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**Contextualized Biblical Hermeneutics in Korea and South  
Africa and Decontextualized Biblical Hermeneutics in  
Jehovah's Witnesses: In Search of Voices from the Margin**

by

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*Declaration*

**This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.**

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28/07/2003

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is in search of voices from the margin in biblical hermeneutics.

Firstly, biblical hermeneutics in the third world (Korea and South Africa) is marginalized by European biblical hermeneutics. However, their biblical hermeneutics plays significant roles in a political and cultural context in the name of the same God. Therefore, from a historical viewpoint, this thesis compares and analyses 'contextualized biblical hermeneutics' in Korea and South Africa. In the process, this thesis reveals that their voices have significance.

From a cultural aspect, Koreans' unique Christian religious practices, which were characterized by 'early-morning prayers', 'audible prayers' and 'rice contribution', induced Christianity to be transformed into Korean Christianity. Similarly, Africans interpreted the Bible without losing their traditional cultural assets such as 'ancestor worship', 'polygamy', 'music & dance', and 'healing'. Furthermore, they developed and transformed Christianity into the African Christianity through their own agencies, AIC (African Indigenous Churches).

On the other hand, from a political aspect, whether Europeans (Afrikaners) or black South Africans; whether Japanese or Koreans; whether oppressors or oppressed, the Bible was the object of political interpretation for strengthening Bible readers' political power in each context. In other words, Bible reading was contextualized given political context of each Bible reader. If Bible reading was important to Europeans, so it was also vital to Koreans and South Africans. This is because the Bible has been interpreted on the basis of Bible readers' context in history, whether in European, Korean or South African cultural and political contexts.

On this ground, there is no reason why Korean and South African biblical hermeneutics should be disregarded by European biblical hermeneutics. In the name of Korean Christianity or South African Christianity, they must have their voices.

Secondly, biblical hermeneutics of Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs)\* is marginalized in the name of heresy by Christendom, which includes mainline churches in Europe, South Africa and Korea. However, their biblical hermeneutics plays important roles in unifying people of different contexts on the basis of the same Bible. Therefore, this thesis reveals the significance of their 'decontextualized biblical hermeneutics' through exemplary biblical interpretations. In the process, their voices have significance.

From a cultural aspect, JWs' missionaries arrived comparatively later than mainline church missionaries. Accordingly, they did not have to get through cultural conflicts between traditional cultural norms and biblical norms. On this ground, their biblical interpretation could be applied in a global dimension, which reveals a sur-cultural aspect. In particular, their 'house-to-house preaching work' and 'abstaining from blood transfusion' are their representative religious practices, whether in Korea or South Africa.

From a political aspect, JWs have not participated in wars, military service or military training. Therefore, they have been persecuted by governments and military authorities. Worse still, they have been branded as heretics by Christendom. Nonetheless, on the basis of 'decontextualized biblical hermeneutics', this thesis puts an emphasis on various biblical reasons why they consistently have rejected and continue to reject military service.

Central theme of their Bible reading is based on God's Kingdom beyond their political and cultural context. Nonetheless, this theme of God's Kingdom provides JWs with great strength, with which they are able to live in global unity. On this stance, they did not take part in the past tragic political history, whether in Korea or South Africa.

Lastly, even though diverse and pluralistic biblical interpretation was a threat rather than a productive challenge to church authority, this thesis reveals that a dichotomous category could be the first step in reading the Bible for contemporary Bible readers in the name of 'contextualized and decontextualized biblical hermeneutics.'

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\* 'Jehovah's Witnesses' are abbreviated as 'JWs' in this thesis.

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**Contextualized Biblical Hermeneutics in Korea and South Africa and  
Decontextualized Biblical Hermeneutics in Jehovah's Witnesses: In  
Search of Voices from the Margin**

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>ii-iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>CONTENTS</b>	
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4-11</b>
1.1 The purpose of the study	4
1.2 Delimitations and limitations of the study	5
1.2.1 Delimitations of the study	5
1.2.2 Limitations of the study	5
1.3 Definition of terms	5
1.4 Methodology	6
1.4.1 Behind the Text (Socio-historical and cultural context of the Text approach)	6
1.4.2 Reading the Text (Literary approach)	7
1.4.3 In front of the Text (Context of the readers' approach)	8
1.4.4 Method to be used in this study	9
<b>2. CONTEXTUALIZED BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS IN KOREA</b>	<b>12-36</b>
2.1 Before the arrival of the Missionaries	12
2.1.1 Shamanism	12
2.1.2 Harmony of Korean religions	13

2.1.3	Confucianism is a religion	14
2.1.4	Korean religious pluralism	16
2.2	The arrival of the Bible in Korea	18
2.3	The responses of the first generation Bible readers (cultural aspect)	20
2.3.1	Conservative Bible reading (Thesis)	20
2.3.2	Liberalistic Bible reading (Antithesis)	21
2.3.3	Korean communal religious experiences in Christian churches (Synthesis)	25
2.3.3.1	Early-morning prayers	25
2.3.3.2	Audible prayers	26
2.3.3.3	Rice contribution	26
2.4	Bible readers' responses in Japanese colonial era and in Pak's dictatorship era (political aspect)	27
2.4.1	Pro-Korean nationalistic stance	28
2.4.2	Pro-Japanese nationalistic stance	30
2.4.3	Pro-Korean masses stance (Minjung theology)	32
2.5	Summary	35

3.	CONTEXTUALIZED BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS IN SOUTH AFRICA	37-78
3.1	Before the arrival of the Missionaries	38
3.1.1	No religion/ Satan's religion	38
3.1.2	Africa's God: Diffused monotheism in a symbol of circle on a horizontal plane	39
3.1.3	Ubuntu (African ethics) → Umuntu (human person)	43
3.1.4	African communal life experiences	44
3.2	The arrival of the Bible in South Africa	47
3.3	The responses of the first generation Bible readers (cultural aspect)	50
3.3.1	Euro-centric missionary Bible reading	50
3.3.2	Afro-centric Bible reading	53
3.3.2.1	The issue of idolatry	53
3.3.2.2	The issue of polygamy	57

3.3.2.3	The issue of music and dance	59
3.3.3	Contextualization of Bible reading in African indigenous churches (issue of healing)	60
3.4	Bible readers' responses in the Apartheid era (political aspect)	64
3.4.1	Pro-Afrikaner nationalistic stance: Apartheid theology	64
3.4.2	Pro-black South African liberation stance: Liberation theology	70
3.5	Summary	77
4.	DECONTEXTUALIZED BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS IN JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES	79-93
4.1	Benefit of JW's late arrival in Korea and South Africa	79
4.2	JW's 'house to house preaching' and 'abstaining from blood transfusion' (sur-cultural aspect)	82
4.3	JW's political neutrality (a-political aspect)	87
4.4	Summary	93
5.	CONCLUSION: IN SEARCH OF THE VOICES FROM THE MARGIN	94-99
5.1	Voices of contextualized biblical hermeneutics from the margin of Euro-centric biblical hermeneutics	95
5.2	Voices of decontextualized biblical hermeneutics from the margin of the Christendom	96
5.3	The significance of contextualized and decontextualized biblical hermeneutics to contemporary Bible readers	98
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	100-108

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this thesis is to search for voices from the margin in biblical hermeneutics.

Firstly, biblical hermeneutics in the third world (Korea and South Africa) is marginalized by European biblical hermeneutics. For example, “*A dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*<sup>1</sup>, proudly presented as the work of distinguished scholars, does not carry a single entry by an Asian, Latin American or African biblical interpreter” (Sugirtharajah, 1991:2). However, their biblical hermeneutics plays significant roles in a political and cultural context in the name of the same God. Therefore, from a historical viewpoint, this thesis compares and analyses ‘contextualized biblical hermeneutics’ in Korea and South Africa. In the process, this thesis attempts to reveal that their voices are significant in biblical hermeneutics.

Secondly, biblical hermeneutics of Jehovah’s Witnesses is marginalized in the name of heresy by Christendom, which includes mainline churches in Europe, South Africa and Korea. However, their biblical hermeneutics plays an important role in unifying people of different contexts on the basis of the Bible. Therefore, this thesis attempts to reveal the significance of their ‘decontextualized biblical hermeneutics’ through exemplary biblical interpretations.

Lastly, even though diverse and pluralistic biblical interpretations are a threat rather than a productive challenge to church authority, this thesis attempts to reveal that a dichotomous category could be the first step in reading the Bible for contemporary Bible readers in the name of the ‘contextualized and decontextualized biblical hermeneutics.’

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<sup>1</sup> R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden (1990). *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International.

## **1.2 Delimitations and limitations of the study**

A limitation is a factor that may or will affect the study in an important way, but is not under the control of the researcher; a delimitation differs, principally, in that it is controlled by the researcher.

### **1.2.1 Delimitations of the study**

This study delimits biblical interpretations to West's three modes of contextual readings. As Ukpong (2000) asserts, the ways of biblical interpretations are so diversified that West's methodology is introduced as a first step to discuss the issues. However, West's three modes of contextual reading have their limitations in interpreting the Bible, given Bible readers' drastically changed political and cultural context in Korean and South African history. In addition, each of West's mode of reading cannot be separately discussed, when readers come to interpreting the Bible. Accordingly, this study is discussed using West's methodology as the first step and dynamically by mixing and modifying three of West's modes of reading. This study delimits socio-historical and cultural context of the Bible text, and the context of the readers to South Africa and Korea.

### **1.2.2 Limitations of the study**

This study does not discuss various approaches of biblical hermeneutics and all case studies in the Bible. However, some exemplary biblical interpretations are discussed throughout this study, in order to arrive at finding voices from the margin.

## **1.3 Definition of terms**

Contextualized biblical hermeneutics: 'Interpretation of the Bible on the basis of the context of Bible readers and the Bible text. Influence of its interpretation is confined to the Bible reader's political and cultural context in the

name of 'belonging to difference' (West, 1999:142).

Decontextualized biblical hermeneutics: 'Interpretation of the Bible on the basis of the context of Bible readers and the Bible text. Influence of its interpretation extends beyond the Bible reader's political and cultural context in the name of 'global unity.'

#### 1.4 Methodology

West (1993) suggests three modes of contextual reading of the Bible as follows: 'Behind the Text', 'Reading the Text', 'In front of the Text'. Whereas the first 'Behind the Text' reading focuses on the context of the Bible text in the past, the second 'Reading the Text' and the third 'In front of the Text' focuses on the current context of the readers.

Reader		
Behind the Text	Reading the Text	In front of the Text
The Past (Socio-historical and cultural context of the Bible text)	The Bible text	The Present (The Future) (Context of the Readers)

##### 1.4.1 Behind the Text (Socio-historical and cultural context of the Bible text approach)

The first mode of reading (Behind the Text) depends on the sources of the Bible, such as sociological, anthropological, and archaeological research data. As a result, this mode of reading focuses on the context of the Bible in the past. For example, Mosala (1989:33-37) interprets the 'Cain and Abel' story in Genesis 4 given the socio-historical and cultural context of the text of Genesis 4.

In short, by using historical-critical tools like source and form criticism, Mosala (1989) locates the writing of the text of Genesis 4 in the David-Solomon period of the Israelite monarch. In addition, from archaeological, anthropological and comparative research, he reconstructed early or pre-monarchic Israel, which was necessary for proving the tensions between Cain and Abel. This tension arose in transition from a pre-monarchic society to a monarchic society. David and Solomon were political rulers in the transition periods. While city-

state took control of the countryside, land was taken from the peasant farmers in order to produce meat and crops for the city. Mosala (1989) analyses that the story was told from the perspective of the landless peasants in the countryside, who were represented by Abel, the nomadic Judean herder. Cain represented the settled landowners, most of who did not live on the land but in the cities. This showed the class struggles between the peasants and the rulers in acquisition of land.

Mosala (1989,1991b) interprets the Bible to stress on liberation of the oppressed by using the first mode (behind the Text) of reading. Likewise, Ahn (1993a) used this mode of reading (behind the Text) to explain Minjung (the masses') theology from the masses' viewpoint (see section 2.4.3). According to West (1993:29) this mode of reading affirms and develops readers' understanding that "God is at work in history and society." In addition, it "minimizes the abuse of the text" and develops reader's critical consciousness by expanding their historical and sociological analyses of both the text and its context. However, depending more on external expertise than on the Bible text itself threatens church authorities.

#### **1.4.2 Reading the Text (literary approach)**

The second mode of reading (Reading the Text) "concentrates primarily on the text rather than on extrinsic factors such as historical background, archaeological data, compositional history, authorial intention, sociological setting, or theological motivation and result"(Trible, 1978:8). This method is used for strengthening church authority by encouraging readers to interact with the Bible text as a whole and not in a selective manner. That is, all Scriptures are regarded as the 'Word of God' ("All Scripture is inspired of God...2Timothy 3:15).

For example, Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) interpret the Bible within the Bible text. JWs' global unity arises from this mode of reading (within the Text). In addition, Boesak's (1984: 148-157) method of the interpretation of the story of Cain and Abel also focuses on literary detail. West (1991a) puts it, "although he (Boesak) refers to the author, he shows no interest in the author's intentions or any interest in the usual historical-critical concerns"(1991a: 49).

Nonetheless, this mode of reading can always be deconstructed by reader's intention or theologian's ideology (West, 1991b: 86). In other words,

this may also make Bible readers dependent upon external expertise input. This is because all lay readers cannot always scrupulously read the Bible, considering all factors that influence the meaning of the text. For example, “a reading of Job as a whole indicates that the book is made up of three sections: a prose prologue (1:1-2:13) in which the narrator speaks, a poetic dialogue (3:1-42:6) in which Job, his three friends, Elihu, and God speak, and a prose epilogue (42:7-17) in which the narrators speaks.” In addition, there are major characters, such as “Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, God, and the narrator” and minor characters, such as “Satan, Job’s wife, and Elihu” (West, 1993:32).

### 1.4.3 In front of the Text (context of the readers’ approach)

The third mode of reading (In front of the Text) focuses on readers’ various possibilities of reading along the axis of central symbols, metaphors and themes. This is because it regards the Bible as “a **‘dynamic medium’** of interpretation rather than a static object” (Schneiders, 1989:5). Furthermore, according to Croato (1987), the Bible plays the same role of *langue* (language as system) in linguistics. Conversely, the different interpretation of the Bible in each reader’s context plays a role of *parole* (language as speech). For that reason, the biblical text can be seen as “a symbolic structure, which may facilitate an easy movement from the text to the reader’s context” (West, 1993:39). In other words, Bible readers’ “socio-cultural context becomes the subject of interpretation of the biblical text” (Ukpong, 2000:16). In this way, “reading along the axis of a central theme in the text generates a possible world into which readers are drawn by their own questions, needs, and interests”(West, 1993:39). For example, readers’ dialogue with “the New Testament along the axis of discipleship enables them to discover new worlds in front of the text through which they can continue to liberate themselves and the text from the ideology of patriarchy”(West, 1993:40).

Furthermore, it encourages deconstructing the self and reconstituting the self. According to Schneiders (1989:8), he coins the phrase “interpretation is hermeneutics of transformation.” In other words, “the text transcends its own psycho-sociological conditions of production. It can therefore be **decontextualized** and **recontextualized** by successive readings” (Schneiders, 1989:7). That is, the text can also play a vivid role in inducing readers (believers) to liberate themselves from their context: “The biblical text can be

seen as a symbolic structure by which the interpreter accepts the invitation to **enter into and inhabit the world of God's liberation**"(West, 1991b: 85). This third mode of reading is hopeful and positive, in that readers can supersede the text and can reach God's Kingdom or Heaven in the name of liberation.

Apart from this positive aspect, 'in front of the text reading' (the third mode of reading) also has a negative aspect. The Bible can be used as a tool of justification for Bible reader's political interests, given that the Bible reader's context is highly regarded before the Bible text. In particular, given the past colonial era in Korea and South Africa, the Bible readers did not show their diverse approaches of Bible reading on an individual basis in their political and cultural contexts. Instead, they read the Bible for their group-centred political purposes by subjecting themselves to the dominant political ideologies (see chapter 2,3). On this ground, West (1993) summarises that 'in front of the text reading' is a 'pre-critical way of reading'. In addition, given that the Bible reader's context is the first key in interpreting the Bible text, 'in front of the text reading' deals with the Bible in part rather than in whole text.

In short, according to 'in front of the text reading', the Bible is originally the medium of dynamic interpretation, which reflects various kinds of readers' contexts. However, given the history of Korean and South African political and cultural contexts of readers, each group of readers, such as Japanese Imperialists, Korean nationalists, white Afrikaner apartheid adherents and black South African liberationists stereotypically read the Bible from their group-centred viewpoints. Therefore, various individuals' diverse approaches of reading the Bible were reduced to a stereotypical group-based reading under the influence of dominant political and cultural ideologies 'in front of the text'. Accordingly, 'in front of the text reading' can be a pre-critical way of reading by playing a passive role under the dominant political and cultural ideologies.

#### **1.4.4 Method to be used in this study**

West (1993) indicated that each mode of reading is not easily separately discussed. For example, Boesak (1984: 148-57) uses the second and the third modes of reading to analyse the Cain and Abel story. West puts it, "throughout his (Boesak) reading of the Cain and Abel story, he follows the final form of the

text with careful attention to literary detail and the central themes”(West, 1991a: 49). This shows how difficult it is to confine Bible readers to one mode of reading. In addition, whereas Ukpong (2000:16) discusses ‘inculturation hermeneutics’<sup>2</sup> separately from West’s contextual hermeneutics, this study locates Ukpong’s hermeneutics in the third mode of reading.

Although West’s (1993) three modes of contextual readings are not perfect, they could effectively be used for clarifying distinctions between ‘contextualized biblical hermeneutics’ and ‘decontextualized biblical hermeneutics.’ In addition, West’s (1993) modes serve as stepping-stones in analysing cultural and political contexts of the readers in Korea and in South Africa through the expanded application of the three modes of reading. This study, therefore, compounds the three modes of reading.

In the case of ‘contextualized biblical hermeneutics’ in chapter 2 and 3, this study applies the third mode of reading (in front of the Text). This study discusses socio-politico-cultural discourses, which influenced readers in those times, given the history of Korea and South Africa. In addition, this study applies the first mode of reading (Behind the Text) and the second mode of reading (Within the Text) to make clear some exemplary issues of Bible interpretation. To be brief, firstly, this study discusses how Korean and South African Bible readers interpreted the Bible to get over cultural shocks that arose from differences between traditional norms and Christian Bible teachings. Secondly, this study focuses on how Korean and South African Bible readers interpreted the Bible for their political purposes confronted with drastically changing political contexts.

In the case of ‘decontextualized biblical hermeneutics’ in chapter 4, this study applies the second mode of reading (Reading the Text) to explain Jehovah’s Witnesses’ interpretation of the Bible. In addition, this study puts an emphasis on the third mode of reading (In front of the Text) in a positive aspect, which can contribute to an idealistic global unity.

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<sup>2</sup> “This model is concerned that the biblical text should be read through a grid developed within the African socio-cultural context. In this way the people’s context becomes the subject of interpretation of the biblical text.” (Ukpong, 2000:16)

In chapter 5, beyond these three modes of reading, this study points out the significance of contextualized and decontextualized biblical hermeneutics.

Emphatically, this is a historical and comparative study on the basis of the cultural and political context of Korea and South Africa. To clarify controversial issues, this study focuses on some exemplary biblical interpretations. For this, it refers to books, journals and Internet documents available in the UCT (University of Cape Town) and SNU (Seoul National University) library. Particularly, when discussing chapter 4, not only does this study refer to books and CD-Rom issued by the Watchtower Society, but also to documentary programmes of MBC (one of the Korean Broadcasting companies) broadcasted nationwide in 2002 and to the interviews with JW's in Seoul, South Korea and in Cape Town, South Africa.

## 2. CONTEXTUALIZED BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS IN KOREA

### 2.1 Before the arrival of the Missionaries

#### 2.1.1 Shamanism

When Underwood (1908), the first American Presbyterian missionary in Korea, arrived in 1885, he described three major religions in Korea: Confucianism, Buddhism and Shamanism. However, he asserted that Shamanism strongly influenced Korean religious ethos, compared with Buddhism and Confucianism.

In the case of Buddhism, it highly spread and became the state religion in Koryo dynasty (AD 918-1391), but the influence of Buddhism was weakened in Chosun dynasty (AD 1392-1910). For instance, monks in Chosun dynasty were classified as the second lowest people, much lower than butchers, who were assigned to the fourth class.

In the case of Confucianism, Underwood (1908) regarded it as philosophy rather than religion. This is because only Confucian scholars could have read scriptures, such as the 'four books and three classics': the books being *the Analects of Confucius*, *the Works of Mencius*, *the Doctrine of the Mean* and *the Great Learning*; and the classics being *the Book of Poetry*, *the Scripture of Documents*, and *the Book of Changes*. In other words, all scriptures were written in Chinese characters, so that the masses could not read them. In addition, through some interviews with Korean people during his mission, Underwood concluded that Confucianism was a type of ethics based on filial duty (孝, hyo)(Underwood, 1908:62). On this ground, Underwood (1908) asserted that Confucianism became scholars' object of learning rather than the masses' object of believing.

Given that Buddhism was weakened and Confucianism was not a religion, Underwood (1908) concluded that Korean religions were characterized by Shamanism. Actually, Koreans regarded Shaman as a very important mediator between the living and spirits. They believed Shaman could expel evil spirits, which were also believed to be the main cause of diseases, suffering and misfortunes.

### 2.1.2 Harmony of Korean religions

This divisive viewpoint about Korean religions arose from the misunderstanding of Korean political and cultural contexts. Given the political and cultural history of Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910), each religious tradition was not so contradictory. Furthermore, Confucianism, definitely, was not only Korean ethics (object of learning) but also Korean religion (object of believing).

In the late Koryo dynasty, influential families in ruling classes and monks in national Buddhist temples were corrupt. They illegally took possession of vast agricultural land. On the other hand, opposition scholars from rural villages accepted Neo-Confucianism from China. Through a military coup, General Lee Seonggye (1335-1408) seized political and military power by deposing King Chang (r.1388-1389) and placing King Gongyang (r.1389-1392) on the throne. Finally, he acceded to the throne as the first King of Chosun dynasty in 1392. For legitimacy of the throne in Chosun dynasty, the national ideology was changed to Neo-Confucianism from Buddhism. In the meantime, opposition scholars from rural villages became the mainline ruling class in Chosun Dynasty. Accordingly, the ruling class rejected Buddhism.

Instead of Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism became the principle governing the country. However, the masses were not influenced by Neo-Confucianism. Therefore, the masses still believed in Buddhism, Taoism and Shamanism. For example, during a memorial service, whereas the 'yangban' (scholar class, ruling class) followed the principle from the book, entitled *Family Rituals* written by Chu-tzu (1130-1200, a representative scholar of Neo-Confucianism), the masses still held a memorial service as they did before under Buddhism, Taoism and Shamanism. Eventually, in the early Chosun dynasty, while Neo-Confucianism<sup>3</sup> became the principle of governing the country to the ruling class, Buddhism became the principle for the masses' ethics.

