The community of Jesus Christ is for the world. The people of God are ordained by the Holy Spirit for the completion of Jesus Christ's missions and will for and to the world."¹¹¹ In other words, the "sending" forth is an activity aimed at revealing the Word of God in the world. The Word of God was sent for the Christian community and it is the time of Christian community to be sent for the Jesus Christ's redemption and reconciliation.

2. Reason of Existence

First of all, God's reason to exist is for the Christian community. Therefore, the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who is sent for God's reason to exist, plays the role of a bride between the Christian community and God. In order to be the real point of connection, Jesus Christ came to us from being beside God with His human body. Jesus Christ is perfect God or divine and perfect human, at the same time. This is because Jesus Christ is the example that God wants to show God's image in God's Son to help God's people to understand the invisible God better. Through Jesus Christ, the people in the world have the comprehension of God's love. Through the knowledge of God's grace, the people

¹¹⁰ Marcello De C. Azevedo, 'Basic Ecclesial Communities: A Meeting Point of Ecclesiologies', *Theological Studies* 46 (1985): 611.

¹¹¹ CD IV/3, 762.

decide to join into the Christian community of God. Between the reason of existence of God and the Christian community, there is the reason for the existence of Jesus Christ. In these two reasons of existence, Barth insists strongly on the doctrine of the image of God in the Son of God, Jesus Christ is not only Son of God, but also the Word of God to let the Christian community know about God. God is not the invisible being in the heaven anymore because of the existence of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Barth thinks Christian community is required to deliver the Good News to those who do not know God.

Secondly, the ultimate mission of the Christian community is to deliver the Good News of Jesus' Atonement and Salvation. This task needs the Christian community to be witness of the truth that Jesus Christ is our Redeemer and Reconciler. Although Jesus came to earth to save all of the people of the world, if the witnesses do not deliver this Good News to non-Christians, the people of the world cannot have the opportunity to accept the love and grace of God. Therefore, God commands the urgent and important mission to the Christian community. Daniel B. Spross characterizes Barth's opinion about the ultimate reason of the existence of Christian community thus: "[it] is the completion of salvation, reconciliation, the covenant and the justification of humanity before God."¹¹² God has sent the people of God through Son of God, Jesus Christ, to live and execute the mission to world. This is the primary purpose and task of the Christian community. According to Barth, 'the roles of the Christian community are explaining and unfolding of the Gospel, in making it comprehensible'.¹¹³ However, if the Christian community loses sight of this purpose, its very reason for being, there is no need for the Christian community to exist at all.

¹¹² Daniel B. Spross, 'The Doctrine of Sanctification in the Theology of Karl Barth', *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 20/2 (Fall 1985): 67-68.

¹¹³ CD IV/3, 846.

Chapter IV

Application of Barth's Ecclesiology to the Hereditary Succession of Korean Churches

In the previous chapters I explored Karl Barth's ecclesiology as one of the possible solutions to dealing with hereditary succession because Barth respects the authority of the Bible and acknowledges Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church. In this chapter, I will examine first the potential of the adoption of Karl Barth's ecclesiology for the Korean church and suggest some ways the Korean church might use Barth's theology of the church to address the problem of hereditary succession.

A. Feasibility of Karl Barth's Ecclesiology in Korea

As we know, Karl Barth is a Swiss theologian. In his experience, he may have had very limited knowledge of Korea and the Korean Church. Therefore, before suggesting any possible solutions based on his work for solving the problem of the hereditary succession in the Korean church, I will investigate the possibility of the use of Karl Barth's ecclesiology for the Korean church. In other words, it would be important to determine the degree of interest in other cultures and religions within the work of Barth.