Nonetheless, the point to note is that, Buddhism, Shamanism and Taoism had also penetrated into the 'yangban' (scholar class). For instance, King Sejong (1418-1450) built a Buddhist temple inside the royal palace and King Sejo (1455-1468) built a government office (Kan-hayng-do-gam), to

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<sup>3</sup> Confucianism signifies the teachings of Confucius (BC 551-479); however, Neo-Confucianism arose from the teachings of Chu-tzu (1130-1200). Neo-Confucianism transferred into the late Koryo dynasty. In addition, opposition scholars from native villages in Koryo dynasty accepted it as a new political ideology.

publish the Buddhist scriptures (Lee, 1992:268). In addition, for Shamanism and Taoism, their influence on the scholar class was proved by the existence of a government office (So-guyck-su) whose function was to hold a rite for *Tan-gun*, the founding father of the Korean nation. In other words, while Confucianism corresponded to laws and regulations on a national scale, Buddhism corresponded to moral conscience in personal life.

Ostensibly, Buddhism, Taoism and Shamanism seemed to disappear among the ruling class. However, in practice, each religious tradition deeply penetrated into scholar classes as well as the masses. On this ground, each religion existed harmoniously despite the dynamically changed political and cultural context.

### 2.1.3 Confucianism is a religion

As Neo-Confucianism became a political ideology in Chosun dynasty, the religiosity of Confucianism arose much doubt amongst common people as well as scholars. Confucius (551-479 BCE) taught his disciples his viewpoint of the next world. In *the Analects* (1979), Confucius answered to his disciple's questions about the next world and the existence of Ghosts as follows: 'I have not yet come to know this human world, how could I know about the next world and the existence of ghosts?' Confucius, ostensibly, avoided speaking about the next world or ghosts, which was one of the main themes of Buddhism. Instead, he placed much value on becoming an ideal person, who was the so-called man of honor (Gunza: 君子) in this world. Gunza (君子) was expected to cultivate his moral culture and to manage his household. Afterwards, he was expected to govern a country and to make the whole world peaceful and prosperous. (修身齊家治國平天下) Therefore, Confucianism was generally known to put much more value on this life than the next life.

Nonetheless, this way of human life did not mean that it disregarded the next life. First of all, the concept of Tien (天, heaven or God) needs to be clarified. According to *the Analects* (1979), Confucius asserted that human beings should do their best and leave the rest to Providence (天命, Tien-myung). If people lived their lives holding to this *Tien-myung*, they would be blessed; if not, they would invite disasters. In addition, Tien-myung can be

equal to the universal principle, Yi (理) in Neo-Confucianism. Yi (理) can be embodied into individual's conscience, which is regarded as human's virtue (duck 德). It is understood to be symbolically located inside the heart (sym 心).

Conversely, people can reach Tien (天) by cultivating their moral culture in the following process: heart (sym 心) → a universal principle (Yi 理) → Providence, God or Heaven (Tien 天). In short, in Confucianism, firstly, each individual should cultivate his mind; secondly, individuals enter political worlds; lastly, rule people by the principle of virtue (duck 德) or heaven's will (TienYi 天理). On this ground, King Taejong (1400-1418) in Chosun Dynasty prayed for rain to Tien (天) when the country suffered from famine. According to myth, when the two ancient Chinese Kings, Yo and Sun (堯舜) ruled, national disasters were thought to result from the King's lack of virtue (Puduck, 不德). From that time onward, Tien (天) became the object of praying for Confucians.

Accordingly, the concept of Tien (天, heaven or God) implicitly connoted the personal Supreme Being as the object of praying or believing in another dimension. On this stance, this personal supreme object of praying was called as King of heaven (ShangTi, 上帝). Therefore, although Confucius kept silent about ghosts or the next world, it is proved that he did not intend to disregard the next world. Besides, Tien (天, heaven or God) could have been understood as the object of praying and believing in the name of the King of heaven (ShangTi, 上帝) Furthermore, according to Kum Jangtae (1996:372), contrary to Catholics, in Confucianism, there were more objects of praying, such as heaven and earth, the sun, the moon, stars, mountains, villages and even ancestors.

Furthermore, the religiosity of Confucianism can be seen from a memorial service. As inferred from the Korean proverb, "By the time you are inclined to treat your parents properly, they are already gone"; this emphasizes descendants' filial duty while their parents are alive. This definitely reveals that this world is much more important than the next world in Confucianism. On this stance, holding a memorial service for the dead ancestors seems useless. However, in Confucianism, a memorial service is conversely interpreted as follows: descendants' irresistible yearning for their parents communicated itself to Tien (天) and could even have reached beyond this world. Finally, this filial piety, which naturally arose from descendants' parents-loving heart (sym 心) in this world, made it possible for descendants to communicate with their dead parents

in another dimension. In another aspect, it could be understood that through a memorial service, dead ancestors were invited to this world as in Shamanism.

Thus, in Confucianism, ghosts or the next world seemed to be disregarded; therefore, Confucianism seemed to be regarded as philosophy or ethics rather than religion. However, as indicated above, each religious tradition developed harmoniously to the contrary. Even though viewpoints of a memorial service were different depending on social standings and religious tradition, Buddhism, Shamanism, Taoism and Confucianism were harmonious and created the culture of Korean memorial service. Through the concept of Tien (天) and the significance of a memorial service that was based on descendants' present filial duty, Confucianism also proved to be a different kind of a present-centered ethical 'religion' just as Buddhism, Shamanism and Christianity are religions.

#### 2.1.4 Korean religious pluralism

Buddhism (the national ideology in Koryo dynasty) was replaced by Neo-Confucianism in the last years of Koryo dynasty. During the reign of Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910), it was Neo-Confucianism that became the national ideology. After Japanese [Hideyoshi's] invasion of Chosun dynasty in 1592, Neo-Confucianism was gradually criticized by the masses. Realists criticized that Neo-Confucianism had become old-fashioned. This was clearly exemplified in popular novels, such as *Hong-gil-dong jon (The tale of Hong Gil-dong)*<sup>4</sup> and *Chunhyang jon (The tale of Chunhyang)*. In addition, practical sciences were gradually induced to the Chosun dynasty in the 17th and 18th centuries. Eventually, many forward-looking scholars founded a practical science school.

However, many 'yangbans' (the aristocratic class persons) persisted in neo-Confucianism. It was required for controlling the unrest public sentiment after wars. Therefore, they spread their ideologies into the masses, particularly the concept of Li (禮, principle and so followed an approach to self-cultivation that was based on the mind's direct intuitive grasp of the proper way), which played an important role in re-establishing order in society after wars.

The concept of Li signifies the principle for the order or cosmos in many kinds of human relationships: an individual, family, society and nation. Left

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<sup>4</sup> It was written by Ho Kyun (1569-1619), who was executed on the suspicion of treason in 1618.

ideograph (示) revealed Heaven's revelation<sup>5</sup> and the right ideograph (豊) signified good harvest. The former comes from the Heaven (Tien, 天) and the latter arises from the earth (ji, 地). Through Li, one of the essential virtues of human beings, the Heaven and the earth could be united. Furthermore, all elements of the world, which were composed of the principle of Yin (陰) and Yang (陽), could also be kept in order and be in harmony. On this ground, human beings could not only be connected to the Heaven but also to the earth through the virtue of Li in harmony with all other elements.

On this philosophical ground, in *Galigylam (Family Rituals, 1685)*<sup>6</sup> written by Kim Jang-saeng (1548-1631),<sup>7</sup> he practically modified and revised the complicated procedures of family rituals for the masses. It included an exemplary procedure by which people could hold a coming-of-age ceremony, wedding ceremony, funerals and memorial services. In this way, Neo-Confucianism was embodied into the masses' daily lives beyond the realm of its previous application in the ruling class in the name of *Li*. In other words, Neo-Confucianism that had only belonged to the ruling class now penetrated into the masses and was eventually universalized in the name of religion. Furthermore, while Neo-Confucianism was accepted as another religion amongst the masses as well as the ruling class, some liberalists were even interested in western sciences, Catholicism and Christianity. The point is that, Koreans had potential to absorb any kind of religion in the pond of Korean religious pluralism harmoniously as revealed in their political and cultural contexts; though they had four major distinctive religions, that is, Neo-Confucianism, Shamanism, Taoism and Buddhism. On this stance, Johns (1910:14), one of the Methodists missionaries, asserted that Koreans lived in religious pluralism before Christianity came. According to Johns (1910), Koreans were Confucians in the aspect of society, Buddhists in a philosophical aspect, and worshipers who indulged in Shamanism when they prayed to gods to avert suffering.

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<sup>5</sup> Kim Young-ok explains this by analyzing the Chinese character, in his book entitled "*What is a woman?*"(1997) However, generally speaking, ideograph(示) displays a table for rituals such as for memorial services or funerals. In the process of arranging food on the table, a rule or the order of the universe arose naturally, which was called *Li*.

<sup>6</sup> Kim Jang Saeng (1685), *Family Rituals*, Seoul National University Library.

<sup>7</sup> He was influenced by the Chinese scholar, Chu-tzu (1130-1200) who wrote *Family Rituals*.

## 2.2 The arrival of the Bible in Korea

The Bible was translated into Korean on the basis of the Chinese and Greek Bible between 1877 and 1887 by John Ross and John MacIntyre with the help of Yi Ungchan in Manju area (North-eastern part of China). In Japan, Yi Sujeng (1842-1887) also translated the Bible into Korean mixed with Chinese characters between 1883 and 1884. China and Japan opened the door to western imperialism a decade earlier than Korea.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, there were not only western scholars but also many missionaries in China and Japan. Accordingly, in the late era of the Chosun Dynasty, numerous Korean scholars went to China and Japan to learn western technology.

As indicated above, forward-looking scholars in a practical science school intended to settle internal political and economic problems by adopting western knowledge after Japanese [Hideyoshi's] invasion of Chosun dynasty in 1592. On this stance, some advanced scholars voluntarily accepted Catholicism from China as an object of acquiring western knowledge. Accordingly, Catholicism became the object of study.

Afterwards, some scholars from 'yangban' (scholar class) accepted Catholicism as a religion after studying several books about Catholicism. *God's real will* (Tienjusilyi 天主實義) written by Matteo Ricci, was introduced to Chosun by Lee Sugwang in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was one of the most popular books about Catholicism. However, the Chosun government had a persistent ban on Catholicism. This is because Catholicism was understood to demolish the distinction of social classes and to disrespect the natural order of human. The distinction of social classes arose from the natural order in Neo-Confucianism according to the principle of *Li* (禮), as explained previously (section 2.1.4). On this ground, two Catholics, Yoon Jichung and Kwen Sanghyuck, who belonged to the yangban class (scholar class), were executed on a charge of disloyalty and impiety (無君無父) in 1791. They actually destroyed ancestor tablets and rejected ancestral memorial services (Kum Jangtae, 1996:369). In addition, many Catholics were persecuted during four distinctive periods between 1801 and 1866. One of the persecutions arose from Hwang Sayoung conspiracy in 1801. According to KCHRC (1997), Hwang asserted that western imperialistic authorities could have threatened the Chosun government by dispatching fleets to the Western Coast of Chosun for

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<sup>8</sup> China and Japan opened the door in 1860 and in 1868. Korea opened the door in 1882.

the sake of giving religious freedom of Catholicism to Chosun people. Nonetheless, the Chosun government did not accept Catholicism even after thousands of Catholics, including Hwang, had been executed. Afterwards, the Pope canonized 24 martyrs amongst them in 1984. (KCHRC, 1997)

After the persecution period of Catholics, the political power of the Chosun government was weakened. The Chosun government was under the control of western imperialism. In the meantime, Christian missionaries officially entered Korea mainly from the United States, Canada and Australia after 1885. In addition, Ministers who had stayed in China and Japan came to Korea and engaged in missionary work. Eventually, the Bible that was translated in China and Japan was propagated in Korea.

The point is that just as Catholicism had become the object of learning before people became Catholics; so the Bible in Christianity became the object of studying. For that reason, Catholicism was voluntarily introduced to Korea from China without any help of bishops. Likewise, the Bible was firstly translated not in Korea but in China and Japan. That is, Yi Ungchan in Manju (China) and Yi Soojeng in Japan could not wait until missionaries came to Korea with the Bible.

On this stance, Lee Duckju (2001:306) summarized that Korean churches characterized the so-called 'Bible centered church.' In short, it arose from the special character of Koreans who liked to read scriptures and analyze them in Korean religious scripture-centered context. For example, scripture centered religion could have been exemplified in scripture-centered history of religion as follows: the Buddhist Scriptures in Koryo dynasty, the four books and three classics in Confucianism in Chosun dynasty and the Bible in Japanese Colonial era. Actually, Deming (1906:152-154), a missionary, asserted that the recitation of the Bible was also one of the traditional characteristics of Korean Bible readers.

According to Lee Duckju (2001), since the era of the first missionaries, Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries formed mainline churches in Korea. Presbyterian missionaries were, with a puritan zeal, very conservative in Bible reading. Most of them had been educated in theology at Princeton University. They adhered to an orthodox Calvinism in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and Puritanism in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. On the contrary, the Methodist missionaries were open and liberal

in their Bible reading. They did not disregard believers' religious experience. They emphasized both believers' reasoning power and religious experiences. Contrary to Presbyterian missionaries, they were based on enlightenment and rationalism in European history. The Methodist missionaries adapted themselves to political and cultural contexts. The response of the first generation Bible readers was diversified depending on the oppositional features of the two church associations.

### **2.3 The response of the first generation Bible readers (cultural aspect)**

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the response of the first generation Bible readers can be summarized by the following principle of dialectics: that is, thesis-antithesis-synthesis. As indicated, Bible readers mainly interpreted the Bible from the viewpoint of their church standard. Presbyterian Bible readers interpreted the Bible in a conservative way, whereas Methodists understood the Bible from a liberalistic viewpoint. As a result, the Bible was interpreted differently depending on the readers' context in history. Consequently, the mode of biblical interpretation was divided into two: conservatism and liberalism. Nonetheless, these two modes were synthesized by Korean communal religious experiences on the basis of the harmonious pluralistic religious culture.

#### **2.3.1 Conservative Bible reading (Thesis)**

Conservative Bible reading focuses on West's (1993) second mode of reading (within the Text). That is, the Bible is understood as an absolute and perfect truth itself in the name of the 'Word of God'. Therefore, its literal meaning has its authority in reading the Bible. When the first missionaries came to Korea, most of them regarded Korean religions as idolatries under article 1 and 2 of the Ten Commandments: "Do not make cast idols (Exodus, 34:17)"

In addition, according to the monthly bulletin of theology (1904:202-203), Korean indigenous religion, Tiendao-kyo (天道教), which had been supported by Korean farmers in the late Chosun dynasty, was criticized by the interpretation of second Corinthian, chapter 6 verses 14 to 15: "For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? What fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?" In other words, Korean indigenous religion was interpreted as

wickedness, darkness and Belial; whereas Christianity was the vice-versa. On this ground, even in the case of memorial services, the first generation Bible readers removed household shrines, where ancestral memorial services were held. In addition, they did not participate in memorial services. Therefore, they suffered from persecution from their neighbors and the community. As discussed previously, the four severe persecutions in Catholicism between 1801 and 1866, implicitly revealed how Christians suffered from persecution on charges of disloyalty and impiety.

Oh Kysun (1911) explained how the first generation Bible readers were against indigenous religions. He introduced many cases, which were regarded as violation of the Ten Commandment. For example, people were required not to talk about the King of Heaven in Taoism, not to consult a fortuneteller, and not to search for a propitious site for a grave. In addition, setting up of an ancestor tablet or a mortuary tablet during memorial services, concubinage and choosing an auspicious day were classified as violation of the Ten Commandment.

On the other hand, even in personal tastes, such as smoking and drinking, were also discouraged by 2 Corinthian 6:16, "For we are the temple of the living God" (Lee Ducksu, 1904:172) In other words, drinking and smoking were understood as the root of sin and Satan's temptations, which easily polluted the temple of the living God, human body (Kim Juryun, 1903:154-5).

This conservative interpretation of the Bible excluded and disregarded the previous religious traditions: Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and Shamanism. The first missionaries adhered to this conservatism. This could have easily influenced people to despise their traditional cultural assets and to forget their ethnic and national identity. For that reason, Korean people, who had been accustomed to living in a harmonious religious pluralism, required another biblical hermeneutics.

### **2.3.2 Liberalistic Bible reading (Antithesis)**

A few decades later, a liberalistic Bible reading emerged mainly from a Methodist school after the first missionaries came to Korea. Whereas conservative Bible readers rejected the previous indigenous Korean religions, liberalistic Bible readers intended to harmonize biblical viewpoints with the

viewpoints of indigenous Korean religions. Several examples are introduced in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, according to Lee Duck-ju (2001:342-347), after researching Christian newspapers that had been issued in 1906, he asserted that some of the first generation Bible readers harmonized Confucianism with Christianity. For instance, cosmology in Confucianism (Tienryun 天倫) was understood by adopting the Ten Commandments in Christianity; besides this, the natural relationships of human in Christianity were explained in comparison with the traditional Confucian ethics, which focused on human beings' five basic relationships between lord and vassal; father and son; husband and wife; the young and the old; and between friends.

Secondly, according to Christian newspapers (1906, March 21), Lee Sungyun converted to Christianity by interpreting the Bible compared with *Jenggamrok* (鄭鑑錄), the representative book of prophesy in Chosun dynasty. He described the word, Sypzagazido (十字架之道: the way to the cross) as Sypsungzizi (十勝之地: the safest ten places during the end of the world) in *Jenggamrok* by analyzing Chinese characters. He found even the name of Abraham in *Jenggamrok* by analyzing the word, Ah (亞). In this way, he was assured that his conversion to Christianity had already been recorded at *Jenggamrok*. This is a typical example revealing that the Bible was interpreted on the basis of Korean Taoism.

Thirdly, according to Se Jengmin (1998) in his book entitled '*Thoughts of Korean Christianity*', Kim Jangho (in Se, 1998:164), who founded Chosun Christian church in 1918, described Moses' miracle (Israelites' wading across the Red sea) as Israelites' wading across the reeds. In addition, the event in which Jesus provided five thousand Jews with food (manna) was explained as Jesus having prepared five thousand lunch boxes. He interpreted the Bible scientifically from the viewpoint of the masses in Chosun. He supported this liberalistic biblical interpretation for the sake of establishing Korean people's national identity in the period of the Japanese colonial era.

Fourthly, Yoo Dongsick (1997), one of the most famous scholars in the history of Korean Christianity, coined Pungryu (風流) theology. According to *Samguksagi* (in Yoo, 1997), the oldest book of Korean history published in 1145, Pungryu means mysterious teachings, for the enlightenment of the masses,

which include the teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism.

Yoo's (1997) Pungryu theology can be explained in the following. From ancient times, Shamanism, Buddhism and Confucianism had played dominant roles one after another in Korean religious culture. Nonetheless, each religion was not exclusive but in harmony with the others in the name of Pungryu. After Christianity came to Korea, Christianity became dominant in Korean religious culture. Nonetheless, just as minor religions did not cease to exist in each period of Korean history of religion, Christianity did not exclude other religions. In other words, they were in harmony and had their individual voices. Accordingly, Yoo (1997) asserted that Christianity was harmoniously absorbed into the existing Korean religious pluralism.

To support this idea, Yoo (1997) explained the concept of 'Han' (恨). 'Han' is the principle that one becomes all and all become one. From this viewpoint, religions cannot be exclusive. This explanation is related with Ephesians 4:6, ("One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.") and Colossian 1:15,16 ("He is the image of the invisible God, the first born over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible...all things were created by him and for him.")

In addition, he criticized conservative interpretation of the Bible. For example, he criticized monarchical relationship between God and human or human and nature. He asserted that nature should not be regarded as the object of human's conquest, which threatened the balance of the ecology. As a result, he suggested an organic model on the basis of the concept of Pungryu. *Tienbugyung*, a sacred book of Pungryu (in Yoo, 1997:35) put it, "the One is divided into three: heaven, earth and human. However, the One exists everlastingly. (一始無始一...天一一 地一二 人一三)" In other words, creatures (heaven, earth and human) are not created but 'becoming'. The relationship between a creator and a creature is not monarchical but organic. Yoo asserted that this organic model is also proved in the Bible, John 1:3,4,14. "In the beginning was the Word (Logos)...Through him all things were made ('egeneto')." Yoo emphasized that 'egeneto' is not 'poieo' (to make) but 'ginomai' (to become). In this way, Yoo absorbed Christianity into a Korean religious pluralism in the name of 'Pungryu', a traditional religious concept.

Lastly, Yoon Sengbum (1964) explained mythology of Dangun, the founding father of the Korean nation, from the viewpoint of the Bible. The

Dangun mythology is included in *Samguckyusa*, written by Il-Yeun in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The summary of Dangun Mythology: 'Once upon a time, Hwan-wung, a son of Hwan-in (the supreme God in heaven) wished to govern the world. With the permission of Hwan-in, Hwan-wung descended to earth with three gods: Wind, Rain and Clouds. Hwan-in supervised 360 things about human life, such as good and evil, span of life etc. One day, a bear and a tiger came to him and expressed their wish to become humans. To become humans, they had to pass a test, which required them to stay in a dark cave for 100 days to survive by eating garlic and mugwort only. The bear passed the test but the tiger did not. Therefore, the bear became a woman. Afterward, the bear that had transformed into a woman wished to have a baby. Therefore, Hwan-wung in the form of a human married the bear and gave birth to a son, whose name was Dangun, the first father of Korea.'

In this story, Yoon (1964) asserted that Hwan-in, Hwan-wung and Dangun corresponded to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in Christianity. In addition, as inferred from Luke 1:35: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you...So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God"; just as Holy Spirit caused Mary to give birth to Jesus, so Hwan-wung caused the bear to give birth to Dangun. Likewise, according to Kim Ungy (1997:89), he asserted that the similarity between Dangun myth and the Bible story made it easier for Koreans to accept Christianity.

In short, liberalistic Bible reading did not disregard traditional religious culture. Therefore, this made it easier for Koreans to become Christians. This mode of reading was closely related with the masses, living in the Korean pluralistic religious culture. In other words, Christianity lastly melted into the large ocean of Korean religious pluralism in the name of Korean Christianity. However, this mode of reading was excluded in the early missionary periods. To date, the majority of Presbyterian Church members in Korea do not accept this liberalistic mode of Bible reading. Nonetheless, whether they are conservative Bible readers or liberalistic Bible readers, their religious experiences are common in the name of 'Korean Christianity'.

### **2.3.3 Korean communal religious experiences in Christian churches (Synthesis)**

In 1907, a great revival service was held in Pyongyang. During this time, the total number of Korean Christians increased from 9,761 in 1905 to 18,964 in 1907. In addition, the number of churches increased from 321 in 1905 to 642 in 1907 (KCHRC, 1997:275). This rapid growth in the number of Christians did not only arise from religious piety but also from political unrest and instability, such as the Chinese-Japanese War in 1894 and the Russian-Japanese War in 1904. In addition, as previously indicated, Korean's voluntary zeal for reading the Bible encouraged people to become Christians. Noticeably, Korean Christians had their own distinctive characters after great revival services. These distinctive characters include early-morning prayers, audible prayers and rice contribution.

#### **2.3.3.1 Early-morning prayers**

Before Christianity came to Korea, Korean women used to pray before daybreak. They sometimes prayed 1000 times or 10,000 times for their family members to the gods of heaven and earth (天地神明). On a small table, they lay a white bowl with clean water drawn from the well. Successively, they prayed toward the moon or a large rock etc.

For example, Reverend Gil Senju prayed three times (early morning, noon and night) for the way of Dhyana (Seon:禪, 'awakening') before his conversion. In addition, he trained his body and mind particularly after the early-morning prayer. Even after he became a clergyman, he continued to pray before daybreak. Following his model, many other worshipers came to church, immediately when they heard the daybreak bell. These early morning prayers became preparatory prayers in the great revival service in 1907 (Lee Duckju, 2001:350).

These early morning prayers arose naturally from pluralistic Korean religious surroundings, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Shamanism and Taoism. As indicated earlier, contrary to Catholics; Confucianism, Shamanism and Taoism had many objects for praying, such as heaven and earth, the sun, the moon, stars, mountains, villages and even ancestors. In addition, the frequency of prayers was related to Buddhism. Accordingly, the existence of the

early morning prayers in every Korean church reveals that Koreans' religious experiences are based on the Korean religious pluralism. This distinctive feature of early morning prayers is still in existence to date.

#### **2.3.3.2 Audible prayers**

In Buddhism and Shamanism, people read sacred books aloud. It is clearly exemplified in a Korean proverb, "a dog nearby a village school can recite a poem within three years," meaning that even a dog could recite a poem only if it stayed for three years near a school, where schoolboys read poems aloud.

Like early morning prayers, audible prayers were another distinctive characteristic of Korean Christians. A missionary, Johns (1918:352), reported that during a revival service, a missionary asked audiences to unite in prayer. Responding to this, about one thousand in audience audibly prayed aloud in perfect harmony. Scott (1976:57) analyzed this phenomenon in the following. Koreans were reticent. In addition, during the Japanese colonial era, political unrest and insecurity led Koreans to cling to Christianity. Accordingly, Scott asserted that audible prayers were effective for Korean Christians to overcome their reticence. Thus, audible prayers became another distinctive religious phenomenon in most of the Korean churches until now.

#### **2.3.3.3 Rice contribution**

Traditionally, Korean women collected rice in a 'Sengjudanji' (sacred ghost's pot). Each time when they prepared meals, they saved rice and put it in the sacred pot in the kitchen. With this rice, contributions were made for the day of memorial service (Collyer, 1905:36). Koreans thought that ancestral spirits came and ate the rice on the table during the memorial service.

However, after Korean women became Christians, God or Lord replaced ancestral spirits (Lee Duckju, 2001:359). In addition, the name of the pot was changed from Senjudanji (the sacred ghost's pot) to Judanji (Lord's pot). Rice contributions were given to lady evangelists for their daily living. A missionary Cram reported that many church female members gathered rice for contribution in 1905 (in Lee Duckju, 2001:358). The rice had the value of money, given that rice was the main food in Korea. In short, rice contribution was also one of the

most distinctive characters of the Korean church, which arose from traditional religious assets. The rice contribution pot was transformed from Ghost's pot to Lord's pot in a pluralistic Korean religious culture. Although this feature does not exist in Korea church today, it still takes place outside the church. For example, some high schools contribute rice for underprivileged students annually.

Thus, in view of Korean culture, the Bible was interpreted in a conservative way during the early missionary era. Therefore, ancestral worship service was prohibited. After a few decades, liberalistic biblical interpretations emerged one after another. Nonetheless, these liberalistic Bible readers were marginalized from Presbyterian conservative Bible readers. Until now, many Koreans get used to reading the Bible literally and conservatively. The point is that even though conservative Bible readers disregarded traditional Korean religions, they also participated in early morning prayers, audible prayers and rice contributions in their daily lives. In particular, early morning prayers and audible prayers are still dominant religious experiences in Korean churches. This reveals that Christianity was also eventually absorbed into the large pond of Korean pluralistic religious tradition and culture in the name of 'Korean' Christianity. In other words, this section proves that Christianity was contextualized in Korea from a cultural aspect.

#### **2.4 The Bible reader's response in Japanese colonial era and in Park's dictatorship era (political aspect)**

From the viewpoint of Korean Bible readers, Christianity provided Korean Christians with the ideology of independence from Japanese imperialism. On the contrary, from the viewpoint of Japanese Bible readers, Christianity was another name for Japanese imperialism. In other words, Japanese Christians interpreted the Bible from their Japanese imperialistic viewpoints, which were contradictory to Korean Christians'. Afterwards, In the 1970s, the Minjung theology gave hope to the masses in Korea. This biblical interpretation was particularly helpful for Korean Christians in protesting against Park's dictatorship. This section is discussed on the basis of various Christian's self-centered biblical interpretations, which were made given the dynamically changed political context of Korea and Japan.

#### 2.4.1 Pro-Korean nationalistic stance

Just as many Buddhist monks fought against Japanese invasion in Koryo and Chosun dynasty, Christians fought against Japanese imperialism in Japanese colonial era (1910-1945). *HyuJeng* in *Myohyang* Mountain and *YooJeng* in *Kumgang* Mountain raised a monk army against Japanese invasion in 1592. (Lee Kyback, 1992:282) Accordingly, Korean Buddhist monks did not only place value on religious meditation but also on national crisis. They did not disregard national crisis. Likewise, even though conservative Bible readers did not participate in memorial services for ancestors, they did not disregard national crisis such as the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of Christians increased through a great revival service. As indicated above, Christians had communal religious experiences in the name of 'Korean Christianity', regardless of their denominations. Particularly after the two wars (the Chinese-Japanese war in 1894 and the Russian-Japanese war in 1904), churches became places of refuge for Koreans, where they consoled each other (McCully, 1903:137,155). In addition, in churches, Koreans gathered and planned for social and political movements.

For example, firstly, Christians held a prayer meeting for national salvation in 1905, when Japanese imperialists deprived Koreans of their diplomatic rights. They prayed for Gojong (1863-1907: period of reign), the emperor of the Chosun Dynasty, and for their nation. Secondly, some Christian soldiers and officials, including Min younghwan, killed themselves patriotically around 1907. On the other hand, Jang Inhwan, a Christian from Pyongyang, terrorized D.W. Stevens, a pro-Japanese American diplomat in 1908. Thirdly, after 1907, Christians, particularly women, established many institutions for redeeming national debts such as the Rice Gathering Association. These political independence movements continued and culminated into the 'Samil (3-1) Independence Movement' in 1919. Many reverends and elders of churches, including Gil Senju and Lee Sunghoon, played major roles in organizing demonstrators and connecting other religious leaders (Lee duckju, 2001; Park Jungsun, 1997).

During that period, Christians sang hymns of battle in churches, such as 'believers are like warriors of the cross', "to become soldiers of the cross" and

“arise soldiers of the cross for the lord” (Brown, 1919:569) In view of biblical hermeneutics, Korean Christians got encouragement from reading the following Bible stories.

In the Old Testament, the theme of exodus was mainly discussed first, which dealt with Israelite’s liberation from Egyptian troops. Secondly, the theme of Babylonian captivity was disputed, which promised Israelites’ escape from the destruction of Babylon. Thirdly, Israelites’ surroundings were considered, in which Israelites were threatened by strong neighbors, such as the Philistines, and other foreign tribes. In the New Testament, the book of ‘Revelation’ was, particularly, regarded as being important. It dealt with believers’ hope that they would behold the new heavens and the new earth (Park Jungsin, 1997:189).

According to Park (1997: 189), Swallen (1907:4) quoted a headline from a textbook in a Sunday school at that time as follows: ‘Just as Japan was an evil force to Koreans, so Egypt was an evil force to Israelites. Just as Israelites realized Egyptians’ barbarity of evil forces, so Koreans gradually realized the essence of evil forces.’ This reveals that Koreans regarded themselves as Israelites; besides, Japanese imperialism was described as evil, just as Egypt was the evil force to Israelites. Park (1997:190) asserted that Korean Christians thought of Jesus as the captain of the battle. In addition, they regarded the Holy Spirit as a sword; and their beliefs as shields.

Furthermore, Brown (1919:568-570) described that a missionary, McCunn, compared Koreans to David and the Japanese to Goliath (the Philistine champion from Gath). In other words, McCunn encouraged Koreans to be strong when they were faced with a national crisis. On this ground, Japanese police authorities regarded Christian communities as a den of anti-Japanese independence movement leaders. Indifferently, Samil (3’1) Independence Movement arose countrywide and lasted for one year. Koreans protested against Japanese imperialism in the principle of nonresistance and nonviolence. However, Japanese government authorities brought military pressures on Koreans; therefore, 3,804 Korean Christians were arrested (KCHRCII, 1997: 37).

After Samil Independence Movement, Japanese changed the government policy from militarism to liberalism (the so-called culture-policy); therefore, it ensured the legal existence of Korean churches. Accordingly, in 1924, 1,266 Reverends and 1844 administrative church-officers received monthly wages from the church (Park, 1997:210). In the meantime, these economically stable

Christians became the objects of criticism by Korean nationalists. This is because they disregarded Jesus' historical and political context; in which Jesus was persecuted under the pressures of Roman Imperialism. In other words, they only focused on the gospel rather than national realities of colonialism (Park, 1997:209).

On the other hand, Japanese rulers supplied Japanese church association with a secret fund ever after the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They expected that Japanese Christians would make Korean Christians be in subjection to the authority of Japanese emperor as his subjects (KCHRC, 1997:192). However, this effort came to nothing after Samil (3'1) Independence Movement in 1919.

In summary, the Bible was interpreted for a nationalistic independence movement until Samil Independence Movement. As long as Christians were Koreans, they could not have lived separately from the political context of Korea. They used the Bible from the viewpoint of the oppressed. In addition, they placed much value on the political context of Jesus. They perceived Jesus as a person who stood against the Roman Empire for the oppressed. In this way, the Bible became the source of ideological weapons for Korean Christians to protest against Japanese imperialism, even though its political Bible reading was rarely done until the 1970s, after the Samil Independence Movement in 1919. Ironically, Japanese Christians supported Japanese Imperialism using the Bible.

#### **2.4.2 Pro-Japanese nationalistic stance**

According to Dohi Akio (1993), after the Chinese-Japanese war in 1894, Japanese Christian leaders were loyal to Japanese imperialism. For example, in a Christian newspaper printed in Tokyo on Aug. 10<sup>th</sup> in 1894, Japanese Christian Fellow Association reported that they were moved by Japanese Emperor's declaration of war. Furthermore, they pledged their loyalty to their country. Dohi (1993) asserted that Japanese Christians were assured that the war was for the independence of Korea and the peace of the Orient.

In 1907, Japanese Methodist missionaries introduced a new Methodist church doctrine in the following. "We are obedient to whatever authorities on earth. This is because all authorities in the world are established by God. Accordingly, we

serve the Japanese emperor; we respect the Japanese Constitution; and we abide by the law" (Dohi, 1993:211). This doctrine inferred from Rom, 13: 1-2: "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves" On this ground, Japanese Christians pledged their loyalty to Japanese imperialism. For example, a Methodist church leader, Honda, a nongovernmental envoy, justified his proclamation that the outbreak of the Russian-Japanese war was absolutely righteous and necessary for all Asians; while he participated in an international Christian meeting in 1905.

When Japan invaded Korea, Japanese Christians supported this invasion. At that time, the theory of 'Ilseongjo' (日鮮同祖) was spread widely by the Japanese. That is, Korea and Japan originated from the same ancestor. Therefore, Uemura (1858-1925), an influential Japanese Christian, asserted that the land of Korea should have been given back to the Japanese forefathers. He quoted scriptures from Deut. 31:7-8: "Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you must go with the people into the land that the Lord swore to **their forefathers** to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. The lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not discouraged." Uemura (in Dohi, 1993:52) asserted that the Japanese authorities rightfully annexed Korea as the Korean forefathers. Furthermore, he supported this theory by using Japanese emperor's edict. That is, the Japanese received the land of Korea as an imperial 'gift'; therefore the Japanese had a 'task' to rule over it.

When Samil (3'1) independence movement broke out, Wadase (in Dohi, 1993:69), a Japanese Methodist resident in Korea, criticized Korean Christians. He blamed Korean Christians for participating in a resistance movement. He reasoned that Christianity should focus on universalism or worldwide brotherhood. In other words, Christianity should be based on the principle of non-resistance. However, Korean Christians participated in independence movement, resisting Japanese Imperialism. For that reason, Wadase criticized the Korean Christian's independence movement. Wadase underrated the Samil independence movement as a riot, which was led by Koreans obsessed with Judaic Patriotism (in Dohi, 1993:64). In addition, Wadase regarded the Tiendao-kyo (天道教: Korean indigenous religion, which had been supported by

Korean farmers in the late Chosun dynasty) as superstitious people's political gathering.

In this way, the majority of Japanese Christians interpreted the Bible from their viewpoint. Dohi (1993) put it, "we know that the Japanese and Koreans are equal in front of Jesus Christ. All human beings are sons of God. On this ground, Japanese emperor will treat all Koreans and Japanese equally." The last sentence was related to another Japanese imperialistic policy, the so-called 'Hwanggucksinmin' (皇國臣民: subjects of the Japanese Emperor). Koreans were expected to become 'Hwanggucksinmin' by force during the Japanese colonial era. However, Koreans were discriminated from the Japanese.

In short, most Japanese Christian Bible readers were in subjection to Japanese imperialism. They interpreted the Bible from the viewpoint of the Japanese emperor. Wadase criticized nationalistic features of Korean Christianity, given the principle of the Bible: worldwide brotherhood. However, he did not realize that he was also a Japanese nationalist. On this ground, the Bible was interpreted from a self-centered viewpoint depending on the Bible reader's political context. For that reason, Korean Christians and Japanese Christians were in opposition to each other, even though they read the same Bible.

#### **2.4.3 Pro-Korean masses stance (Minjung theology)**

After Chosun's liberation from Japanese Imperialism in 1945, Korea was divided into North and South Korea by two foreign countries: Russia in North Korea and the United States in South Korea. After the Korean War that lasted for 3 years from 1950 to 1953, South Koreans were faced with political unrest in society. Taking advantage of this unrest, military authority was established in 1961 through a military coup, which lasted until 1987. Particularly during the period of president Park Junghee's dictatorship in the 1970s, thousands of demonstrators were killed in anti-government demonstrations. For example, Jen Taeil (1948-1970), a tailor, burnt himself to death in 1970 for asserting human rights of workers.

In this political disorder, Minjung (the crowds, 'Ochlos', the masses)

theology appeared as the mainstream of biblical hermeneutics after the 1970s in Korea. Ahn Byungmu was one of the prominent Minjung theologians. He emphasized the 'event' rather than the 'words' in Bible, in opposition to the western biblical hermeneutics. On this ground, Jesus' words were significant only when they were considered in the given political context in Jesus time (Ahn Byungmu, 1993a: 97). In this sense, Ahn's methodology of reading the Bible corresponded to West's (1993) 'Behind the text'. The point is that Jesus played a role model of liberation movement to show that the main theme of the Bible is liberation.

In the event of Exodus, Ahn (1993a) asserted that Israelites represented all oppressed people in the world and not one race. According to Ahn (1993a: 64), the oppressed people who lived under the rule of monarchy in Palestine were united in spirit with Israelites who escaped from Egypt in the name of 'Mono-Yahwism'. This shows that 'Mono-Yahwism' became a universal cause to unite the oppressed people, who suffered from class distinction. Irrespective of races, the oppressed could believe in God through tribal alliances. This 'Mono-Yahwism' lasted for 200 years until David's Kingdom was set up in 1070 B.C.E.

However, King David and King Solomon confined this universal God in the temple. After unifying ancient Israel and Judea into Israel, King David built the kingdom of Israel. Afterwards, his illegitimate son, King Solomon built up the 'Temple of God' in Jerusalem. Consequently, people who lived in different provinces had to make pilgrimages to the Holy Land (Jerusalem). Besides, whenever they wanted to worship God, they had to bring burnt offerings to priests. Furthermore, the priest class in Jerusalem excluded poor people and workers through the sanitation policy. People who wore dirty clothes could not enter the temple in Jerusalem. In short, religion was used as a tool of politics; therefore, a universal God reduced to a local god (Ahn, 1993a: 167).

To restore 'Mono-Yahwism', the prophet Amos resisted this despotism of high classes in Israel. "Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I (Jehovah) will not accept them"(Amos, 5:21). This resistance movement was linked to 'Chasidim', 'Essener', John the Baptist and Jesus Christ (Ahn, 1993a: 66).

In the 'event' of Jesus Christ, Ahn particularly emphasized Mark 1:14, which says: "After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good new of God." Galilee belonged to ancient Israel (not Judea), where Minjung

(the masses) had a strong belief in 'Mono-Yahwism'. On the contrary, Jerusalem was the place where the priest class treated Minjung (the masses) cruelly. Jesus intended to restore a universal "Mono-Yahwism"; therefore, Jesus placed much value on Galilee rather than Jerusalem. For example, in Galilee, Jesus firstly proclaimed that 'the Kingdom of God is near' (Mark 1:15) Besides, Jesus was resurrected in Galilee to meet his disciples: "But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you'"(Mark, 16:7). Furthermore, Jesus hated monarchy as inferred from Mark 10:42: '...those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them...'

On this ground, Ahn (1993a: 67) asserted that Jesus demolished the 'Temple of Jerusalem', which had been built by King David. In this way, Jesus could restore 'Mono-Yahwism'. Afterwards, 'Mono-Yahwism' was changed into 'through Jesus Christ' and it continued to develop in a close connection to Minjung. In short, the Old and New Testament were connected through the theme of liberation of the oppressed in the name of Jesus Christ.

Ahn Byungmu' s Minjung theology arose from the masses' political and economic situation, in which they had to struggle with political injustice and economic inequality in the Korean context. Ahn Byungmu confessed that he was reminded of Jesus when he saw demonstrators; who lay on the ground with faces covered in blood while fighting against unjust powers (Ahn, 1993b: 5). On this ground, the Bible was politically interpreted to stir up the masses' democratic movements after the 1970s from the viewpoint of the oppressed. On this ground, Minjung theology was an extension of the political interpretation of early Korean Bible readers. Just as early Korean Bible readers put special emphasis on the resistance against Japanese imperialism, so Minjung theologians concentrated on the resistance against political dictatorship within the Korean political context.

## 2.5 Summary

This chapter is discussed on a contextualized biblical hermeneutics in Korea. For this, this chapter is discussed, from a historical viewpoint, on the basis of bilateral relationships, such as Korean culture and Bible reading; and Korean politics and Bible reading.

In view of Korean culture and Bible reading, before the arrival of the missionaries, Korea had a pluralistic religious tradition: Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and Shamanism. These religions were deeply engraved in Korean people's mind in harmony. However, the first Christian missionaries in Korea interpreted the Bible conservatively. Therefore, it invoked cultural conflicts between Christian teachings and traditional ethics (particularly Confucianism), such as the removal of household shrines and the abolition of memorial services. However, these conservative Bible readers were also nationalistic in a harmonious religious pluralism; just as liberalistic Bible readers flexibly interpreted the Bible given the Korean context of pluralistic religious tradition. The early morning prayers, the audible prayers and rice contributions were representative common religious experiences. In this way, from the cultural viewpoint, Christianity was transformed into Korean Christianity in Korean cultural contexts.

In view of Korean politics and Bible reading, the Bible was used as a tool for politics. In the period of Japanese Imperialism, for Koreans, the biblical interpretations provided Korean Christians with a political ideology, with which they fought for national independence. On the other hand, for the Japanese, the Bible was interpreted for supporting the Japanese imperialism. In particular, Japanese Christians were assured that Japanese Imperialism could have made all countries in Asia peaceful. Furthermore, in the 1970s, the Bible was interpreted to support demonstrators who resisted Park dictatorship in the name of Minjung theology.

In short, from a historical viewpoint, the Bible has been interpreted given the political and cultural context of Korea. On this stance, Christianity and the Bible could have lost significance, if they were explained separately from the cultural and political contexts. For example, as Ahn put it: "what is important is

not the theology of 'word' but the theology of 'event'", Jesus' words could not have been understood without any consideration of 'the event of the Cross' (Ahn, 1993a:32). On this ground, this chapter reveals that biblical interpretation was based on the Korean readers' political and cultural context. Afterwards, its influence was confined to political and cultural contexts of Korea. This is called the 'contextualized biblical hermeneutics' in Korea.

However, this contextualized biblical hermeneutics was vulnerable to criticism such as 'self-centered hermeneutics'. From the reader's viewpoint, the Bible was used as a tool for their own political and cultural interests. Chapter 3 discusses 'contextualized biblical hermeneutics' in South Africa.

### **3. Contextualized biblical hermeneutics in South Africa**

As discussed above, the definition of contextualized biblical hermeneutics is as follows: 'Interpretation of the Bible on the basis of the context of Bible readers and the Bible text. Influence of its interpretation is confined to the Bible reader's political and cultural context in the name of 'belonging to difference' (West, 1999:142).

Whereas Korean Bible readers voluntarily accepted Christianity as a revolutionary ideology, Christianity in Southern Africa came with European colonization (Muzorewa, 1985:24). As Beetham (1967: 11) asserts, missionaries used colonialists' trading post as missionary centers. As a result, even in Article XIII of the Company Charter, the name of Christ was used as a metaphor for the purpose of increasing the interests of the company: "the Dutch East India Company in the Cape would create a settlement in which the name of Christ may be extended, and the interests of the Company promoted" (Chidester, 1992:35).

On this ground, the early missionaries in Southern Africa observed traditional African culture from a similar viewpoint of western colonialists. As a result, the Bible interpretation was influenced by western colonialists' viewpoints, which were characterized by the superiority of western culture. African culture-centered Bible reading emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The issue of cultural conflicts between western culture and African traditional culture is discussed in the name of 'adaptation, contextualization, inculturation or indigenization theology' (Sindima, 1999:163). Some points on biblical interpretation are clarified by explaining various African scholars view points; given that these cultural conflicts did not occur only in South Africa but also in all the Sub-Saharan African countries.

In the Apartheid era, the Bible was used for political purposes in South Africa. White people used the Bible as a weapon for oppressing the black people; whereas black South African used the Bible as a tool of liberation. The issue of political Bible interpretation is discussed by disputing South African scholars' opinions; given that Apartheid policy was applied only in South Africa.

By clarifying the relationship between the Bible and culture, the Bible and politics; this chapter reveals the 'Contextualization' of biblical hermeneutics in South Africa.

### 3.1 Before the arrival of the Missionaries

#### 3.1.1 No religion/ "Satan's religion"

As inferred from the well-known animation movie, Walt Disney's *Pocahontas*, the phrase of "savage, savage, savage" was synonymous with black people in Africa. Savages had no religions. Even if they had any religion, it was called "savage religion." For example, according to Chidester (1992:37-8), the Methodist missionary to the Xhosa, William Shaw, argued that black people 'cannot be said to possess any religion' in 1820s; while Methodist missionary W.J. Shrewbury insisted that they were 'without any religion, true or false'. In the 1850s, British academics regarded the Zulu as 'representative of the nature of African or "savage" religion in general' (Chidester, 1996: 25).