1. Misunderstood Theology of Karl Barth in Korea

The appraisal of Barth's theology is quite inconsistent. One of the misunderstandings of Karl Barth is that he is too conservative theologian for other countries to use his theology. This misunderstanding of Barth is a result of Barth's

"Nein" to Emil Brunner on the matter of natural theology.¹¹⁴ For this reason, John Cobb commented, "The problem of Barth's theology is having a dialogue with other religions. This is because Barth's theology seems so strict to share any idea with other religions."¹¹⁵ Consequently, John Cobb seems to consider Karl Barth such a strict theologian that Barth's theology, in his view, is not available in other contexts. However, John Cobb did not consider sufficiently the environment of Karl Barth. In fact, Karl Barth's "Nein" is used widely to insist on Karl Barth's non-negotiable theology with other religions.¹¹⁶ But unfortunately, this "Nein" of Barth has been misunderstood since his political interpretation of the Christianity of Europe was conceived in the present danger of Hitler's National Socialism.¹¹⁷ Karl Barth's response of "Nein" was only against Hitler's natural theology but was not against other religions or theologies. David Lochhead states that "Karl Barth's theology is an inclusive theology that is "open to an affirming of any dialogue with the world."¹¹⁸ In short, the characterization of Karl Barth as too conservative and as uninterested in other theologies is inaccurate.

2. Acceptance of Karl Barth's Theology in Korea

Karl Barth is a more well-known and familiar theologian among Korean Protestants than non-Koreans may realize. This is because, the largest theological school of the Presbyterian denominations, 'Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary'¹¹⁹ of

¹¹⁴ Heup Young Kim, *Wang Yang-Ming and Karl Barth*, 64.

¹¹⁵ John B. Cobb, *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 15-21.

¹¹⁶ Heup Young Kim, *Wang Yang-Ming and Karl Barth*, 64.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ David Lochhead, *The Dialogical Imperative: A Christian Reflection on Interfaith Encounter* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 39.

¹¹⁹ The name of *Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary* is changed to

Korea has been teaching Karl Barth's theology since the late 1950s.¹²⁰ Especially Myung-Yong Kim is one of the professors of PCTS, who has introduced Barth's theology to Korea.¹²¹ With such positive supports, Barth's ecclesiology and his theology of the Word of God has impacted many students preparing for ministry. Moreover, the largest denomination, Tong-hap Presbyterianism is connected with the Presbyterian Seminary. Therefore, naturally most churches of Korea became familiar with Karl Barth's theology.

Certain distinctive features of Barth's theology make Korean Christians comfortable because they seem familiar. According to G. Wayne, the characteristics of Karl Barth's theology, are the following: "(1) God and God's relation to the World; (2) Revelation and Biblical Authority; (3) Christology; (4) Man; and (5) History and the Kingdom of God."¹²² Besides, Glick emphasizes Barth's idea of the "'Word of God' as entirely essential to Barth's theology."¹²³ On the matter of 'Word of God', there is adequate evidence of Barth's frequent reliance on the Bible in his *Church Dogmatics*. According to Christina Baxter, there are 4,648 quotations from the Old Testament and 12,270 quotations from the New Testament in Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*.¹²⁴ In the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, every class is based on the Bible, even the class of Systematic Theology. Because Barth's theology is so Biblically-centered and because Korean Christians are so well-acquainted with the Word of God, Korean Christians can consider Karl Barth as one of the vital theologians to apprehend the contemporary

Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary.

¹²⁰ Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea*, 233.

¹²¹ Myung-Yong Kim, a previous President of Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary, taught many classes about Karl Barth and a famous book written by him is '*Karl Barth's Theology*'.

¹²² G. Wayne Glick, "Karl Barth and the Theology of the Word of God," 29-38.

¹²³ David M. Gill, "Karl Barth, The Church and Ecumenism," *The Hartford Quarterly* VII (Spring, 1967): 48.

¹²⁴ Christina Baxter, *Tyndale Bulletin*, 3.

theology of Korea.