Furthermore, as Shorter (1973:21) asserts, early missionaries regarded mission lands in Africa as the 'Empire of Satan.' This was an extension of the idea of John Snow, a trader in Cape Coast, the Gold Coast. Snow (in Davis, 1957:287) put it:

"A black man forgets all obligations but the present; these are his friends that dashec(i.e., give him presents) oftenest and always..... Trusting a Negro was sin against company (i.e., Royal Africa Company) hardly to be forgiven. Treat a Negro with a kindness very dunstable (i.e. straightforward), there being no people on earth that you can gain a point sooner of than the black, if soft and easy methods are used. All other methods of violence serve only to raise devils that none as yet has had the good fortune to lay."

This message revealed that black people are morally bankrupt, not trustworthy and by nature men of violence. On this stance, according to Pobe (1979:102), it was generally accepted to colonialists that "sin is Negro as virtue is white" in the 18<sup>th</sup> and the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Emphatically, from the viewpoint of settlers in British colonies, every black male, regardless of age, was classified as a 'boy', such as 'house boy', 'shamba-boy', 'office-boy', 'ton-boy' and 'mine-boy'. Even until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, black people were regarded as 'Peter Pan children, who can never grow up, a child race.' (Mamdani, 1996:4) On this stance, Smut, South African Prime Minister, satirically, put it, during Rhodes Memorial lectures at Oxford in 1929, "A child-like human (black person) cannot be a bad human, for are we (Europeans) not in spiritual matters bidden to be like unto little children?"; given Matt. 18:3, 'Unless you turn around and become as young children, you will by no

means enter into the kingdom of the heavens.’(in Mamdani,1996:4)

In short, as Idowu asserts, “the European missionaries came to Africa with a preconceived notion that there was either no religion at all in Africa or that it was entirely of the Devil” (in Muzorewa, 1985:34). On this ground, the purpose of missionaries focused on the conversion of Africans. In other words, Africans could be rescued from the ‘darkness’ of not knowing God by knowing Jesus Christ, the ‘Light’ of the World (Muzorewa, 1985:34; John 8:12). If that was the case, did the Africans really live in darkness or in a Satan’s empire from religious viewpoints?

### **3.1.2 Africa’s God: Diffused monotheism in a symbol of circle on a horizontal plane**

African religions were characterized by the so-called “diffused monotheism”, as Idowu put it: “this has the advantage of showing that the religion is monotheism, though it is a monotheism in which the good Deity delegates certain portions of His authority to certain divine functionaries who work as they are commissioned by Him” (1962: 204).

In other words, whereas the Supreme God in Christianity and Islam played every significant role such as from the creation of the universe to the judgment of human beings; the Supreme God in African religion delegated some of His roles to Divinities, Spirits and the living-dead; particularly in the matter of the supervision of human beings’ daily affairs, such as blessings, punishments, rain fall and so on.

John S. Mbiti (1990) classifies the objects of believing in African religions as follows: the Supreme God; Divinities; Spirits; and The living-dead.

Firstly, just as Koreans had believed in the Supreme God in the name of ShangTi (上帝) or Tien (天) before Christianity came to Korea; Africans had the notion of a Supreme God before European missionaries came. Setiloane (1979:60) put it, “the African God, whose name is ‘Modimo’ in Sotho-Tswana, could never die because it has no human limitations and is so immense, incomprehensible, wide, tremendous and unique.” In addition, according to

Smith(1950:100-1), Xhosa clearly defines the conception of the Supreme Being as follows:

“A God is the creator of all things, who controls and governs all, and as such is the rewarder of good and the punisher of evil. Worship is never directly offered to Him, but through the medium of the *iminyanya* or ancestral spirits, who in the unseen world are nearer to Him, and know more than men on earth. The Xhosa name for God is **u-Dali**, i.e. the Creator or Supreme Being, and it is from the same root as **um-Dali**, the Creator. Other names by which He is known are **Tixo** and **Qamata**. .... Tixo has almost submerged the original Xhosa term Dali- the author of all existent life, the creator of man, the animals, and all forms of living things...”

Likewise, Bishop of Natal, Colenso in the 1850s asserted that **uNkulunkulu** and **uMvelinqangi**, were also the Zulu names of God (Chidester, 1996:129). He defines the terms in his Zulu-English dictionary in the following.

“Nkulunkulu (U) a Great-Great-One, Supreme Being, traditional Creator of all things, called also um-Velinqangi...” (in Smith, 1950:103)

Besides, Kunene(1981) emphasizes the Zulu name of God as follows: ‘uMvelinqangi umdali wezulu nomhlaba’(Only God who is the source of all life is superior to all things.)(1981,xv)

As Mbiti (1990:33) asserts, the point is that ‘God is transcendental in theory but in practice He is immanent.’ Although God, as the Supreme Being, is remote from Africans’ daily affairs; “He is immanent, being manifested in natural objects and phenomena, and they can turn to Him in acts of worship, at any place and any time”(Mbiti, 1990:33). The Supreme Being’s immanency is clearly proved from the title U-zivelele; which means, “He who came of himself of being; He who is of himself” in Zulu (Smith, 1950:109). Besides, the Supreme Being was never worshiped directly but was worshiped through mediums, ancestral spirits. As a result, ever present to the Africans was one beyond them who was supreme (Smith, 1950:101).

Secondly, Africans had thousands of Divinities (Mbiti, 1990:75). According to Mbiti (1990), Divinities were created by God. “They are associated with Him,

and often stand for His activities or manifestations either as personifications or as the spiritual beings in charge of these major objects or phenomena of nature”(Mbiti, 1990:75). For example, in Yoruba, the Divinity ‘Orisa-nla’ acts as ‘God’s earthly deputy’ and ‘Orunmila’ as one, who understands every language spoken on earth, represents ‘God’s omniscience and knowledge. “These divinities are associated with natural phenomena and objects, as well as with human activities and experiences”(Mbiti, 1990:75).

Thirdly, Africans have myriads of Spirits and ‘the living dead’ (Mbiti, 1990: 77). Whereas Divinities were created as spiritual beings like angels in Christianity, Spirits and the living dead are the destiny of human beings after death (Mbiti, 1990:78). Mbiti (1990) explains the notion of Spirits and the living dead by using the African concept of time and space.

According to Mbiti (1990), he introduces the concept of Sasa (Micro-time) and Zamani (Macro-time) as follows: “Sasa has the sense of immediacy, nearness, and now-ness and is the period of immediate concern for the people, since that is where or when they exist. What would be future is extremely brief...Sasa is really an experiential extension of the Now moment stretched into the short future and into the unlimited past (Zamani)... Sasa is the time region in which **people are conscious of their existence**, and within which they project themselves both into the short future and mainly into the past (Zamani)... Sasa generally binds individuals and their immediate environment together. It is the period of conscious living.” On the other hand, “Zamani is the period of the myth, giving a sense of foundation or security to the Sasa period; and binding together all created things, so that all things are embraced within the Macrotime”(Mbiti 1990:21-22). In other words, in the case of ‘the living-dead’, as long as descendants (homestead-members) remembered them, they stayed in the time-region of Sasa (Micro-time). However, after generation and generation, when they were forgotten, they entered into the time-region of Zamani (Macro-time) in the name of Spirits. Mbiti explains that the living dead, generally, entered the realm of Sprits after five generations (Mbiti, 1990:82).

As long as the living-dead were remembered within the homestead, they were in the state of personal immortality. In contrast, when their process of dying was complete,(i.e. when their homestead-members did not remember them any more), they became Spirits, which entered ‘the state of collective immortality.’ (Mbiti, 1990:158)

The point is that the living dead, who were also called ancestors or

ancestor spirits, were the essential objects of worship or offerings in domestic rituals of the homestead. In other words, although their physical bodies decayed, their spiritual bodies, as living homestead-members, continued to associate with their descendents and homestead members on the basis of community (homestead) through rituals: "The dying person is being cut off from human beings, and yet there must be continuing ties between the living and the departed. Relatives and neighbours come to bid farewell to the dying man and to mourn his departure, and yet there is continuity through his children and through rituals which unite the two worlds"(Mbiti, 1990:151). On the other hand, offerings to Spirits, who were positioned beyond the relatively stable domestic domain, such as in the wild, the forest or the river, were occasionally made (Chidester, 1992: 9). In case of Spirits, who lost personal links with homestead members, they were regarded as being harmful and evil to people (Mbiti, 1990:199).

On this ground, the concept of 'diffused monotheism' can be described as follows: even though God, Divinities, Spirits and living-dead vertically resided in hierarchy, Africa's God is regarded as one God in vital union of many gods in a horizontal plane (Mulago, 1991:120). Kunene (1981) compares the state of one God in 'vital union' to the symbol of a circle, which represents the universe. That is, although Divinities, Spirits and the living-dead evolved from the supreme God, every element including the supreme God is in harmony in the symbol of a circle on a horizontal plane. Furthermore, Africa's God is understood to be 'a reality whose benefits are tangible and are intended to meet human need in concrete ways' rather than 'a philosophical concept' (Muzorewa, 1985:80; Sawyerr, 1970:10). This was because even the Supreme God was immanent and tangible. In addition, He was not the direct object of offering but He was worshiped through ancestral offerings during rituals. In this way, many gods become One God in vital union in the name of Africa's God or diffused monotheism. The point is that the notion of Africa's God could not be explained separately from the community, where the living and the dead lived together. The next section discusses Africans' ontology characterized by 'ubuntu'.

### 3.1.3 Ubuntu (African ethics) → Umuntu (human person)

Just as the Supreme God, Divinities, Spirits and the living dead (ancestors) resided in hierarchical order in the spirit realm; so human beings, animals, plants and unanimated things resided in the extension of the hierarchy. That is, all elements of the spirit and physical world are located in one hierarchical structure. Nonetheless, just as many gods were understood as one God in vital union in the symbol of a circle in a horizontal plane; so every animated or unanimated creature was understood to be in vital union in the symbol of a globe.

The difference in each element is in the quality of vital force ('Seriti')(Shutte, 1993:57). For example, Sub-human or unanimated things were regarded as lacking vital force in the name of evil; whereas God and ancestors were known to have strong vital forces in the name of goodness (Shutte, 1993:57). As a result, human beings, as the center of creation, were required to protect or increase 'Seriti' (vital force) particularly through communal rituals: "The activating and final aim of all Bantu effort is only the intensification of vital force. To protect or to increase vital force, that is the motive and the profound meaning in all their practices"(Tempels, 1959: 175). On this ground, Kwenda (1999:1) asserts that human beings' goal in life was to become an ancestor by practicing good in African religion.

Although each element, vertically, resided in the hierarchy of life forces, it was in union with the vital forces. This is because, the relationship amongst each element, whether in the spirit world or in the physical world, was much more significant than the identity of its own. As indicated, the identities of many gods in the spirit world were subsumed in One God in vital union in the symbol of a circle in a horizontal plane. The life force of the vital union extends to the physical world. For example, when individuals die, it was perceived that they did not leave the community but continued to live as the living dead within the community. Furthermore, even domestic animals continued to live with them (Mbiti 1978,157).

Likewise, in the symbol of a circle in a horizontal plane, human beings, as the center of creation, could only be defined within the relationship amongst individuals in the community. This is called African ethics of 'ubuntu', a person is a person through persons (Shutte, 1993:46). The point is that a person can become Umuntu (human person) only through 'ubuntu'. As Menkiti asserted, "in

the African view, it is the community which defines the person as person, not some isolated static quality of rationality, will or memory”(1979:158). In addition, he emphasized that the community was “an organic dimension to the relationship between the component individuals” rather than “the aggregated sum of individuals” (1979:165-7). This community was exemplified in form of family. Contrary to the general concept of family, such as a nuclear family or a large family; African families included “anyone, not only those related by blood, kinship or marriage.” Shutte (1993:50) emphasized the significance of the family: “in the last resort humanity itself is conceived of as a family, a family which one joins at birth but does not leave by dying”

On this ground, individuals grew up within this organic community. Contrary to the western Cartesian ontological proposition: ‘*Cogito ergo sum*-i.e., I think, therefore I am’; African philosophy focused on ‘*Cognatus ergo sum*-i.e., I belong by blood relationship, therefore I am’ (Pobee, 1979:88) That is, ‘ontological independence to human society moves from society to individuals rather than from individuals to society’ (Menkiti, 1979:165-7). Besides, although Pobee(1979:88), ostensibly confines ‘ubuntu’ into ‘blood relationship’, such as a family, a clan, and a tribe; principally, the realm of ‘ubuntu’ could expand to any human in the world.

The point is that, in the symbol of a globe, whether God, human beings or animals; whether living or dead; unity in life or vital union can be realized in “a relationship in being and life of each person with descendants, family, brothers, and sisters in the clan, with ancestors, and with God who is the ultimate source of all life”(Mulago, 1991:120). On this stance, rituals and religious practices became significant, given that they strengthened the solidarity of the community members. These are good models of African ethics or ontology of ‘ubuntu’, which can be realized in community members’ communal life experiences.

#### **3.1.4 African communal life experiences**

This section discusses African communal life experiences, given the relationship between the Bible and African culture in the following: issues of ancestor rituals, polygamy, music & dance, and healing.

In the case of ancestor rituals, Salala (1998:136), through the case study of the Basukuma of Tanzania, asserted that "sacrifices were made to ancestors only". For example, firstly, in the case of a poor harvest, people sacrificed an animal as a means of pacifying the angry ancestors who were considered to be responsible for the misfortune; secondly, when a wife got sick or possessed by ancestral spirits, homestead members made marital sacrifices to matrilineal ancestors; Thirdly, the Basukuma built new homesteads every fifth or tenth year to consecrate homesteads by sacrificing a goat or a sheep. This sacrifice guaranteed family head protection from sorcerers and also guaranteed the provision of the needs of his family.

Likewise, these ancestor rituals were also ubiquitous in South Africa. In Nguni and Sotho-Tswana, male ancestors played dominant roles in rituals; while both paternal and maternal ancestors featured in Tsonga and Venda rituals (Chidester, 1992:9). Cows or beer were used as offerings. These were for establishing "communication with the ancestors and the ancestor spirit responsible for causing the particular misfortune that was being addressed in the ancestral ritual"(Chidester, 1992:10).

In other words, through these ancestor rituals, homestead members participated in communal solidarity; in which 'the living, the dead, the origin of life and deity' were harmonized. This enabled them to gain the 'fullness of life' against sickness or misfortune (Sindima, 1999:143). On this stance, Sindima defines "ritual as a way of expressing communion or solidarity with the living, the dead, the origin of life, deity, through word, action or material means"(1999:143). In short, ancestor rituals were one of the most important African religious experiences. Through these rituals, the vital forces increased and invigorated homestead members in vital union, whether the living or the dead.

With respect to the 'fullness of life' or vital unity, polygamy was understood as a means of perpetuation of a lineage (Mulago, 1991:131). In other words, the more descendant a person had, the bigger his homestead became. That is, as long as the descendants remembered their ancestors, they could perpetuate their lives in the homestead. This led to increase vital force of homestead as well as individuals, which was in accord with the goal of human beings. This can be another model of the realization of 'ubuntu.'

During ritual processes, music & dance, as 'mediations with the Sacred,' helped Africans to unify the living and the dead. Niangoran-Bouah (1991:82) regarded drumming as 'mediation with the sacred.' He asserted that "the sacred was an organized and hierarchized universe filled with invisible beings which included God, spirits, the spirits of the ancestors, myths, legends, ceremonies, elaborate rituals and cult objects." To communicate with the sacred, the drums were beaten as a sound language. Just as Christians read God's thought through the Bible, so Africans communicate with the sacred through drums. In addition to music, Smith (1979) compared the dance in African rituals to the Bible in Christianity as follows: "What theology is to Christian church, a ritual dance may be to an African tribe"(1979:15). His explanation arose from the contrast between the literate and textual based European culture and the oral and performative media based African culture.

The point is that the ancestor rituals, polygamy, music & dance were the crucial African communal life experiences; which enhanced the life force of the homestead as well as individuals in vital union with the living and the dead. If some forces prevented the fullness of life, they were regarded as evil. On this stance, evil revealed itself as the cause of diseases to individuals as well as to the homestead itself. For that reason, a ritual for healing, as an ancestor ritual, was practiced to ancestors; in the premise that it could restore the harmony between the spirit and the physical world; and between individuals and the homestead.

Ancestor rituals, polygamy, music & dance, and healing are crucial issues, given the relationship between the Bible and African culture. This is because they were regarded as primitive, 'Peter Pan children', savage, evil, or as darkness from the early European missionaries' viewpoints. Interestingly, just as Korean memorial services were criticized by conservative Bible readers as ancestor rituals, so African ancestor rituals were criticized by the early European missionaries in Africa.

### 3.2 The arrival of the Bible in South Africa

Koreans voluntarily accepted the Bible as a revolutionary ideology for political reformation. Hence, the Bible was mainly read by reformative elite scholars as an object of learning. In addition, the Bible was not translated in Korean only by missionaries but also by Korean scholars in the 1880s.

In contrast, the Bible found its way to South Africa with European colonialists. Missionaries from LMS (London Missionary Society) engaged in missionary work to the Nguni people on the eastern coast from Xhosa to Zulu and Swazi in the 1800s (Sundkler and Steed, 2000: 344-5). Afterward, Anglicans came to South Africa in 1848 and did missionary work from Cape Town. In addition, American Board of Commissioners functioned as a pioneering catalytic body in Natal in 1834, similar to the Congregational LMS in the Cape.

However, missionary work did not proceed favorably to the European missionaries, given the wars between native black people and Europeans in the Nguni. While debilitating wars in 1819, 1834-1835, 1846 and 1850-52 sliced away the Xhosa territory, Xhosa bitterness and anger increased and deepened against white rulers. As a result, any missionary attempt came to be much more difficult: "The religion of the Whites might be good enough for slaves and women, on the margin of society, but not for able-bodied Xhosa or Thembu warriors" (EOA, 1999:147; Sundkler and Steed, 2000:345). In addition, given that missionaries used colonialists' trading post as missionary centers, Africans could not differentiate the religious intention of white missionaries from the economic intention of white colonialists (Beetham, 1967:11). In other words, missionaries were subordinate to the colonial government: "With few exceptions, Methodist ministers and missionaries were in agreement with the Anglican hierarchy on the political imperative of loyalty and obedience to the colonial government"(Chidester, 1992:85).

Nonetheless, in the process of colonization from the southern Cape to the north, rumors were spread in Tswana communities as early as 1823. That is, "any community having accepted a missionary in their midst could not be defeated in war" (Sundkler and Steed, 2000:326). For example, missionaries were symbols of firearms: "the advent of the missionary had deterred the chief's enemies from attacking him out of a dread of being resisted by

firearms”(Chiderster, 1992:42). In addition to the political interest, western medicine that missionaries introduced to Africans played a positive role in the conversion of some Africans to Christianity; as inferred from the episode: when the King, Mpande had been hit by an attack of gout in 1866, Schreuder, Norwegian Lutheran, gave him medication and was cured (Sundkler and Steed, 2000:364). Therefore, for a political or medical interest, African chiefs accepted Christianity.

Besides, missionaries sometimes provided refuge for disappointed people in African ancestral beliefs. For example, “in 1856-1857, following millenarian prophecies, many Xhosa communities killed their cattle and destroyed their crops, but the ancestors failed to rise as predicted. Instead 20,000 Xhosa died in the ensuing famine” (EOA, 1999:147). In fact, substantial numbers of Xhosa people, for the first time, converted to Christianity after this event (EOA, 1999:147). In short, during the early missionary era, most Africans accepted Christianity not for the evangelical purposes but for the political, medical and ideological purposes.

With the imbalance of political powers, African converts had to understand the Bible in European languages. For that reason, given black converts' illiteracy, hymns and messages were mainly used in the mission field (Hodgson, 1980:7).

For example, on the one hand, Ntsikana (1770-1821), son of a sub-chief of the Ngqika tribe, composed four hymns such as 'Ntsikana's Bell', 'Dalibom-Life-Creator', 'the Round Hymn' and the 'Great Hymn'; after he saw a heavenly vision in 1815 (Sundkler and Steed, 2000:347; Hodgson, 1980; Bokwe, 1914:13). He composed hymns by using the source material, which was largely taken from the oral tradition of the Xhosa.

Firstly, 'Ntsikana's Bell' was “chanted by the composer at the dawn of day, standing at his hut door, summoning his congregation to morning prayers. As people gathered they joined in the strain adding the other vocal part”(Bokwe, 1914:18). In particular, the chant 'Sele', 'Ahom' referred to 'some idea of power on high speaking through thunder for instance.' Hodgson (1980:6) asserted that traditionally, the Supreme Being was thought to 'manifest in lightening and was then referred to as iNkosi yezulu, the Lord of the Sky.'

Secondly, 'Dalibom- the Life- Creator' was chanted while settling the assembly down after Ntsikana's Bell (Bokwe, 1914:23). Dalibom derived its

meaning from the praise-name of God. Hodgson (1980:8) explained that this hymn was a good model that guided people to liberate themselves “from the present to ascend to something else, whether it be literally heaven or something new in terms of what we believe.” It was chanted as a way of quieting the audience. It was chanted “as a Solo, later the congregation joining him in parts and the Chorus as reproduced. The “Ele,le,le homna” sounded pretty much like Hallelujah, Amen”(Bokwe, 1914:24). ‘Round’ meant an ox without horns; viz. ‘the Poll-headed’, which suggested defenselessness. According to Hodgson (1980:10), this hymn revealed that Ntsikana sought no power for himself and, as a servant of God, saw himself a man of peace.

Lastly, the ‘Great Hymn’ “was printed in all the Xhosa-speaking collections used for Church praise. Words and Music were traditionally handed down until committed to print as arranged by the compiler of ‘Amaculo ase Lovedale.”(Bokwe, 1914:26) According to Hodgson (1980), this hymn revealed that Ntsikana intended to teach the notion of sin, the need for repentance and the belief in salvation through trusting in the death of Christ. Particularly, the Great Hymn was so influential on missionary work that it afterward became something of a national anthem to the Xhosa: “Ulo Tixo omkulu, ngosezulwini, He, is the Great God, Who is in heaven...”(Sundkler and Steed, 2000:348; Hodgson, 1980:19).

On the other hand, the message in the book of Genesis in the Bible, such as Creation, the Fall, the Flood and the Last Judgment attracted keen attention in the missionary field. This message was, of course, relayed in the native language through interpreters. Paradoxically, for Africans, the period required for learning European languages could have taken much shorter compared with the period required for translating the Bible into their native languages. However, this idea arose from the misunderstanding of the fact that African language was based on an oral language rather than written language. The point is that, for Africans in the early missionary era, singing hymns was as much an effective way as reading the Bible to accept God’s message; as inferred from the generally known aphorism: “What theology is to Christian church, a ritual dance may be to an African tribe”(Smith, 1979:15).

Finally, J.W. Appleyard, a British missionary, translated the New Testament into Xhosa in 1846 and the whole Bible in 1859. Colenso, Bishop of

Natal from 1853 until his death in 1883, translated the Bible into Zulu, with the help of his catechist, William Ngidi. Noticeably, the Bible was translated by Europeans rather than by native Africans, given the oral and performative media based African culture. This shows the historical distinction between Korean based Bible reading and South African based Bible reading: voluntary and passive.

### **3.3 The response of the first generation Bible readers (cultural aspect)**

Whereas Koreans played a pivotal role in Korean Bible reading without European colonialists in the name of conservative and liberalistic Bible reading, Afro-centric Bible reading developed during the struggle with Euro-centric Bible reading. In other words, Euro-centric Bible reading focuses on the rejection of African traditional culture, whereas Afro-centric Bible reading focuses on harmonization of western biblical teachings and African culture in the name of 'adaptation', 'contextualization', 'inculturation' or 'indigenization' theology' (Sindima, 1999:163). In the process, the Bible interpretation was contextualized particularly on the basis of African communal religious experiences. The development of African indigenous churches directly serves as an example of the 'contextualization of biblical hermeneutics' from a cultural aspect.

#### **3.3.1 Euro-centric missionary Bible reading**

According to Mills (Mills, 2001: 161), in the early missionary era (the 19<sup>th</sup> century) Revd. Barret, Wesleyan Methodist clergy, pointed out that African rituals were "superstitious customs, barbarous and filthy practice." Furthermore, missionaries consistently regarded African rituals as witchcraft: "They attacked ancestor ritual, initiation, polygyny, bridewealth, and the ritualized relations of production and gender roles that went into building up a homestead" (Chidester, 1992:39). Since the late Middle Ages, Europeans had the long history of witch trials, through which they had a general conception that witches were idolatrous and 'heathen' against God. On this ground, leaders of Christian churches officially opposed African ancestor rituals, which "were idolatrous" (Pobee, 1979:64).

The center of this 'heathen' or 'idolatry' debate was in whether African

ancestor rituals belonged to ancestral worship or ancestral veneration. If African ancestor rituals pertained to ancestral worship, they were directly against the article 1 and 2 of the Ten Commandments: "Do not make cast idols (Ex 34:17); You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven or on earth beneath or in the waters under the earth; you shall not bow down before them or **worship** them"(Ex 20:4-5 in New American Bible). In short, as Oleka (1998:131) asserted, worship of idols was forbidden and God would not give His praise to idols: the revelation from Sinai did not involve a form (Deut 4:15-18) and He was the only one to be worshipped (Is 42:8). On the other hand, if African ancestor rituals pertained to ancestral veneration, they were worthy of consideration.

In detail, according to Theology manuals (in Shorter, 1973:147), idolatry was defined as 'giving divine worship to a creature.' Theology manuals established categories of idolatry, according to the nature of the idolater's intention and belief; however, ancestral sacrifices were objectively idolatrous: "Whereas, they say, other ritual actions such as bowing, genuflecting, prostrating, derive their character from the worshipper's intention, this is not true of sacrifice, the character of which is objectively determined"(Shorter, 1973:147). On this stance, European missionaries also blamed Africans for killing animals for ancestors, which could have introduced a heathen aspect. That is, the killing of an animal was a means of contact with ancestors (Mills, 2001:158; 166).

On the other hand, Afro-centric Bible readers asserted that ancestors were the object of veneration or respect not the object of worship as long as ancestors were still spiritually alive and played an active role in the homestead. In other words, serving the spiritually living ancestors was similar to bowing to current living elders: "the ancestors are not worshiped but are rather venerated as elder brothers of the living"(Pobee, 1979:66). Therefore, African ancestor rituals were not against the Bible in the name of ancestor veneration or respect. This aspect is discussed in detail in the preceding section (3.3.2.1).

Another thing that missionaries rejected was African polygyny (polygamy). For example, when chief Sechele of the Kwena decided to be baptized on 8 August 1848, he had to dismiss four of his five wives. Therefore, when one of his dismissed wives, Molokon, was pregnant; her baby did not have an official father (Sechele). In this way, Protestant Church discipline was stern and intractable about the issue of polygamy (Sundkler and Steed,

2000:436-8). Finally, the Lambeth Conference of 1888 decided that polygynists should not be accepted into the church (in Pobee, 1979:137). Shorter (1973:174) asserted that "there was no doubt that monogamy, and not polygamy, was the Christian ideal." This was based on Gen. 2:24, which says, "a man will leave his father and his mother and he must stick to his wife and they must become one flesh." "This sentence suggested that the ideal was one of a profoundly personal union with some degree of autonomy" (Shorter, 1973:175).

According to Shorter (1973:175), in the books of Judith, Job and Tobit, fidelity to one partner was the ideal. For example, "in the image of God's redemptive love, Samaria and the other cities were no longer rival suitors or co-wives, but daughters of Jerusalem, the unique bride of Yahweh." Furthermore, even though polygamous cases were introduced in Old Testament, they were for the temporary purpose of fertility. For example, firstly, Sarah, the true wife of Abraham, had no child; that is why she gave Hagar to her husband. Secondly, Jacob took Rachel for his second wife after Leah had proven barren for some time. Thirdly, Elkanah only took another wife because Hannah had been barren, although he loved her. Fourthly, David's wife Michal, younger daughter of Saul, never bore her husband any children (2 Sam. 6. 23). Parrinder (1950) asserted that this was the big reason why David took other wives who were fertile.

Therefore, these polygamous cases in the Old Testament did not change the ideal Christian principle of monogamy. On this stance, "The Catholic Church always strongly affirmed the practice of monogamy and never considered modifying her teaching on the point"(Shorter, 1973:175). In addition, Parrinder emphasized the ideal of monogamy as follows: "If Christianity is to conquer any part of the world today, it must seek to strengthen marital fidelity and monogamic ideal"(1950:63).

The third example of the negative attitude to African culture was dance & music (drumming). Dance and music played a crucial role in communication amongst homestead members, the living and the dead, during ancestor rituals. Therefore, they were also related to the heathen or evil in the name of idolatry: "The earliest missionaries assumed that drumming had heathen associations, and therefore, was un-Christian, if not sinful" (Pobee, 1979:66). Accordingly, the standing order No. 548, Section 2, of the Methodist Conference of Ghana (1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1964) had the following line: "There shall be no drumming at a

Member's wake-keeping" (Pobee, 1979:66). In practice, Pobee (1979:66) emphasized that disciplinary action was taken by individual clergymen against the families of a deceased at whose funeral there was drumming.

In summary, Euro-centric missionary Bible reading focused on the rejection of African culture, which was characterized by ancestor worship. Ancestor worship was embodied in various rituals, such as initiation, marriage, funeral, hunting, building a new homestead and so on. In other words, rituals were inseparable communal experiences for Africans. Nonetheless, from European missionary's biblical viewpoints, these rituals contain heathen, evil and idolatrous components in the name of ancestor worship. That is, although ancestors were created by God, Africans performed rituals to them. This clearly violated the first Commandment of God: "Do not make cast idols (Ex 34:17); You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven or on earth beneath or in the waters under the earth; you shall not bow down before them or **worship** them"(Ex 20:4-5 in New American Bible) On this stance, music and dance were also classified as heathen, in that they played a catalytic role in communication between the living and ancestors. Furthermore, African polygamy was also regarded to be against the Bible principle, from Euro-centric biblical viewpoints.

### **3.3.2 Afro-centric Bible reading**

#### **3.3.2.1 The issue of idolatry**

In settling the issue of idolatry in African Traditional Religions (ATRs), there were two ways in regard to the position of ancestors. Firstly, if ancestors were explained as One God by merging themselves into the Supreme God, they could not be creatures any more. Instead, they could become 'One' God; therefore, they deserved to be worshipped. Secondly, if ancestors were explained as living saints, it was impossible to worship the living human beings. Therefore, they could only become the objects of respect or reverence but they could not become the objects of worship.

Firstly, the issue of ancestors' merging into One God is discussed. Afro-centric Bible readers focused on both divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ. That is, Jesus Christ was not only the Supreme God but also a human being. The supreme God sent Jesus Christ to the world for redemption of humankind's sin. As a result, Jesus Christ associated with people in the world and He sacrificed himself on their behalf. He was both a transcendent and immanent being. Likewise, ancestors in African traditional religions were inseparable to homestead members' daily lives. Ancestors in the spirit world live in an extended world. Even though ancestors' physical bodies decayed, they were not thought to be dead but still alive. Furthermore, the Supreme Being and ancestors were not thought to be divisive: "it is impossible to separate belief in the Supreme Being from belief in survival and in the interaction between the living and the dead, or from para-religious beliefs"(Mulago, 1991:130). On this stance, Pobee (1979:94) asserted that Jesus Christ was thought to be the Great and Great Ancestor ('Nana' in Akan tribe): "As Nana Jesus has authority over not only the world of men but also of all spirit beings, namely the cosmic powers and the ancestors"(Pobee, 1979:94). In other words, if ancestors were regarded as Jesus, the issue of idolatry in African traditional religions (ATRs) could be settled. This is because Jesus could become the Supreme God in the trinity. In detail, the Supreme God in ATRs was not separated from ancestors, who were still alive in homesteads in association with homestead members. Therefore, He had both divinity and humanity as Jesus did.

On this ground, Afro-centric Bible readers tried to compare God in Christ with ancestors in African traditional religions. For example, Oleka (1998) asserted that African Traditional Religions (ATR) could harmonize with Christianity. In theory, there existed ostensible distinction between ATRs and Christianity. For example, God in ATRs revealed Himself limitedly through many spirits and ancestors whereas God in Christianity revealed Himself fully in Christ. In addition, whereas, in ATRs, a mortal human depends on God as well as on the ancestors; in Christianity, Jesus depended on God alone. In spite of this ostensible distinction, as Matt. 5 verses 17 to 18 says, "I (Jesus) have come to not to abolish them but to fulfill them." Therefore, just as Christianity found its own way by fulfilling the incomplete mission of Judaism, so Christianity could fulfill its mission by getting over the difference with African culture. On this ground, Pobee (1979) also emphasized that God revealed himself in diverse ways and forms (Romans 1:19:20). He put it that "the divine revelation was

progressive, from the less worthy to the more worthy, from the less mature to the more mature" (1979:74). In view of the idea of progression, Pobee (1979) asserted that African religion would progress to Christianity, just as Judaism progressed to Christianity.

Shorter (1975), a Roman Catholic missionary in East Africa, explained that Africans easily converted to Christianity without any cosmological inner-conflict. "Conversion to Christianity did not answer their deep religious questions. Christianity was just an overlay on their original religious beliefs" (Salala, 1998:137). This was because Christ himself could replace spirits or ancestor spirits (Salala, 1998:138).

In addition, J.C. Warner, a Wesleyan Methodist missionary, in 1858, was opposed to a majority of missionaries' viewpoint of idolatry in African traditional religions. He put it, "missionaries were in error to compare Africans to isolated superstitions of Europe, such as nailing a horseshoe over the door and should not be misled by the fact that Africans had 'no visible symbols' of their supernatural beings"(Mills, 2001:158).

Furthermore, Mbiti asserted that Christian trinity was also found in Shona beliefs: "in one areas of the Shona country, God is conceived of as 'Father, Son, and Mother.' Among the neighboring Ndebele, there is a similar belief 'in a Trinity of spirits, the Father, the Mother and the Son' " (1970:30). In other words, if God was diffused in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy spirit in Christianity, so God was diffused in the name of the Father, the Son and the Mother in Shona beliefs. In spite of this diffusion, God in Shona beliefs was regarded as inseparable; just as God in trinity was regarded as one.

In short, whereas the Supreme God in Christianity was diffused into three in one in the name of trinity; the Supreme God in ATRs was diffused into many ancestors and spirits. However, ancestors and spirits could not be explained independently without considering that the African notion of time and space was not divisive. That is, Africa's Supreme God, who was thought to be residing far from the homestead, was meaningful, only in the premise that ancestors and spirits played significant roles in the homestead. In other words, Africa's Supreme God was represented as the significant God only through many ancestors and spirits. That is, many ancestors and spirits could merge into one God on the basis of homestead. On this ground, Idowu (1962) coined the term, 'diffused monotheism' for describing Africa's God. Even though God, Divinities, Spirits and the living dead vertically resided in hierarchy; Africa's God

was, in the symbol of a circle on a horizontal plane, regarded as one God in 'vital union' rather than many gods (Mulago, 1991:120). As a result, just as Jesus Christ became one God in the trinity, so ancestors became one God in vital union. On this ground, Afro-centric Bible readers settled the issue of idolatry.

Secondly, the issue of ancestors' becoming living saints is discussed. The issue of idolatry could be settled given the status of Jesus followers. In short, Jesus shared in the kingship of God and held his kingship under God. (1 Cor. 15:24,25,28) Given Jesus' kingship in Christianity, "the kingship of Christ was meaningless unless his followers joined to execute his will and purposes"(Pobee, 1979:98). According to Pobee (1979:66), the Christian "communio sanctorum- communion of saints" indicated Jesus followers who executed his will. Likewise, the Supreme God in Africa was "such a great king that he could not be approached directly. Indeed he delegated authority to the ancestors and gods to deal with the relatively trivial affairs of men"(Pobee, 1979:65). If Jesus followers were regarded as communion of saints, so ancestors could not be worshiped but were rather venerated as elder brothers of the living (Pobee, 1979:66). Therefore, ancestors were not objects of worship but objects of respect (veneration) like saints in Christianity. If that was the case, the issue of idolatry was settled.

In summary, if Africa's God was explained as one God like God in the trinity, the issue of the idolatry was settled. In ancestor rituals, no visible image (idol) was found. In addition, the object of worship was Africa's one God (Creator) not ancestors (Creatures). That is, as Bishop Colenso insisted, the object of worship was uNulunkulu (the Great-Great One) and uMvelinqangi (He who was before everything else) (Sundkler and Steed, 2000:92). Even though ancestors ostensibly looked like objects of worship, ancestors played the same role as Jesus. Therefore, just as Jesus merged into God in the name of trinity, so ancestors merged into God in the name of Africa's God, the so-called diffused monotheism in the symbol of a circle on a horizontal plane. On the other hand, if ancestors were explained as living beings, they were not objects of worship but objects of respect (veneration).

### 3.3.2.2 The issue of polygamy

Afro-centric Bible readers asserted that African traditional polygamy was different from the Hebrew traditional concubinage. That is, the former focused on the equality among multiple wives, whereas the latter focused on the priority of the first wife, which degraded rest wives to concubines. In other words, contrary to African traditional polygamy, which treated concubines and their descendants equally and fairly (Kanyoro, 1992: 98), Hebrew polygamy placed much value on the role of one, the first wife.

For example, Sarah, as Abraham's true wife, took Hagar her slave in person "and gave her to Abraham her husband to be his wife". The motive was clearly stated to be Sarah's own desire: "that I shall obtain children by her"(Gen. 16. 2) This revealed that Abraham needed the consent of his wife, before he could take her slave, and also that Sarah could regard the child as her own. That is, even though a scribe of the Bible wrote Hagar as Abraham's wife; in practice, Hagar was just a concubine. As Kanyoro (1992:98) asserted, the English and French were inconsistent in their translations of "wife" and "concubine". In addition, given the Babylonian Code of Hamurabi, it allowed a man to take a concubine when she was captured in warfare, or bought from slave-dealers. On this stance, Parrinder (1950:14) asserted, "Hagar was said to have been an Egyptian, perhaps captured in warfare, or bought from slave-dealers."

Similarly, in the case of Solomon's numerous wives, Parrinder (1950) emphasized that there was a chief wife among the numerous wives: "Adam, Noah, Isaac and Joseph were perhaps monogamists, while Abraham, Jacob, and David had several wives, **of whom one seems to have been the chief wife**"(1950:23).

In this way, Parrinder (1950) reasoned that Hebrew polygamy was the first form in the direction toward the Christian ideal of monogamy. That is why he interpreted the Hebrew polygamy in the context of unilateral stream of monogamy in the Bible, from Euro-centric missionary viewpoints.

Nonetheless, in the Old Testament, African traditional polygamy was acceptable in the case of Moses' Cushite wife. This was inferred from Miriam's attitude towards the African wife. "Miriam was not angry because Moses had married another woman (having already taken Sephora for his wife). She was angry because he married an Ethiopian woman, who was not of the tribe of Israel"(in 'Bibleman'). Furthermore, God was generous toward Moses' polygamy.

“Although Miriam and Aaron complained about Moses’ new marriage, the Lord did not. In fact, God punished Miriam because she complained about the second wife of Moses. If having more than one wife was truly an abomination before God, surely He would have condemned Moses for practicing it. Instead, God declared that Moses was “faithful in all my house”(Numbers 12:7).

Similarly, according to Sindima (1999:179), Tappa (1982) argued that “both polygamy and monogamy existed in the time of Jesus, but he did not forbid either; what he taught against was divorce for ‘what God had joined together, let no man put asunder.’ ”(Matt. 19:16) “Jesus did not come to monogamize the polygamists; he did not replace one institution by the other, nor the one prohibition by the other. The role of the Church is to construct, rather than destroy, as was often the case with marriage.” This revealed that African traditional polygamy was acceptable even in the New Testament.

On this ground, Hastings (1973) sympathized with Karl Barth’s reasoning: ‘We can hardly point with certainty to a single text in which polygamy is expressly forbidden and monogamy universally decreed.’ That is, there was no explicit evidence to say that monogamy was the principle in the Bible. Similarly, in the church history of South Africa, Colenso maintained that it was right for polygamists to be baptized (Sundkler and Steed, 2000:372). Besides, Revd. W.A. Goodwin (Anglican) restated Colenso’s argument in 1904, “polygyny was a sin of the missionaries’ own making as it was prohibited nowhere in the Bible”(Mills, 2001:160). In this way, William Ngidi, Colenso’s assistant in the translation of the Bible, like his fellow convert Mgema Fuze, took second wives after their conversion. They cited the biblical precedent of the ancient patriarchs of Israel like the above examples.

For them, economic considerations played a crucial role in conversion; as Fuze later noted, ‘a man with one wife only was a poor fellow’ (Chidester, 1992:59). Besides, as Twesigye (2002), professor of Black World Studies, asserted; there were also sociological reasons why Africans practiced and valued polygamy. Some reasons are explained as follows:

“8. Polygamy insured that most marriageable girls were married off. Women tended to outnumber men because men naturally die in larger numbers and earlier than women. Women are genetically tougher than men! Moreover, men also tended to engage in dangerous or fatal activities such as wars, hunting and fighting one another in drunken quarrels! 9. In most of traditional Africa, there was a custom of levirate or widow inheritance. A brother’s wives

passed on to the father or another on his death! That was designed to ensure that no widows or orphans would be left with provision and family or tender care” (2002:3-4).

### **3.3.2.3 The issue of music and dance**

Whereas Euro-centric Bible readers rejected African music & dance in the name of spirit possession; Afro-centric Bible readers regarded music and dance as blessed goods of the Holy Spirit. As indicated, even the first generation converts of Xhosa were greatly influenced by Ntsikana’s four hymns. Conspicuously, “Ntsikana’s hymn-signing was accompanied by dancing in the traditional manner”(Hodgson, 1980:11). According to Olowola (1998:294), he quoted Adejiji’s argument: “sweet songs, drums and the like were relished goods of the Holy Spirit.” As a result, members of the congregation came forward to dance, sing and testified to God’s saving power, given that the Holy Spirit would descend upon hearing them. Similarly, Sister Mary Aquina, in an article on the Rhodesian Zionists, remarked that the members of this church supported their use of drumming and dancing with biblical quotations. In a sermon she heard, based on Psalms 149 and 150, the preacher said:

“We Zionists please God with our drumming. In Psalm 149 verse 3 and 4, we read: Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with timbrel (translated as drums) and lyre (translated as the African piano)... Look also at Psalm 150. There we read: Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with timbrel and dance”(Olowola, 1998:298; Appiah-Kubi, 1983:125).

“Singing and drumming were usually accompanied by dancing. Dancing was mentioned together with singing in the Bible; in fact, David danced before the Ark of the Covenant”(Appiah-Kubi, 1983:125). On this ground, they asserted that music & dance were in concord with biblical teaching.

### **3.3.3 Contextualization of Bible reading in African indigenous churches (issue of healing)**

Whether Korean Bible readers interpreted the Bible liberally or conservatively, the Bible reading was contextualized on the basis of Korean traditional culture through Koreans' communal religious experiences, such as early morning prayers and audible prayers in Korean churches. Likewise, in spite of the Euro-centric missionary viewpoint, African Bible reading was contextualized on the basis of African traditional culture through communal religious experiences, such as spirit possession, healing and divination in African Indigenous churches. Healing, in particular, was one of the most influential African communal experiences, which led to the development of African Indigenous churches. In fact, at the turn of the twentieth century, "the African indigenous churches were Africa's fastest growing body of Christian believers, indeed a third force in African Christianity beside Protestantism and Catholicism"(Appiah-Kubi, 1983:120; Chiderster, 1992:112). Appiah-Kubi (1983:121) asserted that the most single reason why people joined the African Indigenous Churches was healing.

In African traditional religions, sickness was not the matter of individuals but the matter of whole members of homestead. For example, when a daughter in a family in Kinshansa was HIV/AIDS infected, her relatives and her community members tried their best to support and save her. This was because she was still a member of community even after she died. "If someone should die, he or she will die knowing that relatives have done everything they can to help" (Bockie 1993:39). This meant that individual's life did not belong to an individual, but rather it belonged to the community.

Therefore, even though individuals were sick and died because of illness, they were not indeed dead as long as their community was sustained. "The only true outcasts (the dead) were those who wilfully chose to go outside the traditions, without respect for the communal values that were determined by the ancestors"(Bockie 1993:39). According to Bockie (1993), these people were classified as witches or 'ndoki', practitioner of witchcraft ('kindoki'). On this ground, the common cause of sickness was generally known as the wrath of ancestors or the work of the witches, such as magic, sorcery and witchcraft. Hence, diviners, who were sacred specialists with greater religious knowledge,

power and prestige, held a healing ritual to resolve a crisis in the homestead.

In the process of the healing ritual, "the diviner suddenly emerged to perform an ecstatic dance, going into a type of trance that signified a superhuman access to the knowledge and power of divination"(Chidester, 1992:19). At the climax of ritual dance, witches, 'whose evil disposition had been responsible for bringing sickness to the clients', came forward when the diviner called their names. Witches had 'the opportunity to confess, arrange for the performance of a sacrifice and make a payment for guilt to the chief under whose jurisdiction the ritual had been performed.' As a result, the accused (witches) were 'reincorporated into society or excluded through confiscation of property, banishment, or execution.' In this way, diviners resolved a crisis of sickness in the homestead beyond the cure of individuals (Chidester, 1992:19).

In comparison, Pobee (1979:92) compared the Akan healer(diviner) to Jesus. Before they performed healing, they had humanity. However, in the moment of healing, not only was Jesus "ensouled" with God but also the diviner entered in a state of holiness or in the power of divination during the ritual. The difference between Jesus and diviners was that 'Jesus was in perpetual state of holiness unlike the traditional healer, who had the occasional experience of it' only during the ritual (Pobee, 1979:92). In short, Jesus and African diviners, as mediators between the spirit world and the human world, played role models in connecting these separate worlds through the divine miracle, healing. Therefore, it restored the cosmological order, which was broken by sickness or evil forces.