B. Gathering of the Christian Community

1. Head of the Christian Community

The hereditary succession of the Korean Church is the result of misunderstandings about the appropriate head of the Christian community. In other words, if a senior pastor tries to transfer his/her position of Church to pastor's a member of family, the pastor certainly forgets or pretends to forget to whom the church truly belongs. According to *Church Dogmatics* of Karl Barth, the pastor is not the head of the community and the pastor also belongs to Jesus Christ's body.¹²⁵ Therefore, the pastor of the Church does not have the right nor the ownership of the church to pass on to another. Furthermore, for Barth, the Church is gathered by the Holy Spirit in faith, not by the pastor's influence.¹²⁶ If the members of the Christian community do not follow the command of the Head, Jesus Christ, the whole body is no longer a healthy group. There cannot be two heads for one body. In other words, the pastor should not foster a greedy mind that suggests a transfer of leadership in the realm of the hereditary succession.

2. Authority of Bible

Furthermore, the topic of hereditary succession is certainly not found in the Bible. God does not command the hereditary succession of a Church. For Barth, speaking about the Bible, "As Scripture is heard and read itself is present to speak and act as the living

¹²⁵ CD IV/1, 666.

¹²⁶ Colm O'Grady, *The Church in the Theology of Karl Barth*, 250.

Lord of the Church."¹²⁷ In other words, Barth's perception of the Bible is that it is living like Jesus Christ. According to this trend, hereditary succession does not represent a life of the Head of the Church. This practice only seems acceptable to the members of Church, who are willing to transfer the Church, and do not resemble the Word of God incarnate, Jesus Christ. This is a very significant problem because if the pastor and Church do not acknowledge the authority of the Bible, this problem is linked to the problem of their very existence. The existence of the Christian community depends on the Word of God. That is to say, the Christian community is sustained by Scripture and must do its best to follow the living practices suggested by the Bible. For Barth, "The Christian community should accept the direction of Scripture always gives to its preaching and theology a strict concentration on the respect of Jesus Christ."¹²⁸ In other words, the Christian community must represent the authority of Scripture as the living Jesus Christ who is with the Christian community. Thus, hereditary succession of the Christian community conflicts with the witness of the Bible.

C. Upbuilding of the Christian Community

1. Center of Christian Community

The "upbuilding" of the Christian community occurs when the church declares that Jesus Christ is the Head and Lord of the community. However, the hereditary succession of the Church does not share the idea that Jesus Christ is the internal power of life and growth which is dwelling within the community.¹²⁹ The influence of Confucianism causes the pastor to think that the family is more important than the

¹²⁷ CD IV/2, 675.

¹²⁸ CD IV/1, 723.

¹²⁹ CD IV/2, 657.

Church.¹³⁰ However, according to Barth's explanation, all members of the Christian community are members of one body and Jesus is the Head of this community.¹³¹ One body is a much more solid affiliation than family. Therefore, the pastor who endorses hereditary succession must think twice about which matters more. If the pastor does not overcome this temptation, for hereditary succession, the pastor should give up his/her duty in the church. Barth wants to explain about the importance of order in the church, "Jesus Christ is the community, but the community is not Jesus Christ."¹³² Jesus Christ is alone the head of the church, and the pastor is not the church. The practice of a hereditary succession is an attempt to take over Jesus Christ's position in the Church. However, without the existence of Jesus Christ, the Church cannot make the "upbuilding" as well as the "gathering." The reason for this is that Jesus Christ is the internal power of life and growth which is indwelling in the community.¹³³ The "upbuilding" of the Church is not attained by the practice of hereditary succession. Jesus Christ is the only one who can bring about the "upbuilding" and "sending" forth as well as reign of the Christian community to grow in the absolute power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Upbuilding Under Pressure

According to Barth, the Christian community has to undergo pain in order to participate in communion with Jesus Christ.¹³⁴ In other words, the suffering of Christians is supposed to be part of their way while they are following Jesus Christ. In this trend,

¹³⁰ Edward Ben. Adams, *Korea Guide: A Glimpse of Korea's Cultural Legacy* (Seoul: Seoul International Pub. House, 1986), 240.