Furthermore, Sindima (1999) emphasized the role of music and dance as catalyst, which induced the revelation of Jesus in the process of healing in African Indigenous Churches (AIC). Briefly, in African traditional healing rituals, drum and dance were used for the communication with ancestors. Likewise, tom-tom beat of the drums from AIC introduced a new way, namely revelation through Jesus. In this way, "Jesus joined African ancestors and was integrated into the African community as a proto-ancestor" (Sindima, 1999:148).

In fact, African Indigenous Churches (AIC) was characterized by the 'healing ministry': Healing was 'the primary concern' of the ministry of AIC (Olowola, 1998:299). In South Africa, "at least 36% of the people belonging to the Black African population identified with African Independent Churches"(Pauw, 1995:4). For the reason of development of AIC, Pauw (1995), in another aspect, asserted that development of AIC was mainly spurred

by a political and social movement in the name of 'black nationalism' and 'modernization'. In addition, Chidester (1992:112) analyzed that the development of AIC arose from 'certain features of the Protestant mission churches, such as their denominational divisions, emphasis on the private interpretation of scripture, racial segregation and reluctance to ordain African ministers'. Furthermore, he added the economic reason to this: "By the 1880s and 1890s, colonial government had introduced policies of land reservation, racial restriction, and heavy taxation that drastically limited black economic opportunity. Under those conditions, therefore, interest in church leadership appears to have increased as other avenues of advancement were closed"(Chidester, 1992:113). For all that, the fact that Jesus replaced African diviners in healing services of AIC deserved special emphasis.

According to Olowula (1998), Hackett said of the Celestial Church: "Many of the healing technique and symbolic objects used by the church resembled traditional and magical curative practices"(in Olowula, 1998:300). For example, when any new comer came to the church for healing, "he is immediately directed to a prophet or prophetess. He will then go into 'trance' and diagnose the cause of the sickness and announce certain ritual prescription or prayers, which are to be carried out by the sufferer. In case of unnatural illness, the prayer will be offered by elders and prophets with the use of candles; then holy water or oil will be applied to the ailment, or the patient will be asked to go and wash in a nearby stream"(Olowula, 1998:299-300). In short, healing ministry of AIC followed the model of Jesus' healing on the basis of the deep-rooted African traditional culture. This was one of the African communal religious experiences, which was influenced by the deep-rooted African culture to reveal the 'contextualization of the Bible reading'.

In short, just as 'early morning prayers' and 'audible prayers' were the representative Korean ethnic religious experiences in Korean churches; so healing, as one of African communal religious experiences, was embodied in AIC. In addition, as inferred from tom-tom beat of the drums from AICs (Sindima, 1999:148), music and dance also played catalytic role for the revelation of Jesus during healing services. This showed how the Bible interpretation, in spite of the main stream of Euro-centric Bible reading, was contextualized on the basis of deep-rooted African traditional communal culture.

In summary, in respect of African culture, the Bible was interpreted from Euro-centric missionary viewpoint in the early missionary period. Therefore, ancestor worship, polygamy, music and dance were prohibited. A few decades later, Afro-centric biblical interpretation emerged one after another. Nonetheless, these Afro-centric Bible readers were marginalized by Euro-centric Bible readers. For example, "*A dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*"<sup>9</sup>, which was proudly presented as the work of distinguished scholars, did not carry a single entry by an Asian, Latin American or African biblical interpreter" (Sugirtharajah, 1991: 2). To date, some Africans regard the Bible from Euro-centric viewpoint. The point is that even though Euro-centric Bible readers disregarded African traditional religions, a majority of black Africans developed African Indigenous Churches in their own strength. Through these agencies (AIC), Africans held healing services in the name of Jesus using music and dance in their daily communal religious experiences. Healing, music and dance, in particular, are still dominant religious experiences in African Indigenous Churches. This revealed that Christianity was eventually also absorbed into a large pond of African communal religious tradition and culture in the name of 'African' Christianity. In other words, the Bible, substantially, belongs to Africans in an African cultural context as inferred from the common aphorism: "when the white men came to Africa, the black men had the land and the white man had the Bible, but now the black man has the Bible and the white men the land" (Zulu, 1972:5) In short, this section reveals that Christianity was contextualized in Africa, in a cultural aspect.

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<sup>9</sup> R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden (1990). *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International.

### **3.4 The Bible readers' responses in Apartheid era (political aspect)**

From the viewpoint of black South African Bible readers, Christianity provided black South African Christians with the ideology of liberation against the Apartheid government. On the contrary, from the viewpoint of Bible readers in Afrikaner nationalists' Dutch Reformed Churches, Christianity was another name of Afrikaner nationalism. In other words, Afrikaner Christians interpreted the Bible from their Afrikaner nationalistic viewpoint in the name of Apartheid theology, which was contradictory to the liberation theology of black South African Christians. This section reveals Christian's various self-centered Bible interpretation, which was made according to each political context.

#### **3.4.1 Pro-Afrikaner nationalistic stance: Apartheid theology**

In a number of conflicts between the British imperialists and the Dutch-descended Boers (Afrikaners) in the 1830s and the 1840s, several thousand Boer families left Cape Colony in flight from intrusive British rule and in search of new land. "Nationalist historians dubbed this exodus the 'Great Trek.'" (EOA, 1999:147) In the process, Boers annexed the Ndebele in the western Transvaal in 1837 and the Zulu in Natal in 1838. In addition, through four wars against the Xhosa in 1819, 1834-35, 1846 and 1850-1852; Boers annexed Xhosa territory and turned it into their farms. However, Boers' regime was threatened by the British military power. Finally, in Boer War (1899-1902), the British defeated the Boers. As a result, Boers gave in the world's great gold reserves to the demand of the British. In the aftermath of the war, some twenty thousand Afrikaner (Boer) women and children died in concentration camps, whose death toll was 344 per 1000 compared with the great flu epidemic of 1918 whose death toll was only 17 per 1000 (EOA, 1999:149; Loubser, 1987:20).

Given these historical events, pro- Afrikaner Bible readers, figuratively, compared Boers to Israelites; the British imperialism to the Egyptian ruling; and native Blacks to Canaanites: "The Voortrekkers identified themselves with the people of Israel, who trekked out of Egypt (the Cape Colony and British oppression) to the promised land (the interior, Canaan), where they were harassed by the children of Ham (of whom the Blacks were believed to be descendants)" (Loubser, 1987:18). This metaphor typically revealed how the Bible was politically contextualized depending on the South African political context.

In the 1930s and 1940s, given that Boers were Dutch descendants in Europe, they were fully aware of dominant ideologies in those times, such as 'Max Muller and De Gobineau's myth of the eminence of the Aryan race'; 'the German romantic idea of the people as an organism'; and 'Darwin's evolutionary theory' (Loubser, 1987:48). In particular, these three dominant ideologies in Europe extended to natural theology. That was characterized by the existence of nature, which could also reveal God's creative purposes even if there was no biblical proof (Hick, 1973).

In short, just as plants, animals and human had their own purpose and law that came from God; so every Volksgeist (nation), which has collective historical personality of individuals, came directly from God Himself (Bax, 1981:29). Furthermore, this Volksgeist (nation) made every Volk (members of a nation) an organic whole and gave it a coherent and unique culture. Likewise, Hegel, also, regarded the Absolute Spirit Itself as coming to its supreme expression in the form of the nation and its Volksgesit, and so providing the nation with its own Gesetz or fundamental law (in Bax, 1981:29). Plainly, just as individuals reflected God's image, so nation also revealed God's original creative purposes. Just as people could recognize God's original creative purposes through nature such as plants, animals and human; so people could discern God's purposes through the existence of nation, whose members had their own languages and unique culture.

Whereas John Calvin's principle is 'Sola Scriptura' (in Bax, 1981:36), natural theology focuses on God's revelation in creatures, such as plants, animals and human. If a nation, as a national organism, belonged to God's creation, the existence of the nation itself would reveal God's will. Even though people did not accept Calvin's principle, 'Sola Scriptura'; they could know God's purposes through the existence of a nation, which has its own ethnic features among diverse nations in the world. On this stance, German Romanticism put special emphasis on the organic community of the Volk over the individual (Bax, 1981:29). The emphasis on nation rather than individuals induced the historic racism in the name of Nazism or the German nationalism. Furthermore, this idea laid groundwork for contriving the so-called Apartheid Bible in South Africa.

As indicated, Calvinism is based on the principle of Sola-Scriptura. On the other hand, Neo-Calvinism is based on Calvin's concept of 'common grace.'

This term, quite apart from 'grace of salvation for the elect', normally "blesses **men in general** with natural talents and skills, such as those in mechanics, science, the arts and government, and with a sense for civil justice and law that fosters and preserves society" (In Bax, 1981:29). According to Bax (1981:29), Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), going a step further, put it: God's common grace, as that which pertains to the whole of creation, 'ordained for the **different spheres of creation and society, to preserve them.**' On this ground, Kuyper emphasized the theology of diversity rather than uniformity. For example, the emphasis on uniformity, such as "by uniformity to unity or by uniformity to unification", remained in subjection to "Caesarism" (Loubser, 1987:41; Mark 12:17). This is because the philosophy of uniformity was formed through the historic French Revolution in 1789. That is, as generally known in Jean Jacques Rousseau's (1712-1778) theory of social contract, people in modern times were required to establish 'the collective personality of the nation as the new center of the social order' in the name of uniformity (Bax, 1981:29). On this ground, the idea of the phrase, 'by uniformity to unity or by uniformity to unification', did not belong to God but to Caesar: 'by centralization to Caesarism' (Mark, 12:17). For that reason, Kuyper published the book entitled "*Uniformity, the curse of modern life*" in 1869.

On the principle of diversity, the unity in real life could not be complete before God's judgment day. Kuyper asserted, in his book entitled *Der Stonelezingen* (1898) that "the pluriformity of the world is a dominant idea... The unity of the church is thus a matter of the Second Coming" (in Loubser, 1987:40). In other words, on the basis of numerous forms of nations, pro-Apartheid Bible readers accepted spiritual unity only. Even if spiritual unity could have been found in real life, it must have been found in the brotherhood of white Afrikaner Christians, who belonged to diverse congregations under the Dutch Reformed Church. On this ground, in real life, the principle of diversity became dominant, which led to prohibition of intermarriage (HR, 1974). This pro-Apartheid Bible reading was the main stream from 1930s to 1970s, given that about 42% of the White population of South Africa were members of the Dutch Reformed Church (HR, 1974:5). The book entitled '*Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture* (1974)'<sup>10</sup> represented the most sophisticated phase of the Apartheid Bible (Loubser, 1987:100). This pro-Afrikaner centered Bible reading revealed how the Bible was interpreted given the political context of South Africa.

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<sup>10</sup> In this thesis, the title of this book is abbreviated as HR

For example, from the period of slavery, scriptures of Gen 9:18-27, Ham's descendants were cursed to be slaves of Shem and Japheth, were generally known by white colonialists. Since the church council of Drakenstein, at first, made mention of this passage in 1703, this idea was as alive as ever until the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Loubser, 1987:7). In the 1930s, the scripture of Gen 11, the story of the Tower of Babel, which characterizes the principle of diversity, was used for strengthening the ideology of German Nazism. Likewise, Apartheid Bible reading was also an extension of the understanding of this scripture by providing the strong political ideology of Apartheid for Boers. In addition to this scripture, synthetically, concrete scriptures were introduced in *HR* (1974) to uphold Apartheid policies.

Table 1. The principle of diversity (In the New International Version)	
Gen 1:28	And God blessed and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase, and fill the earth and subdue it
Gen 11:1-9	(1) Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. (2) As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. (4) Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the earth (7) Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other (8) So the Lord scattered from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city (9)...From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth
Acts 2:5-11	(5) Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven (6) When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language (8) Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? (9) Parthians, Medes and Elamites...(10)...Egypt and the parts of Lybia near Cyrene..(11) Cretans and Arabs- <b>we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues</b>
Rev 7:9	...before the throne of the Lamb a great multitude of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues is gathered..

Table 2. The issue of boundary (in the New International Version)	
Deuteronomy 32: 8-9	(8) When the Most High portioned out the nations, when he dispersed the sons of mankind, he set the limits of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God (or sons of Israel) (9) while the Lord's share was his own people, Jacob was the portion he allotted himself
Acts 17:26	God made the entire human race (the whole race of men) from one man to dwell upon the whole face of the earth, having determined set seasons and the boundaries of their habitation (i.e. the area of land, bounded by the sea, on which they all could live)

Firstly, in regard to the principle of diversity, God's plan or life purposes of human beings were implicitly revealed in the name of diversity, differentiation or division (Gen 1:28). That is, "mankind was to fill the earth by diverging into different volke" (Bax, 1983:114). However, in the story of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9), people resisted this principle. Therefore, they searched for the unity of people on the plain in Shinar by building up the Tower. However, God criticized this action, which was characterized by the phrase: "by uniformity to unity or by uniformity to unification". By cursing them, God restored the principle of diversity. Consequently, the confusion of tongues contributed to the diversity of races and people. After all, although God's punishment showed His curse on tower builders, it became a 'blessing' to rest of humankind. Furthermore, the event of Pentecost in the New Testament revealed in detail how each person heard the gospel in his or her own language. This principle of diversity continued to be applied on humankind and will continue until the Day of Judgment. This principle of diversity is unified in spiritual unity only on the Day of Judgment before Jesus Christ.

Secondly, with regard to the issue of boundary, pro-Apartheid Bible readers focused on the idea that God made nations, which had their own territories. As indicated in the natural theology, the existence of plants, animals and human beings proved the existence of God. Likewise, if nations were recognized as organic creatures of God, it showed God's providence.

Philosophically, the infinite and perfect being cannot be recognized by finite and imperfect beings. If finite and imperfect beings recognized the infinite

and perfect being, He could not be infinite and perfect. This is because the infinite and perfect being should be transcendental above the realm of reasoning of imperfect beings. The moment when finite and imperfect beings recognize Him, He cannot remain as the infinite and perfect being any more. Therefore, finite and imperfect beings could recognize Him indirectly only Volksgeist (nation) is recognized as organism, which has collective historical personality of individuals; God could be recognized in myriads of nations. The point is similar to the idea in the neo-Calvinist series, *Koers in die Krisis* (*Direction in the crisis*, 1941). That is, divine revelation, which taught that the human race is one, could only be recognized in various human beings' experiences, which taught the diversity of humanity (Loubser, 1987: 36). On this ground, according to Loubser (1987), Rev J G Strydom said the following in his article on "The racial question in South Africa": "God's word teaches us that he had willed different nations, colours and languages"(in Loubser, 1987:37). Furthermore, as the HR (1974) report interpreted Acts 17:26, "God, after Babel, arranged the historical epoch and boundaries of the nations so that in these men could see evidence of His existence"(Bax, 1983:133).

To summarize, the principle of diversity, division or differentiation was God's providence in the real life of human beings. Hence, intermarriage was against God's law (HR, 1974). This is because interracial couples were on the side of the builders of the Tower of Babel, who searched for the following phrase before the Day of Judgment: by uniformity to unity or by uniformity to unification. On this stance, Apartheid, "defined as an ideology, a closed, totalitarian system of ideas, which has in mind the total separation of the Black and White races in South Africa and which endeavors to make its influence felt over the whole spectrum of human activities (Loubser, 1987)" was regarded as ideal in accordance with the God's providence. The point is that pro-Afrikaner nationalistic Bible reading played a dominant role in upholding Apartheid policies between the 1930s and 1970s in the political history of South Africa. This reveals how the Bible was contextualized depending on political contexts from the viewpoint of pro-Apartheid Bible readers.

### 3.4.2 Pro-Black South African liberation stance: Liberation theology

In contrast to pro-Afrikaner nationalistic Bible reading, pro-black South African Bible reading is explained in the name of 'black theology' or 'liberation theology.' Before proceeding to this main subject, criticism of Apartheid theology is discussed, which caused political sensation in the early 1980s.

In the case of the principle of diversity, firstly, God's plan in Gen 1:28 focused not on diversity but on multiplication. God calls humankind to fill the earth by multiplication, not by division (Bax, 1983:114). Secondly, in the story of the Tower of Babel, tower builders rejected God's authority: "we may make a name for ourselves (Gen 11:4)". Just as Adam had paid his price for sin by death owing to his rejection to God's authority; so tower builders had to pay a high price, such as the miscommunication or the division amongst them, because of their challenge against God's authority. Figuratively, if someone received death sentence for their crimes, death sentence would be the consequence of their misbehavior. It does not necessarily mean that death is God's providence. If so, God must want men to kill each other. Likewise, the confusion of their languages was neither God's providence nor God's blessing. Pro-Apartheid Bible readers mistook God's providence and ethics (Bax, 1983:123). Thirdly, in the story of Pentecost, given that Paul preached to all those present from different countries in one language (presumably Aramaic), and that they were converted and brought into one church; this scripture is focused on the principle of unity rather than the principle of diversity (Bax, 1983:129). Fourthly, the scripture of revelation 7:9 just presents the 'fact' that races and nations would still remain until the Day of Judgment. It does not necessarily mean that the principle of division becomes God's norm or God's providence. Even if God willingly set boundaries of nations so that this would be God's providence; it does not stand for human's 'presumptuous control' under the banner of Apartheid (Bax, 1983:133).

In the case of the issue of boundary, pro-Afrikaner Bible readers, whose idea was in the extension of natural theology or Neo-Calvinism, are to be refuted given Jesus' reason for living. In other words, pro-Afrikaner Bible readers asserted that God's existence would be proved by the existence of diverse nations (Volksgeist), which, as national organism, came directly from

God Himself; just as the existence of plants, animals and human beings showed God's creative purposes on the vertical plane of creation (Logos; Word; Angels; universe; sky; earth; Sun; Moon; plants; animals; human beings etc). Nonetheless, as John Calvin in *Institutes of the Christian Religion, I, vi 4* put it, "the human mind, unaided by the Word of God, 'can in no way attain to God' through nature or in any other way"(in Bax, 1983:133). Therefore, pro-Afrikaner Bible readers' supposed knowledge of God outside Christ could not help but be 'a deadly abyss.'(Calvin, 1959; Bax, 1983:133)

In addition to the criticism of Apartheid theology, pro-black South African Bible readers interpreted the Bible in the name of Black theology or liberation theology given the suppressive South African political context. Whereas apartheid theology played a role model of political ideology in supporting the Apartheid regime; black theology or liberation theology is, beyond the ideology itself, based on black life experiences, such as black people's experiences as victims of oppression, discrimination and exploitation. In other words, as Basil Moore (1973) put it, "Black theology is a theology of the oppressed, by the oppressed, for the liberation of the oppressed"(Moore, 1973:ix). On this ground, the theme of liberation is one of the most important threads to bind the Old Testament and the New Testament together in the name of liberation theology (Muzorewa, 1985:108). Accordingly, liberation theology is synonymous with black theology.

There are two main Bible readers groups who interpreted the Bible based on the main theme of liberation. Bible readers in the first group accepted the Bible as the 'Word of God' and they, therefore, conventionally, read the Bible within the text as Afrikaner centered Bible readers did. This point of view was the main stream in the first stage of black theology in the late 1960s and 1970s. On the other hand, Bible readers in the second group accepted the Bible as 'a product and a record of class struggle' (Mosala, 1991a:115). In other words, given that the Bible was constructed by the oppressors and the exploiters who had a superior political power in those times; their interpretation of the Bible should be scrutinized and reconsidered through investigation of the historical and economic background of scriptures in those times (behind the text). For example, the oppressed black experiences were interpreted from the viewpoint of the ruler's class, such as David and Solomon. This interpretation inevitably led to division between the oppressors and the oppressed; the rich and the

poor; the exploiters and the exploited; the whites and the blacks and so on. On this ground, it was required to read the Bible on the basis of the oppressed black experiences in the name of liberation theology. Furthermore, this way of reading was meaningful only when it played a vivid role in real life. That is, the church became a meaningful institution only when it played a major revolutionary role in the world. On this stance, black theology covered the oppressed dynamic life experiences beyond the static realm of the ideology itself.

In the first stage of black theology in the late 1960s and 1970s, South African black theology was closely connected with black theology in the United States. For example, James H. Cone (1973), "the father of contemporary black theology in African Methodist Episcopal Church in North America" (Hopkins, 1990:41), made his standpoint clear on the basis of 'Word of God' like Boesak, who "belongs to the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa, which is condescendingly considered a daughter church by the white Dutch Reformed Church (NGK)" (Hopkins, 1990:104).

According to Cone (1973,1993), he criticized white centered Bible reading. White Christians focused on individual salvation rather than 'economic, political and social dimensions of human existence.' This is because they were obedient to the authority of the State: "men are called upon to act out salvation not only through silent prayer but by faithfully protecting the existing laws" (1973:53).

However, Cone argued, "the God of Israel is participating in human history, moving in direction of man's salvation which is the goal of divine activity." For example, in the event of Exodus, God was revealed by means of his acts particularly on behalf of a weak and defenseless people. Yahweh heard "their groaning, and remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; he saw the plight of Israel, he took heed of it" (Ex 2:24-25). "With arm outstretched and with mighty acts of judgments" (Ex 6:6), he delivered Israel out of Egypt and across the Red Sea. He is the God of power and of strength, able to destroy the enslaving power of the mighty Pharaoh. Furthermore, when Israelites went into exile- the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. and the Southern Kingdom of Judah in 597 B.C. and 587 B.C.; they faced difficulty from the surroundings where other gods were in control. (Cone, 1993:166) In the midst of Israel's despair, Jeremiah spoke of the new covenant (31:31-34) and Ezekiel spoke of a new heart and a new spirit (36:26) Finally, Yahweh revealed himself as the deliverer

of the weak and defenseless Israel again. "Comfort, comfort my people... She (Jerusalem) has fulfilled her term of bondage...She has received at the Lord's hand double measure for all her sins." (Isaiah 40:1-2)

In addition to the Old Testament, the theme of liberation of slaves and the poor continued to be revealed in the story of Jesus' action in the New Testament. In the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus quoted from the Book of Isaiah. "The spirit of the Lord... has sent me to announce good news to the poor, to proclaim release for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind; to let the broken victims go free..."(Luke 4:18-19; Isaiah 61:1-2) In regard to the oppressors, Jesus said that they could not inherit the kingdom of God. 'Truly I say to you (Pharisees: the religious oppressors of his days), tax collectors and harlots go into the kingdom- but not you (Pharisees)(Matt. 21:31)

In short, Cone asserted that Christ salvation is neither 'an eschatological longing for escape to a transcendent reality' nor is it 'an inward serenity which eases unbearable suffering.' Rather, it is 'God in Christ encountering man in the depths of his existence in oppression, and setting him free from all human evils, like racism, which hold him captive.'(Cone, 1973:55) On this ground, Cone emphasized the theme of liberation in his liberation theology.