¹³¹ CD IV/1, 666.

¹³² Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea*, 159.

¹³³ CD IV/2, 657.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 664.

hereditary succession is not the way of the Cross which Jesus walked or the life communion with Jesus Christ at all. This is because, hereditary succession may be one of the stable ways to keep the Church from some possible dangers. For example, if a new pastor comes from outside the church, there may be a relationship problem between the senior pastor and his/her successor and the problem of different policies which caused disorder in the Church. However, in the history of Christianity, the Good News was delivered to the world widely under the persecution of Christianity after Jesus Christ's Ascension. As said by the Gospel, the Christian community should believe in Jesus Christ instead of other secular ideas such as hereditary succession. If the Church wants to accept the option of hereditary succession, there is no chance to share in the glory of Christ.¹³⁵ That is to say, the pain for Jesus Christ is helpful for the "upbuilding" of the Christian community.

3. Secularization, the Real Threat

As we studied above, hereditary succession is a phenomenon of secularization in the Church of Korea. Barth regards secularization as a state marked by distancing from Jesus Christ and by opposition to the Word of God.¹³⁶ While some in the church may think of it as the best way for the church and Jesus Christ, but actually it is not. In fact, secularization is a real threat to the Christian community when the community is willing to build up with the power of the Holy Spirit. Interestingly, secularization does not appear as an image of evil but rather through the figure of an angel. Perhaps ironically, the good will for "upbuilding" of Christian community with secular ideas usually results

¹³⁵ Bible. Roman 8:17

¹³⁶ CD IV/2, 668.

in growing apart from God. Thus, the Christian community be very wary of hereditary succession.

However, there is a reverse effort against secularization, which is generally defined as sanctification.¹³⁷ For Barth, "the doctrine of sanctification in which dogmatics straightly and clearly becomes ethics."¹³⁸ This is because, sanctification needs to be a practical movement against secularization. Barth says, "if one does not hear the Word of God in act, he does not hear it at all."¹³⁹ Therefore, if we intend to resist secularization, we must do so directly and openly in real action. However, Barth himself considered how to balance secularization and sanctification.¹⁴⁰ Such a balance is necessary since the propagation of the Gospel requires Christians to be in the world, but not to indulge in secularization. In other words, this is the matter of finding a balance between delivering the Word of God to the world and building up the Christian community with only the Bible and without adopting secular methods. In short, in any case, hereditary succession does not tend to sanctification but rather to secularization which Christians must approach with precaution.

D. Sending of the Christian Community

1. Mission as a Primary Task

According to Jesus' mission, Jesus came to earth in order to make people return to God. Since then, Jesus commanded Christians to deliver the Gospel to those who did not

¹³⁷ Jung Suck Rhee, *Secularization and Sanctification*, 23.

¹³⁸ CD I/2, 792

¹³⁹ Karl Barth, *Ethics* (1928/29), tr. G. W. Bromiley (New York, 1981), 16.

¹⁴⁰ Lak-Geon George Paik, *The History of Protestant Mission in Korea: 1832-1910* (Seoul, Yonsei University Press; 3rd edition, 1980), 70-73.

know about God.¹⁴¹ Barth thinks this delivering the Good News is the ultimate vocation of Christians and can be completed when Christians live by living according to the Words of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁴² Barth also speaks of the primary task of the Christian community, "The existence of Jesus Christ's community is for the world. The Christian is sent by the Holy Spirit for the completion of Jesus Christ's missions and will for and to the world."¹⁴³ In other words, the "sending" forth of Christian is exposing the Good News in the world. The Word of God was sent for the Christians and Christians will be sent for the Son of God's redemption and reconciliation.

On the other hand, hereditary succession is absolutely not the primary mission of the Christian community. Furthermore, hereditary succession may even be an obstacle to the dissemination of the Gospel. This deflective activity is not the result of not Jesus-centered but only one of family-centered greed.