Similarly, Boesak (1983) described the event of Exodus as a shift from a 'situation of oppression' to a 'situation of liberation.' In short, the black oppressed did not physically or geographically move into a new world in South Africa. Rather, the event of Exodus had significance in a spiritual and political exodus: "What we need is a spiritual and a political Exodus out of the situation of oppression toward a situation of liberation, out of the situation of inhumanity, darkness, and hatred toward a situation in which we, both whites and blacks, can regain our common humanity and enjoy a meaningful life, a wholeness of life that has been destroyed"(Boesak, 1983:173). Just as Cone emphasized the ministry of Jesus in Nazareth, so Boesak put the emphasis on Jesus quotation from Isaiah 61, which is revealed in Luke 4:14-21. That is, Jesus' teaching at Nazareth reconfirms that God's main concern is the 'liberation' of the oppressed in the New Testament as well as in the Old Testament.

However, according to Boesak (1983), the way to liberation of the oppressed had been blocked by the white Apartheid discriminative system. This is because Apartheid theology reduced to a political ideology of the Apartheid regime and it distorted the Gospel. For that reason, Bible readers were required

to 'liberate the Gospel' for the realization of the main theme of the Bible: liberation. This is the first step to fulfill biblical concept of 'the wholeness of life (African ontology, 'ubuntu')'; even though it was distorted by pro-Apartheid Bible readers, whose culture was based on individualism (Boesak, 1983:175).

In short, both Cone and Boesak regarded the Bible as the 'Word of God.' In addition, they asserted that God in the Bible could not be reduced to an ideology of politics. This is because the main theme of the Bible, whether in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, is the liberation of the oppressed, the poor and the exploited. On this ground, God was regarded as being on the side of the black oppressed rather than the side of the white oppressors.

On the other hand, as briefly discussed in chapter 1, Mosala (1989) emphasized 'behind the text' mode of reading. In short, the theme of the Bible can be divided into two: the revolutionary Mosaic covenant tradition verses the 'status quo' oriented Davidic covenant tradition (Mosala, 1991a:115). Just as white Bible readers put emphasis on Davidic covenant tradition, which supported the status quo; so black Bible readers highlighted the theme of liberation from Mosaic covenant tradition. In another aspect, this divisive viewpoint, in itself, revealed that "the Bible is a product and a record of struggle" (Mosala, 1991a:115). On this ground, just as the Bible was constructed by class struggle in historical and economic contexts in those times; so the Bible in modern days should be read in the center of black experiences. Black experiences should not be in subjection to the interpretation of the Bible.

For example, white Afrikaner centered Bible reading was in the center of discrimination of black people. This revealed how the blacks were victimized and were in subjection to the interpretation of their theology. This interpretation is synonymous with the Bible-reading from the 'status quo oriented Davidic covenant tradition.' For that reason, Mosala (1991a) asserted that the orthodox reading of the Bible should be based on Mosaic covenant tradition not on Davidic covenant tradition. For this, Mosala (1991a) asserted, through the behind the text reading, that chapter 4 to 7 of Micah was inserted later into the Bible for the sake of supporting the interest of the landlord class in those times.

In short, Mosaic covenant tradition is characterized by justice, solidarity, struggle and vigilance; whereas Davidic monarchic ideology is characterized by stability, grace, restoration, universal peace, compassion and salvation. The

main theme of Micah 4-7 is as follows: the Lord's universal reign of peace (4:1); the promise of return from exile (4:6); God's promise of a ruler from Bethlehem (5:2); and the Lord's salvation(7:8) On this ground, Mosala singles out his point that the Bible should be interpreted from the Mosaic covenant tradition under the theme of liberation.

According to Mosala (1991a), Pharaoh in the event of Exodus could be synonymous with western imperialists in modern days, who suppressed the blacks. God in black theology is not metaphysical and abstract but concrete and dynamic, which is closely connected with real life of the oppressed. Just as Moses went to Egypt for the sake of liberating Israelites from Pharaoh's slavery beyond an evangelical purpose of individual's salvation; so black-centered Bible readers should understand, in the name of liberation theology, that Jesus would liberate the blacks from their existing political and economic slavery. In short, God in Christ living with the oppressed is the essence of black theology.

In summary, whether Cone and Boesak (Within the text) or Mosala (Behind the text), they agreed that the theme of liberation was the essence of black theology. Cone and Boesak accepted the Bible as the 'Word of God.' Even though the Bible was used for ideology for whites regimes, they accepted the authority of the Bible itself. On the other hand, Mosala regarded the Bible as the product of class struggle. Therefore, for Mosala, life experiences of the oppressed were much more important than the Bible itself. This is because the Bible was constructed depending on the political power in those times. Nonetheless, both sides agreed that liberation of the oppressed was the main theme of the Bible.

Going a step further, beyond these conflicting viewpoints between the oppressors and the oppressed, Tutu (1983) expanded the application of the concept of liberation into the oppressors: "God saves the oppressed for the sake of their oppressors; it is not our politics but our faith that inspires us"(Tutu, 1983:166,168). Tutu (1983:167) asserted that "yesterday's victim quite rapidly became today's dictator." On this ground, people should accept the traditional doctrine of the fall and original sin, which made every person become imperfect. However, they should also know that God provided the remedy in Jesus Christ. When people realize God's providence, the realization of liberation can be made for both blacks and whites in the name of Jesus Christ. Likewise, Buthelezi(1973)

asserted that liberation could be realized in people's love that Jesus emphasized: "It is now time for the black man to evangelize and humanize the white man. The realization of this will not depend on the white man's approval but solely on the **black man's love for the white man**"(1973:55-56).

According to Kretzschmar (1986), given the church history of South Africa, the English church ignored the socio-political content of the Gospel. The Afrikaans church was confined into its ideological captivity, from which programme of separate development arose under the Apartheid regime. Learning from the lesson above, black Bible readers must focus on 'rediscovery of people's solidarity in Christ', whether whites or blacks, 'as people engage in love and mission of liberation.'(1986:85; 1John 4:19-21) This is because "the Church could not ultimately be an ideological community, whether that ideology was related to a program of separate development or to any black nationalistic or tribal aspirations." (Goba, 1980:29)

To make a long story short, in regard to the Bible and the political context, black theology was meaningful only when it was based on the political context of the Bible readers. For that reason, black theology was synonymous with liberation theology or contextual theology (Muzorewa, 1985:108). From the viewpoint of Afrikaner Bible readers, the Bible played a role model in supporting their status quo as a political ideology. On the other hand, from the viewpoint of black centered Bible readers, the Bible made the distinction between the church and the world blur, 'for whatever political liberation occurred God was seen as being at work.'(Kretzschmar,1986:86) Thus, both sides clearly revealed how the Bible was contextualized depending on the historical and political situation.

### 3.5 Summary

This chapter discussed the 'contextualized biblical hermeneutics' in South Africa. For this, this chapter is discussed from a historical viewpoint on the basis of bilateral relationships, such as African culture and Bible reading; and South African politics and Bible reading.

In view of African culture and Bible reading, before the arrival of the missionaries, Africans had religion not superstition. Their religious experiences in African traditional religion were characterized by 'ancestor worship', 'polygamy', 'music and dance', and 'healing'. These African conventional elements were in harmony and were deeply engraved in African people's daily lives. However, the first European Christian missionaries in South Africa interpreted the Bible from colonial imperialists' viewpoints. Therefore, it invoked cultural conflicts between Christian teachings and the traditional African ethics, such as African Christian converts' prohibition of participating in ancestor worship, polygamous wives' descent of status into concubines, prohibition of music and dance within the church, and so on. A few decades later, Afro-centric Bible reading, however, emerged one after another. Furthermore, the majority of black African Bible readers developed African Indigenous Churches with their own strength. Through these agencies (AIC), Africans held healing services in the name of Jesus with 'music and dance' as one of the most essential communal religious experiences. In particular, healing, music and dance have been and continue to be commonly represented in African Indigenous Churches. In this way, from cultural viewpoints, Christianity was transformed into African Christianity given African religious cultural contexts.

In view of South African politics and the Bible reading, the Bible was used as a tool of politics. In the period of Apartheid, for Afrikaners, the Bible was interpreted for providing Afrikaners with a political ideology for upholding status quo: Apartheid. On the contrary, for black Africans, the Bible was interpreted and reconstructed for supporting black conscious and black liberation movement, which resisted the Apartheid policy of the Afrikaner regime in the name of 'liberation theology.'

In short, from a historical viewpoint, the Bible was interpreted given the

political and cultural context of South Africa. On this stance, if they were explained separately from the South African cultural and political context, Christianity and Bible reading would lose their significances. For example, black theology, which is synonymous with liberation theology or contextual theology (Muzorewa, 1985:108), also arose from South African black Bible reader's real life. In short, this chapter reveals that Bible interpretation has been dependent upon South African Bible reader's political and cultural context. Besides, the influence of their Bible interpretations was confined to South African political and cultural context. This is called the 'contextualized biblical hermeneutics' in South Africa.

However, this contextualized biblical hermeneutics was vulnerable to criticism such as the 'self-centered hermeneutics'. Depending on the viewpoint of readers in each context, the Bible was used for their own political and cultural interests. Chapter 4 discusses 'decontextualized biblical hermeneutics' in the case of Jehovah's Witnesses.

#### **4. DECONTEXTUALIZED BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS IN JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES**

In chapter 2 and 3, this thesis focused on biblical interpretation that does not have any significance if discussed separately from people's political and cultural context in the name of 'contextualized biblical hermeneutics'. Accordingly, contextualized biblical hermeneutics is defined as follows: 'Interpretation of the Bible on the basis of the context of Bible readers and the Bible text. Influence of its interpretation is confined to the Bible reader's political and cultural context in the name of 'belonging to difference' (West, 1999:142). In other words, Korean biblical hermeneutics has significance only on the basis of Korean cultural and political context; as South African biblical hermeneutics is not meaningful without any consideration of South African cultural and political context.

In contrast, in chapter 4, this thesis stresses that biblical hermeneutics can be meaningful regardless of any specific political and cultural context in the name of 'decontextualized biblical hermeneutics'. Accordingly, 'decontextualized biblical hermeneutics' can be defined as follows: 'Interpretation of the Bible on the basis of the context of Bible readers and the Bible text. Influence of its interpretation extends beyond the Bible reader's political and cultural context in the name of 'global unity.' Jehovah's Witnesses' Bible interpretation is a good model to show Bible readers' global unity regardless of their political and cultural context. Whether South Africans or Koreans, they can be unified through the same interpretation of the Bible beyond their specific political and cultural contexts.

##### **4.1 Benefit of JWs' late arrival in Korea and South Africa**

The Watch Tower Society's first president, Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916), as chairperson of the IBSA (International Bible Students Association) committee, visited Korea in 1912, which made the start of Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) in Korea. Given protestant churches arrived in Korea in 1885, JWs arrived late in Korea. Robert R. Hollister, as a representative of the Association in the Orient, introduced the first book entitled, "*The Divine Plan of the Ages*" in

Korean language in 1914. In 1915, Kang Pom-shik became the first Korean Jehovah's witness while doing translation work. The first generation of JWs had mostly been members of main line churches and were well acquainted with the Bible. For example, Ok family members were all Seventh-Day Adventists in 1937. Ok Jijoon's father was an elder in the church and his wife, Kim Bongnyo was the local school's auditor. In other words, contrary to the first main line church members, the first generation of JWs could, comparatively, avoid cultural shocks that arose from the cultural collision between traditional thought and Christian thought. Members of JWs were not more than 12 until the year of 1949 in Korea (Yearbook, 1988:137-97).

One year prior to the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, trained missionaries from the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in New York set missionary work in earnest in Korea. Afterwards, JWs' organization has rapidly developed. At present in 2002, 89,006 JWs out of a population of 47,639,618 are actively doing evangelical work by proclaiming Kingdom messages in Korea (Watchtower, 2003:12-15).

Noticeably, under the Japanese Imperialism (1910-1945), all Koreans were imposed to worship the Japanese emperor in the Shinto shrine in the late 1930s. In addition, during the Korean War (1950-1953), citizens of Seoul, who could not seek refuge in the Southern Province, were imposed to participate in the war by both sides: military authorities of North Korea and of South Korea. After the war, North and South Korean government authorities constitutionalized a clause of obligatory military service for every adult male. Liability of military service still remains as one of the most important legal obligations in Korea. The point is that a-political attitudes of JWs are in consistency; even though political situations have drastically changed in Korea.

On the other hand, JWs found their way to South Africa about 1902, when a Dutch Reformed minister from Holland was sent to South Africa with some of the publications of C.T. Russell. Particularly, Frans Ebersohn and Stoffel Fourie saw the literature in the minister's library. A few years later, they became the members of Jehovah's Witnesses with the help of two Jehovah's Witnesses, who emigrated from Scotland to Durban (Proclaimers, 1993:418).

However, in the early missionary periods, JWs' missionary work was not always favourable. For example, Elliott Kamwana did a political movement by adopting millennium thought of JWs under the slogan: "The inheritors of the new

world would be African and those cast into outer darkness at the time of Armageddon would be European”(Hodges, 1982:7). In 1937, he did not join the Watch Tower Bible Tract Society (the legal institution of JW's in New York) but set up his own independent church, 'the Watchman Healing Mission,' which played a similar political and healing role like other African Independent Churches (Hodges, 1982:7). For that reason, this political movement mistook the identity of the genuine JW's (Proclaimers, 1993:418). In another aspect, this could have been another example of contextualized biblical interpretation. Nonetheless, Kamwana did not identify himself as one of JW's. On this ground, JW's organization had not fully grown until missionaries from Watch Tower Bible School of Gilead came to South Africa around 1950s.

After the 1950s, JW's organization in South Africa rapidly developed as in Korea. At present in 2002, 72,707 JW's out of a population of 45,454,211 are actively doing evangelical work by proclaiming Kingdom messages in South Africa (Watchtower, 2003:12-15).

The point is that JW's found their way to South Africa, where main line Christian church missionaries had already played a dominant role in African culture. In other words, the majority of JW's, comparatively, could have avoided cultural conflicts between African traditional norm and the Bible teaching. After the 1950s, the Bible was, at least, well known to the majority of Southern Africans, given that the translation of the Bible started from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, in a political aspect, white male adults were imposed on the obligatory military service in-between the period of Apartheid (1950-1989) like Korean JW's (Hodges, 1982:12). Conspicuously, their a-political neutral stances were the same as Korean JW's.

To summarize, given the late arrival of JW's in Korea and in South Africa in comparison with main line churches; JW's had much less problems that arose from cultural conflicts between traditional cultural norms and the Bible teaching. On this ground, their interpretation of the Bible could be internationally consistent regardless of Korean or South African cultural context. For example, 6,304,645 publishers of JW's do house-to-house preaching around 234 lands in the world and they abstain from blood transfusion (Watchtower, 2003:15). Furthermore, in a political aspect, they stick to the principle of political neutrality, with whatever a political situation they are faced. For example, they neither go to military service nor vote for any political party. The next section discusses

three issues from JW's biblical viewpoint: firstly, 'house-to- house preaching'; secondly, 'abstaining from blood transfusion'; and, lastly, 'political neutrality.' This is a good example of the 'decontextualized biblical hermeneutics.'

#### 4.2 JW's house-to- house preaching and abstaining from blood transfusion (sur-cultural aspect)

In the case of house-to-house preaching, both Korean and South African JW's preached for about fifty million hours in field service in 2002 (35,113,210 hours in Korea and 14,274,356 hours in South Africa) (Watchtower, 2003:12-15). Rogerson (1969) satirized in the postscript of his book, entitled *'Millions now living will never die'*(1969) that JW's daily lives were characterized by door-to-door preaching work irrespective of their cultural context: "... their efficient organization and will be knocking on our doors to tell us of the impending battle that will finally prove them right"(Rogerson, 1969:190). In that case, how do JW's interpret the Bible, of which principle guides their daily lives?

(1)	Matt. 24:14	<b>This good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come</b>
(2)	Matt. 28:19,20	Go therefore and make disciples of <b>people of all the nations, baptizing them</b> ... teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you
(3)	Luke 8:1	He went journeying <b>from city to city and from village to village</b> , preaching and declaring the good news of the kingdom of God
(4)	Mark 6:7,30	(7) Now he summoned the twelve, and he initiated sending them out <b>two by two</b> , and he began to give them authority over the unclean spirits. (30) And the apostles gathered together before Jesus and <b>reported to him all the things they had done and taught.</b>
(5)	Luke 10:1	After these things the Lord designated seventy others and sent

		them forth <b>by twos</b> in advance of him into <b>every city and place</b> to which he himself was going to come
(6)	Acts 17:17	Consequently he began to reason in the synagogue with the Jews and the other people who worshiped God and <b>everyday in the market place</b> with those who happened to be on hand
(7)	Acts 20:18,20,21	(18)... Form the first day that I stepped into the district of Asia...(20) I did not hold back from telling you <b>any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house.</b> (21) I thoroughly bore witness both to Jews and to Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus
(8)	James.2:17, 18,26	(17)Faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself. (18) Nevertheless, a certain one will say: "You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith apart from the works, and <b>I shall show you my faith by my work.</b> "(26) Indeed, as the body without sprit is dead, so also <b>faith without works is dead.</b>

JWs have a belief in Jehovah God, who will put an end to Satan's tolerated rulership over the world and set up God's Kingdom in the name of King Jesus Christ. This will enable humankind to be brought back into harmonious relationship with God (Rev. 20:3;Rom. 8:19-21). On this stance, their preaching and teaching the good news of God's Kingdom are regarded as the most important mission of humankind (2). Even the end of this world is connected with their preaching work (1). Given that their faiths reveal in their works (8), they preach in earnest God's Kingdom messages from house to house as did the early Christian congregation. For example, the Apostle Paul defended his ministry before the overseers in Ephesus as indicated in (7). After finishing their field service, they report to elders in congregation all the things that they taught and preached (4). As illustrated in (3),(4),(5),(6) and (7), JW's house to house preaching is modeled after that used in Jesus Christ's and apostles' day.

In particular, if they do not preach the advent of God's Kingdom in the world, it results in bloodguilt for them. Figuratively, if someone did not do anything despite seeing a baby walking toward the edge of precipice, he or she might be blood guilty: "In case you build a new house, you must also make a parapet for your roof, that you may not place bloodguilt upon your house because someone falling might

fall from it”(Deut. 22:8). On this ground, they engaged in the house-to-house preaching work from city to city and from village to village.

In the case of ‘abstaining from blood transfusion’, Cloete (1983) put it, “from a medical viewpoint, JW’s patients are internationally notorious for their steadfast refusal of any form of blood transfusion, regardless of the medical ailment or seriousness of the injury or accident with resulting blood loss, or surgical procedure requiring blood”(1983:1). In addition, Bergman (1990) raised the issue of blood transfusion; in that children tragically died because of their parents’ refusal of a blood transfusion for them. As he put it, “what was now not an uncommon situation in many large western hospitals”(1990:455). Likewise, this blood transfusion issue has excited much controversy both to Koreans and South Africans. If that is the case, why do JW’s stick to that principle, which arose from their Bible interpretations?

(1)	Gen. 9:3,4	Every moving animal that is alive may serve as food for you. As in the case of green vegetation, I do give all to you. Only flesh with <b>its soul (life)- its blood- you must not eat.</b>
(2)	Lev. 17:11,12	<b>The soul</b> of the flesh is in the <b>blood</b> , and I myself have put it upon the altar for you to make <b>atonement for your souls</b> , because it is the <b>blood</b> that makes <b>atonement by the soul</b> in it. That’s why I have said to the sons of Israel: ‘ <b>No soul of you must eat blood and no alien resident</b> who is residing as an alien in your midst <b>should eat blood.</b>
(3)	Heb. 9:11-14, 22	When Christ came as a high priest... he entered, no, not with <b>the blood of goats and of young bulls, but with his own blood</b> , once for all time into the holy place and obtained an everlasting deliverance for us. <b>For if the blood of goats and of bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who have been defiled sanctifies to the extent of cleanness of the flesh, how much more will the blood of the Christ</b> , who through an everlasting spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works that we may render sacred service to the living God?... <b>Unless blood is poured out no forgiveness takes place.</b>

(4)	Leviticus 17:13-16	(13) As for any man of the sons of Israel or some alien resident....(14) <b>For the soul of every sort of flesh is its blood by the soul in it.</b> Consequently, I said to the sons of Israel: <b>“You must not eat the blood of any sort of flesh,</b> because the soul of every sort of flesh is its blood. <b>Anyone eating it will cut off.</b> (15) As for any soul that eats a body (already) dead or something torn by a wild beast, whether a native or alien resident, he must in that case wash his garments and bathe in water and be unclean until the evening; and he must clean.
(5)	Acts 15:20,29	(20)But to write them to <b>abstain from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.</b> (29) To keep abstaining from <b>things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication.</b> If you carefully keep yourselves from these things you will prosper. Good health to you
(6)	Rev. 2:14	Nevertheless, I have a few things against you, that you have there those holding fast the teaching of Balaam, who went teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, <b>to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.</b>

Just as Bergman (1990:504) agrees that blood, soul and life are equated, Jehovah God told Noah and his family that blood represents the soul or life (1). Given that God gave life to human beings, they should respect life and blood. In the Old Testament days, Israelites poured out animal's blood on the ground as water or on an altar; whether they went hunting or they were holding sacrifices (Deuteronomy 12:15,16). They just ate meat in the premise that there remained no blood within it (4). This is because life belongs to God rather than human. Ostensibly, Israelites killed animals for food since Noah's day. However, they were not considered to kill life or soul itself, as long as they poured out its blood on the ground or on an altar. Accordingly, they could not have been blood guilty.

On the other hand, blood cannot be the object of substitution, given that blood represents the life itself. Given that taking blood of any sort of flesh means taking their lives, 'abstaining from blood' has been one of the most important biblical principles since Noah's day (1). Besides, this principle continued to be effective even in the early Christian apostles' days (5).

The point is that the symbolism of blood in the Old Testament was connected with Jesus ransom sacrifices. In short, all the sacrificial animals in the Old Testament foreshadowed Jesus Christ ransom sacrifice (3). Most of all, Abraham's offering Isaac in sacrifice was a distinctive example. That is, Jehovah God (Father) offered Jesus Christ (Son) on the stake as a ransom sacrifice; as Abraham (the father) offered Isaac (the son) in sacrifice (Isaiah's Prophecy, 2001:218-219). If the well-known God's principle, Talio's law, were applied: "...Soul (life) will be for soul (life), eye for eye and tooth for tooth..."(De 19:21;Ex 21:23;Le 24:20;Mt 5:38), Jesus had to die for eternal life of human beings. This is because "the wages sin pays is death"(Rom 6:23). In short, Adam's sin caused the death of his descendants, all human beings. ("Through one man (Adam) sin entered into the world...Rom 5:12) Without substituting death of human beings for death of Jesus Christ, it is impossible for human beings to regain their original state, an eternal life. If Jesus Christ had not bled, human beings would still be destined to die. Jesus Christ made atonement for Adam's sin by pouring out his blood on the stake; just as Israelites made atonement for the sin by pouring out sacrificial animal's blood on the altar (2). Through Jesus Christ ransom sacrifice, human beings, ultimately, can have a hope of everlasting life. On this ground, if Jesus Christ's blood could have been replaced with other blood; Jesus did not necessarily have to die for humankind. Furthermore, Jehovah God had no reason for sacrificing His begotten Son. In short, blood is life itself and nobody can substitute for his or her own blood. Only Jehovah God is in charge of blood and life itself. As a result, human beings should not take blood of any sort of flesh and keep abstaining from blood. On this stance, JW's reject blood transfusion whether they are South Africans or Koreans.