2. Reason of Existence

According to Barth, "the roles of the Christian community are the explaining and unfolding of the Gospel, in making it comprehensible."¹⁴⁴ In this view, the "sending" forth is the reason for the existence of the Christian community. This is because the Head of Christian community, Jesus Christ, came into the world for the role as the bridge between the Christian community and God. In other words, this is a mission of reconciliation. If the church loses its purpose, namely the "sending" forth of the Church, the Church will lose its way.

¹⁴¹ Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea*, 168.

¹⁴² Marcello De C. Azevedo, "Basic Ecclesial Communities: A Meeting Point of Ecclesiologies," *Theological Studies* 46 (1985): 611.

¹⁴³ CD IV/3, 762.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 846.

The Church's vocation is the reason for the existence of the Church. When the church becomes unclear or uncertain about its mission this might induce the eye of the community to other improper interests such as hereditary succession. Therefore, to recover its own sense of mission or purpose, namely what Barth calls the "sending" of Christian community, is one of the possible ways to avoid the practice of hereditary succession. For Barth, reconciliation of Christian community is the ultimate reason of existence of it.¹⁴⁵ Reconciliation is achieved when the Good News is delivered by Christians. Spreading the Gospel is accomplished when the Christian community is sent. Therefore, the Christian community should be sent forth for the salvation of God's people in the world. In short, the sending of Christian community will play a significant role to escape from the danger of losing its reason of existence through hereditary succession.

¹⁴⁵ Daniel B. Spross, *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 20/2 (Fall 1985): 67-68.

Conclusion

The main target of this thesis was to suggest possible solutions to the contemporary problem of hereditary succession that is occurring in the Korean churches, by exploring Barth's ecclesiology. This was accomplished by first investigating the status and the reasons for the existence of the practices of hereditary succession. In order to determine the best practices for the Korean Church in light of the Gospel mandates, particular focus on Barth's Christocentric theology of the Church as the Christian community served as a resource for recommending what the essential aspects of the Korean Church should be.

In chapter one, this research focused on the current state of affairs of hereditary succession in the Korean Church. According to statistical data by the anti-succession group, this improper conduct has gradually generated a loss of confidence in the Korean Protestant churches of Korea. Therefore, this hereditary succession reflects well the corrupt status of a growing number of Korean churches. Furthermore, this inappropriate transfer of church leadership is a problem of society as well as of the Church in Korea. As a result, the inadequate method of succession within the church hurts the theology of Lordship and social fairness for some applicants who aspire to be appointed to a position of being a Senior Pastor in a church.

In the second chapter, attention was directed to examining the practices of secularization within the churches and the impact of Confucianism as among the main

reasons of hereditary succession. The secularization of the Church reflects the spiritual debasement of the churches by the influence of ideas and cultures of world. Hereditary succession is one of the greatest secular practices that induce the church to remove itself from the realm of God, even though it looks like the best way to sustain the church's stability. Secondly, the influence of Confucianism enables the Protestant church of Korea to practice the improper transfer of main positions of the Church in Korea. As a matter of fact, the rapid growth of the Korean Christian community was caused by the influence of Confucianism. It has influenced the entire social system of Korea, including the hierarchical organization of the Church. The filial piety of Confucianism plays an important role of sustaining this hierarchical ranking system with unconditional obedience in the Korean Church. This happened because the congregation of the Church regards the pastor as their spiritual father. This blind obedience made them lose their ability to prevent the pastors' abuse of power. However, this also contributes to the practice of hereditary succession in the church. It is important to mention that the problems of hereditary succession remain unanswered.

In the third chapter, an exploration of Barth's ecclesiology was accomplished by a study of three features of his theology of church. According to *Church Dogmatics*, the idea of ecclesiology is organized according to the concepts of the "gathering, upbuilding and sending" of the Christian community. The main theme of his ecclesiology is that of a Christocentric theology which identifies the center of the Christian community as Jesus Christ who is the head of His community.

The "*gathering of the Christian community*" is the first characteristic of Barth's ecclesiology, which means that the church is gathered by the Holy Spirit in faith. In his theology of Church, he usually refers to the Church as a Christian community because the Christian community is Christendom in which the Word of God is unfolded to the world. Furthermore, Barth regards the Word of God as a main source for his Christocentric ecclesiology. Barth's theology is founded on the Bible and developed with close dependence on Scripture. In short, the Christian community is the group that is gathered by the Holy Spirit and admits the authority of Scripture.

The "*upbuilding of the Christian community*" is the second aspect of Barth's ecclesiology. The "upbuilding" of the Christian community is the process of building up the community of the faithful with the love of God. For the "upbuilding" of the Christian community, Jesus is at the center of His Christian community. This is because the Christian community needs the existence of Jesus Christ to survive. In other words, there is nobody who is alive without a head. Besides, the suffering is supposed to be through the way of the Cross which the Head, Jesus Christ walked for us. Beyond all of the possible threats to the Church, secularization is the greatest threat for the Christian community when it is willing to compromise the "upbuilding" by the Holy Spirit. Thus, the secularization results in the tragedy of facilitating the Christian community's move away from God.

The "*sending of Christian community*" is the last theme of Barth's ecclesiology. This means that the Christian community should be sent to deliver the Good News to God's people in the world. That is to say, the "*sending*" is the movement of revealing the Word of God in the world. Jesus Christ was sent for the Christian community and it is

the time for the Christian community to be sent for the purpose of Jesus Christ's redemption and reconciliation. Furthermore, this sending activity of the Christian community is the reason for existence. Jesus came to earth for the reconciliation between God and people and Christians should be *sent forth* for the spreading of the Good News of Jesus Christ, our Reconciler.

In the last chapter of this thesis, possible solutions for the appropriate handling of the practice of hereditary succession is suggested through Karl Barth's ecclesiology. Before providing potential answers for the practice of hereditary succession in the Korean churches, I found out the possibility of indigenization of Barth's theology within the Korean Church. According to an investigation of the context in which Barth said "*Nein*," one can conclude that the misunderstanding indicating that Karl Barth's thinking is too conservative and non-adaptable to the theological thinking and practices of other countries is not true. Having engaged a precise study of Barth's ecclesiology in chapter three, I can also recognize and conclude that the practice of hereditary succession for the Korean Christian community, is not an appropriate way to have positions in the Church assigned and should be dismissed.

The hereditary succession of the Korean church is only the result of misinterpretation about the head of the Christian community. Jesus is the head of the Church and the pastor only belongs to Jesus' body. Moreover, there is no right or place for the pastor who is willing to engage in improper moral conduct. Furthermore, the

hereditary succession is not written in the Bible and Christian community should try to acknowledge and follow the authority of the Scripture that points out that it is the living Jesus Christ who is with the Christian community. That is, the practice of hereditary succession is the result of family-centered greed of the people under the influence of Confucianism. Besides, the "upbuilding" of the Christian community is achieved when Jesus Christ is the internal power of life and Word of God is indwelling in the community of faith, not by the practice of hereditary succession that can be regarded as the best way to maintain the peace during the transition of the position of the Senior Pastor. However, we should be reminded that Christianity grew and spread throughout the Roman Empire in the context of persecution. The Christian community should not be afraid of the suffering. Rather, it should welcome persecution for the growth of the Church. The hereditary succession is just one of the secular phenomena of the Church from which Christians needs to stay away. The idea of hereditary succession is not of the Bible but of the world much like the succession in a commercial company or corporation. Therefore, the Korean church needs to focus on its own primary task and the reason for its existence rather than to promote the practice of hereditary succession. Naturally, this exploration leads me to continue to ask as well as to continue to seek methods of how the Korean Church can maintain communion with Jesus Christ. In addition, attention needs to be directed to how the church can best focus on its mission tasks.

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