Although Bergman (1990) criticized JW's viewpoint, he did not fully deal with the relationship between Israelites' sacrifices in the Old Testament and Jesus Christ's ransom sacrifices. In particular, he asserted that a package of 4 rules of Act 15 would have been nullified; given that one rule out of four, **"abstaining from things sacrificed to idols" was clearly permitted in I Cor. 8:1-10**: **"If one of the four concerns was permitted later, then one must conclude that the rest of the prohibitions were likewise both temporary and their application was limited"**(Bergman, 1990:560). However, as indicated in (6) Rev 2:14, all things related with idols and fornication are clearly prohibited throughout the Bible. Besides, even in I Cor. 8:1-10, idol is never described in a positive way: "...we

know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no God but one..." For that reason, it is much more appropriate, to the contrary, to say that two of the three concerns (blood issue includes the strangled one, which is not properly bled) are clearly prohibited repeatedly even in Revelation (6), then one must conclude that the remaining rule of blood prohibition has no reason to be removed.

On this ground, JW's biblical interpretation of both house-to-house preaching work and rejecting blood transfusion leads them to global unity; regardless of their dominant cultural influences, whether South Africans or Koreans, in the name of 'decontextualized biblical hermeneutics.'

#### **4.3 JW's political neutrality (a-political aspect)**

The definition of JW's political neutrality is as follows: "The position of those who do not take sides with or give support to either of two or more contending parties. It is a fact of ancient and modern-day history that in every nation and under all circumstances true Christians have endeavored to maintain complete neutrality as to conflicts between factions of the world. They do not interfere with what others do about sharing in patriotic ceremonies, serving in the armed forces, joining a political party, running for a political office, or voting. But they themselves worship only Jehovah, the God of the Bible: they have dedicated their lives unreservedly to him and give their full support to his Kingdom"(Reasoning book, 1989:269-70).

As indicated, under the Japanese Imperialism (1910-1945), all Koreans including Japanese were imposed to worship the Japanese emperor at the Shinto shrine in the late 1930s. Since the 1910s, a small number of JW's both in Korea and in Japan had been doing printing and translating work for JW's Society. In the meantime, Korean JW's were faced with the pressure of worshipping the Japanese emperor. Nonetheless, 38 JW's refused to worship at the Shinto shrine in 1939. For that reason, they were imprisoned and 5 of the 38 imprisoned died faithful while in prison (Yearbook, 1988:137-97). On the other hand, even in Japan, on June 21, 1939, 130 members of the Todaisha (燈臺社: "Lighthouse Association", as the local organization of JW's was then called) were arrested and imprisoned, because of their uncompromising attitude toward Japanese Imperialism; they refused to worship the emperor or support Japan's

militarism (Yearbook, 1998: 68-73). Although 30 of them apostatised under pressure, the rest of them remained faithful. One of faithful JWs, Matsue, put it, "most of those from before the war who excelled in ability and intellect left God's organization when subjected to great pressure... those who remained faithful had no special abilities and were inconspicuous"(Yearbook, 1998:68-73). Likewise, Dohi, in his book entitled "*Understanding of Japanese Christian History*"(1993), also attested that JWs' testimony in Japanese Court was praise-worthy; in that JWs, as one of model Christians, did not bend their faith in God despite great pressures.

Similarly, during the Korean War (1950-1953), Roh Pyung-il, as a member of JWs, testified a religious reason why he had to refuse to go to the People's Volunteer Army of North Korea in spite of the fear of death sentence: "he was put with a number of other young men who had been rounded up. They were questioned, one by one. Those who were unable to satisfy their interrogators (soldiers of North Korean army) were taken aside and shot." According to Yearbook (1988), he replied, "I can serve only God's Kingdom. At Armageddon both sides in this political struggle will be destroyed by God, and I do not wish to be on either side. I cannot violate God's law for any man-made law contrary to his. I am not afraid to die because I believe in the resurrection."

After the war, the North and South Korean government authorities constitutionalized a clause of obligatory military service for every adult male. Accordingly, liability of military service still remains as one of the most important legal obligations in Korea. As their members did before, JWs are still notorious for their incessant refusals to go to military service in South Korea. One of the Korean nationwide broadcasting companies, MBC, even broadcasted on the issue of JWs' conscientious rejection of military services several times in 2002.

On the other hand, in South Africa, white male adults were imposed on the obligatory military service in-between the period of Apartheid (1950-1989)(Hodges, 1982:12). In 1972, every young white male of JWs, who refused to undergo military training, was invariably sentenced to 90 days' detention in the barracks. They were locked up there in their underwear because they refused to put on a uniform. However, before the ninety-day sentence was up, they would again be asked to don the uniform and, if they refused, they would be given another sentence of 90 days. In the meantime of this vicious circle, JWs were sentenced to detention barracks for one year in the end (Yearbook,

1976:236). Furthermore, as Hodges (1982) put it, in *Jehovah's Witnesses in Africa: Minority Right Group Report No. 29(1982:12)*, "in January 1983, 66 JWs were sentenced to three years imprisonment each for refusing conscription."

The point is that JWs' a-political neutral principles have been internationally applied regardless of political situations in Korean or South African history. The preceding paragraphs discuss their Bible interpretation of the issue of political neutrality.

(1)	Rom. 13:1/ Titus 3:1	Let every soul <b>be in subjection to the superior authorities</b> , for there is no authority except by God; the existing authorities stand placed in their <b>relative positions by God</b> ./ Continue reminding them to be in subjection and <b>be obedient to governments and authorities as rulers</b>
(2)	Rom. 13:7/ Luke 20:21-25; Mark 12:17	Render to all their dues, to him who calls for the tax, the tax...to him who calls for honor, such honor/... By all means, then, pay back <b>Caesar's things to Caesar</b> , but <b>God's things to God</b> ...
(3)	Acts 5:28,29/4.18-20	(A spokesman for the Jewish high court) said: "We positively ordered you(the apostles) not to keep teaching upon the basis of this name(of Jesus Christ), and yet, look! You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you are determined to bring the blood of this man upon us.' In answer Peter and the other apostles said: <b>We must obey God as ruler rather than man</b> ."/ (Peter and John said to them): " <b>Whether it is righteous in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, judge for yourselves</b> . But as for us, we cannot stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard.
(4)	Daniel 6:5	Consequently these able-bodied men were saying: We shall find in this Daniel <b>no pretext at all</b> , except we have to find (it) against him in the <b>law of his God</b> .
(5)	Matt. 26:52	"Jesus said to him: 'Return your <b>sword</b> to its place, for all those who take the sword <b>will perish by the sword</b> .'"
(6)	Isa. 2:2-4; Mic. 4:3	"It must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains...And he will certainly render

		judgment among the nations and set matters straight respecting many peoples. And <b>they will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore.</b> ”
(7)	2 Cor. 10:3,4	“Though we walk in the flesh, <b>we do not wage warfare according to what we are in the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful by God for overturning strongly entrenched things.</b> ”
(8)	John 17:16/ John 18:36	<b>They are no part of the world, just as I(Jesus) am no part of the world./ (Jesus told the Roman governor): If my kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought that I should not be delivered up to the Jews. But, as it is, my kingdom is not from this source.</b>
(9)	Jas. 4:4/ 1John 5:19/ John 14:30	Adulteresses, do you not know that the <b>friendship with the world is enmity with God?/ the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one./ (Jesus referred to Satan as being ) “the ruler of the world.”</b>
(10)	Luke 6:27,28 /1Peter 3:11	“I (Jesus Christ) say to you who are listening. Continue to <b>love your enemies</b> , to do good to those hating you, to bless those cursing you, to <b>pray for those who are insulting you.</b> ”/ let him turn away what is bad and do what is good; let him <b>seek peace and pursue it.</b>
(11)	Deut. 7-1,2,5	...You should without fail devote them to <b>destruction...</b> Their <b>altars</b> you should pull down, and their <b>sacred pillars</b> you should break down, and their <b>sacred poles</b> you should cut down, and their <b>graven images</b> you should <b>burn with fire.</b>
(12)	Joshua 2:9-13; 9:24-27	(Mercy was shown to Rahab and to the Gibeonites)...I have exercised loving-kindness toward you...you must deliver our souls from death; he...deliver them from the hand of the sons of Israel, and they did not kill them.

The core subject in political science is that an individual's moral code of conduct is different from the morality in politics in a national dimension. In other

words, what is good for a nation is not always good for an individual. This realistic idea in politics is inferred from Machiavelli (1469-1527), particularly from his book entitled, "*Il Principe (The Prince)*(1988)." Confronting disunity amongst thousands of principality in Italy, he emphasized that politicians could have seized power by hook or by crook, which would lead the people to be in real peace and unity. This is the so-called Machiavellism. Figuratively, even though individuals do not want to kill people (enemy) in any sort of war, they are required to kill enemy (people) in the name of national interest or under the slogan of "Holy war." On this ground, politicians have justified their jingoism in various countries.

Furthermore, from a biblical viewpoint, individuals should be obedient to government authorities (1). Besides, in the Old Testament days, Israelites defeated other tribes under the direct command of God (11). The event of exodus is another well-known example, given that Israelites occupied land of Canaanites after escaping from Egypt. On this stance, the Japanese justified their invasion to Korea as discussed in chapter 2. In addition, Afrikaners justified their exploitation of land of black natives as discussed in chapter 3.

However, from the view point of JWs (Reasoning book 1989; Ministry book 1989), they bring out a contrary conclusion. In brief, when there is a conflict between law of human's government and God's law, JWs stick to God's law rather than human beings' law. However, when there are no spiritual conflicts, they are in subjection to government authorities (1). The principle of military neutrality pertains to God's law, while paying tax or tribute belongs to Caesar's law (2). For example, owing to the fear of God, Shiphrah, a Hebrew woman, rejected Paraoh's law: 'every new-born male baby should be put to death'(Exodus 1:15-20). Accordingly, baby Moses was preserved life. In addition, although rulers of people charged and threatened Jesus' apostles, they witnessed about Jesus resurrection to people (3).

In particular, the ruler of the world is Satan, wicked one rather than God (9). For that reason, Jesus reminded his disciples that they were not part of this world (8). If Jesus' kingdom were part of this world, his disciples would have fought that Jesus should not be taken by the Jews and be executed (8). However, Jesus' disciples did not fight with them when Jesus was taken to a place of execution. This is incongruous with Jesus' words: love your enemy (10) and seek peace rather than wage war (5)(7). As long as human beings are in

the flesh, they should not wage wars (7). This is because God Himself would overturn entrenched things by using a spiritual weapon (7). On the other hand, all the wars commanded by God in the Old Testament days were related with human beings' sin, such as idolatry and immorality (11). On this ground, when tribes of Rahab and Gibeonites demonstrated faith in God, His mercy was shown to them (12). In other words, God's judgment has been made on the basis of people's spirituality, which is different from the carnal warfare of any nation today.

On this ground, in the final days, people **“will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore.”**(6) For that reason, Jews keep political neutrality for the sake of not violating God's law (4); although they would violate human's law, which might require that they should kill enemy (people) in the name of Machiavellism, nationalism, justice, or Holy war.

For them, individuals' moral code of conduct is dependent on God's principle irrespective of political, ideological and economic interests in a national dimension, given that the ruler of this world is Satan (9). In other words, for them, what is good for God's Kingdom is always good for an individual. On this stance, They **“must obey God as ruler rather than man”**(Acts 5:29).

Therefore, Jews' biblical interpretation of political neutrality makes them unite in global unity. Regardless of political and military pressures, both South Africans and Koreans have clung to their principles in the name of God's Kingdom beyond their political and cultural contexts. This is a typical example of 'decontextualized biblical hermeneutics.'

#### 4.4 Summary

This chapter discussed JW's decontextualized biblical hermeneutics, which has much significance even in beyond any specific political and cultural context.

Given that JW's missionaries arrived in Korea and in South Africa comparatively later than mainline churches, new members of JW's did not have to experience cultural shocks; which generally arose from cultural differences between traditional norms and the Bible teachings. As a result, JW's have been able to unify themselves under the principle of the Bible. For example, if a principle is clarified from Watchtower Society's biblical interpretation, it directly applies to the worldwide scale irrespective of their cultural context.

On this ground, this chapter focused on JW's sur-cultural aspect by discussing exemplary biblical interpretations such as 'house-to-house preaching work' and 'abstaining from blood transfusion.' In addition, this chapter put an emphasis on JW's 'a-political' aspect from the biblical interpretation of political neutrality. Particularly, JW's rejecting military services has been a consistent standpoint despite drastically changed political situations; whether or not, in Japanese colonial era, during the Korean War, in the Apartheid era and even in modern days.

In short, although JW's have lived under the influence of their specific political and cultural dominant ideologies, they have read and understood the Bible in the same way regardless of their political and cultural contexts. This is clearly proved by their harmonious global activities, which are characterized by 'house-to-house preaching work', 'abstaining from blood transfusion', and 'political neutrality'. This is the so-called 'decontextualized biblical hermeneutics.' Emphatically, the centre of their religious activities is not on human's political and cultural context. Instead, it is on God's Kingdom, which lies beyond human's political and cultural context.

## 5. CONCLUSION: IN SEARCH OF THE VOICES FROM THE MARGIN

The purpose of this thesis was to search of voices from the margin in biblical hermeneutics.

Firstly, biblical hermeneutics in the third world (Korea and South Africa) were marginalized by European biblical hermeneutics. For example, “*A dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*<sup>11</sup>, which was proudly presented as the work of distinguished scholars, did not carry a single entry by an Asian, Latin American or black biblical interpreter”(Sugirtharajah, 1991: 2). However, their biblical hermeneutics played significant roles in a political and cultural context in the name of the same God. Therefore, from a historical viewpoint, this thesis compared and analysed contextualized biblical hermeneutics in Korea and South Africa. In the process, this thesis revealed that their voices had significance.

Secondly, biblical hermeneutics of Jehovah’s Witnesses was marginalized in the name of heresy by Christendom, which included mainline churches in Europe, South Africa and Korea. However, their biblical hermeneutics played important roles in unifying people in different contexts on the basis of the Bible. Therefore, this thesis revealed the significance of their ‘decontextualized biblical hermeneutics’ through exemplary biblical interpretations. In the process, their voices have significance.

Lastly, even though diverse and pluralistic biblical interpretation became a threat rather than a productive challenge to church authority; this thesis reveals that a dichotomous category could be the first step in reading the Bible for contemporary Bible readers in the name of contextualized and decontextualized biblical hermeneutics.

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<sup>11</sup> R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden (1990). *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International.

## **5.1 Voices of contextualized biblical hermeneutics from the margin of Euro-centric biblical hermeneutics**

Firstly, although Euro-centric Bible reading played a dominant role in biblical hermeneutics of the Christian world, Korean and South African Bible reading also have unique significance in the name of contextualized biblical hermeneutics.

On one hand, from a cultural aspect, when early European missionaries came to Korea and South Africa, they disregarded spirituality of Koreans and South Africans in the name of 'no religion', 'superstition', 'Satan's religion', 'Savages' and so on.

However, Koreans voluntarily accepted Christianity and developed it in their own way. Although there were many conflicting viewpoints between conservative Bible reading and liberalistic Bible reading, Koreans did not lose their cultural identities, which could have been in harmony with Christianity. In particular, their unique Christian religious experiences, which were characterized by 'early-morning prayers', 'audible prayers' and 'rice contribution', induced Christianity to be transformed into Korean Christianity in cultural contexts of Korea.

Similarly, South Africans transformed Christianity into African Christianity on the basis of African communal experiences. In the face of Euro-centric Bible reading, Africans interpreted the Bible without losing their traditional cultural assets such as 'ancestor worship', 'polygamy', 'music and dance', and 'healing'. Furthermore, they developed and transformed Christianity into African Christianity through their own agencies, AIC (African Indigenous Churches).

This revealed that Jesus Christ did not only pertain to European culture but to Korean and African culture as well. If Bible reading did not regard the Bible readers' context, it could become a vain philosophy not a religion. This is because religion is, in nature, based on people's faith and grounded on their real lives. On this ground, Euro-centric Bible readings were contextualized given cultural contexts of Korea and of South Africa, in the name of 'Korean' Christianity and 'African' Christianity.

On the other hand, from a political aspect, whether Europeans (Afrikaners) or black South Africans; whether Japanese or Koreans; and whether the oppressors or the oppressed, the Bible was the object of political interpretation for strengthening Bible readers' political power in each context. In

other words, the Bible reading was contextualized given each political context of Bible readers. These historical facts reveal that religion was subsidiary to politics; furthermore, Bible reading was in subjection to each political context of Bible readers. The subjection of role of religion to politics was grounded on the realities of life, which were characterized by the ironic aphorism: "religion would disappear if there were no believers, who also lead lives in the political context in this world."<sup>12</sup>

In short, if Bible reading was important to Europeans, so it was also vital to Koreans and South Africans. This is because the Bible has been interpreted on the basis of Bible readers' context in history, whether in European or in Korean & South African cultural and political contexts. On this ground, there is no reason why Korean and South African biblical hermeneutics should be disregarded by European biblical hermeneutics. In the name of Korean Christianity or South African Christianity, they must have their voices.

As a result, this Bible reading can be defined as 'contextualized biblical hermeneutics': 'Interpretation of the Bible on the basis of the context of Bible readers and the Bible text. Influence of its interpretation is confined to the Bible reader's political and cultural context in the name of 'belonging to difference' (West,1999:142). The center of their Bible reading is within their political and cultural context.

## **5.2 Voices of decontextualized biblical hermeneutics from the margin of the Christendom**

Secondly, this thesis put much emphasis on 'decontextualized biblical hermeneutics', which defines, 'Interpretation of the Bible on the basis of the context of Bible readers and the Bible text. Influence of its interpretation extends beyond the Bible reader's political and cultural context in the name of 'global unity.' JW's Bible reading is a good example to show 'decontextualized biblical hermeneutics.

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<sup>12</sup> Religion cannot exist without believers. For instance, no matter how powerful the worship of the Sun God (Re) was in the Ancient Egypt, it disappeared because nobody believes in the Sun God (Re) nowadays.

In contrast to contextualized biblical hermeneutics, JW's biblical interpretations are applied in a global dimension whether in Korea or in South Africa. From a cultural aspect, JW's missionaries arrived comparatively later than mainline church missionaries. Accordingly, they did not have to get through cultural conflicts between traditional cultural norms and Bible teachings. On this ground, their biblical interpretation could be applied on a global dimension, which reveals a sur-cultural aspect. In particular, their 'house-to-house preaching work' and 'abstaining from blood transfusion' are their representative religious experiences, whether in Korea or in South Africa.

From a political aspect, JW's have not participated in wars, military services, or military trainings. Therefore, they have been persecuted by governments and military authorities (Hodges, 1982). What is worse, they have been branded as heretics by Christendom. Nonetheless, this thesis put emphasis on various biblical reasons why they consistently have rejected and continue to reject military service.

If it were not for any biblical reasons, contemporary people generally would acknowledge that Japanese Imperialism in Korea and Afrikaners' Apartheid policy in South Africa must have been human beings' gross error in the past history. This is because contemporary Bible readers live under the influences of various political ideologies, such as respect of human rights, anti-racism, democracy and so on. In other words, contemporary Bible readers would criticize the past erroneous political context from the aspect of their current political context. In the case of military service, people were forcefully imposed on military service in the periods of Japanese Imperialism, during the Korean War and in the Apartheid era. Given the past political context, which were characterized by imperialism, nationalism, despotism and racism, it must have seemed fair or unavoidable reality for them to have participated in wars in those times; whether willingly or unwillingly; whether Japanese or Koreans; whether Afrikaners or black South Africans. However, their participation eventually led human beings on the other side to be faced with tragedy in the name of Japanese Imperialism or Afrikaner nationalism. Additionally, their political Bible reading supported one side's political policies. Likewise, although the present generation's participation in military service or wars are regarded as being fair or an avoidable duty from a nationalistic viewpoint particularly for one side; in another political context it could induce another

discriminative violence, as proved in Korean and South African political history.

On this stance, JW's biblical interpretation should be seriously recognized in the world of Christian biblical hermeneutics. It characterizes 'decontextualized biblical hermeneutics'. Although the center of their Bible reading is on God's Kingdom beyond their political and cultural context, God's Kingdom provides JW's with great strength, with which they can live in global unity. On this stance, they did not, at least, commit erroneous errors in the past, whether in Korea or in South Africa.

### **5.3 The significance of contextualized and decontextualized biblical hermeneutics to contemporary Bible readers**

In summary, just as African or Korean religion were marginalized in the early Christian missionary era, so are JW's now classified as a sect and are persecuted particularly by military authorities and many other mainline church Christians (Hodges, 1982). In addition, just as Euro-centric Bible readers felt a crisis from contextualized biblical hermeneutics, so mainline church Bible readers feel uncomfortable about decontextualized biblical hermeneutics.

Nonetheless, contextualized biblical hermeneutics has significance in that it prevents Euro-centric Bible readers from disregarding the voices of the so-called Bible readers in the third world (Korea and South Africa). Similarly, decontextualized biblical hermeneutics has significance in that it prevents mainline church Bible readers from disregarding the voices of JW's, who are now treated as marginal heathens.

In particular, JW's decontextualized hermeneutics has significance in that it could unify all the people. Although they are living in different cultural and political context, they can escape from the boundary of political and cultural context and seek the same political and cultural center in the name of God's Kingdom. Although God's Kingdom seems to be an unrealistic and absurd object that people seek after, it is fully significant to contemporary Bible readers given that religion, in nature, is based on people's dream.

In addition, figuratively, contextualized and decontextualized biblical hermeneutics could be compared to J. Z. Smith's locative and utopian model from his book entitled "*map is not territory*"(1978). In short, contextualized biblical hermeneutics would pertain to the 'locative model', given that the center of Bible reading is on the cultural and political context; while decontextualized biblical hermeneutics would pertain to the 'utopian model,' given that the centre of Bible reading is beyond the cultural and political context.

However, whether their sacred centers are in or out of context, they are on the same dimension. For instance, the former is in the direction of the positive; the latter is in the direction of the negative on a straight line in mathematics. These two viewpoints (models; map) have limitations in explaining human's diverse and different religious experiences on the multi-dimension (territory). Similarly, the dichotomous viewpoint (contextualized and decontextualized biblical hermeneutics) would not fully grasp Bible readers' diverse and pluralistic understanding of the Bible. This is because "map (model) is not territory (human's historical religious experiences)."

Nonetheless, just as the locative or utopian map are the first step in categorizing human's diverse religious experiences (territory) in history; so contextualized or decontextualized biblical hermeneutics could be the first step in grasping Bible readers' diverse and pluralistic biblical interpretations on the basis of their political and cultural context. On this ground, the dichotomous category of both contextualized biblical hermeneutics and decontextualized biblical hermeneutics has significance even for contemporary Bible readers.

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