

Walking in Parallel: Roman Catholicism and Protestant Christianity in Korea, 1899–1945

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In the early twentieth century, Korean Catholic and Protestant Churches found themselves in a period of significant power transition, from a neo-Confucian dynasty to a colonial regime. Imperial Japan and Christianity thus posed a mutual challenge: church leaders worked to sustain and increase their Evangelical mission field within Korea's new socio-political environment, while, simultaneously, the Japanese depended on the cooperation of the Korean Christian communities to fulfil their colonial project. In this dynamic of State-Church relations, Catholics and Protestants constantly vied for ascendancy. This article examines how the two Christian denominations engaged with each other and with Korea's coloniser, as imperial Japan's policies varied and its international status fluctuated.

This article explores how Roman Catholicism and Evangelical Protestantism encountered, engaged with and clashed with each other and with governmental authority during the first half of the twentieth century in Korea, where both these Christian traditions were rapidly expanding (over a quarter of Korea's population now follows them). This essay's spatio-temporal dimension has profound implications for understanding modern Korea and, more broadly, the histories of East Asia and Christianity. Meiji Japan (1868–1912) overturned the traditional East Asian hierarchy, in which China had occupied the apex of power and eventually annexed Chosŏn Korea (1392–1910) by its victories in the Sino-Japanese (1894–5) and Russo-Japanese (1904–5) wars. This period overlapped with major socio-religious changes in Korea: the embracing of Catholicism, which the Chosŏn court had severely persecuted, the introduction of Protestantism and the establishment of numerous schools and medical facilities by Western missionaries. Unlike Christian

GGK = Government-general of Korea; KIA = Korean Independence Army; MEP = Society of Foreign Missions of Paris; RGK = Residency-general of Korea

missionaries in Africa and settler colonies on other continents, over which the home countries held enormous sway, those who pioneered mission fields in Korea had to face a ‘foreign’ empire. Consequently, they competed for survival and spiritual supremacy against imperial Japan, which imposed state Shintō (国家神道) and emperor worship on Koreans to fulfil their aim of colonial assimilation.

Over the past decades, a significant volume of Korean and Euro-American scholarship has explored Korean Christianity from various angles. For example, several historians have demonstrated how Roman Catholicism flourished as a faith-based community in nineteenth-century Chosŏn society, even though neo-Confucian elites perceived the new religion as ‘heresy’ (邪教).¹ Yet others have highlighted a myriad of factors and agents that contributed to forming the early Korean Church: Western missionaries and Korean female preachers,² the vast spiritual revival movements of the 1900s³ and the indigenisation of rituals and symbols within the Korean Church.⁴ Notably, recent research focusing on the colonial era (1910–45) scrutinises the controversy over mandatory Shintō shrine worship, which rose sharply in the late 1930s, and Korean Protestants’ support of nationalist struggles for independence.⁵

This article adds to the academic literature and deepens our understanding of Korean Christianity by exploring the fluidity of interactions and

¹ Donald L. Baker, ‘A different thread: orthodoxy, heterodoxy, and Catholicism in a Confucian world’, in JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler (eds), *Culture and the state in late Chosŏn Korea*, Cambridge, MA 1999, 199–230; Andrew Finch, ‘A persecuted Church: Roman Catholicism in early nineteenth-century Korea’, this JOURNAL li (2000), 556–80; 편집부 [Editorial department], 한국천주교회사 [A history of the Korean Catholic Church], Seoul 2009–14, i–v.

² Chae-sŏng Kim, ‘초기 한국 개신교 선교의 역사적 의미: 알렌의 의료 선교 활동을 중심으로’ [‘The historical meaning of early Christian missions in Korea: a study of Allen’s medical missionary activities’], 국제신학 [International Theology Journal] xvi (2014), 49–72; Hyaewol Choi, *Gender and mission encounters in Korea: new women, old ways*, Berkeley, CA 2009; Donald N. Clark, *Living dangerously in Korea: the western experience, 1900–50*, Norwalk, CT 2003.

³ Pyŏng-sŏn Yi, ‘한국 교회 초기 부흥 운동의 사회 심리적, 신학적 고찰: 원산부흥운동 (1903), 평양대부흥운동 (1907), 백만인구령운동 (1909) 중심으로’ [‘The early Korean Church’s revival movements: the Great Revival of 1903 in Wŏnsan, the Great Revival of 1907 in P’yŏngyang, and the million souls movement of 1909’], 기독교교육정보 [Journal of Christian Education and Information Technology] xxxviii (2011), 309–43.

⁴ Sung-Deuk Oak, *The making of Korean Christianity: Protestant encounters with Korean religions, 1876–1915*, Waco, TX 2015; D. L. Baker, ‘Christianity Koreanized’, in Hyung Il Pai and Timothy R. Tangherlini (eds), *Nationalism and the construction of Korean identity*, Berkeley, CA 1998, 108–25.

⁵ Wi Jo Kang, ‘Church and State relations in the Japanese colonial period’, in Robert E. Buswell, Jr and Timothy S. Lee (eds), *Christianity in Korea*, Honolulu 2005, 97–115; Sebastian C. H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, ‘Oppression, resistance, and millennial hope’, in *A history of Korean Christianity*, Cambridge 2015, 107–56.

rivalries between Korean Catholicism and Protestantism and Japanese colonisation. As Emily Anderson notes, ‘unlike Western empires that championed a liberal notion of secular governance that recognised religious diversity while also protecting government policy and diplomacy from the vagaries of religious devotion’, the Japanese Empire ‘defined patriotism as a religious devotion to the imperial household’ and hence sought to regulate other belief systems and dominate public discourse about religion in colonial Korea.⁶ Thus, the rise of Christianity posed a challenge to Japanese authorities, just as the colonial regime was a threat to Korean Christians. As latecomers to imperialism, the Japanese knew that Christianity was gaining popular support in Korean society and that Western missionaries had close ties with their home countries. Church leaders, in turn, had to adjust to the transition of power on the peninsula from a neo-Confucian dynasty to a new socio-political environment to protect and increase their Evangelical mission field. This article argues that within the complicated dynamics of colonial domination and contest, Catholic and Protestant adherents continuously vied for ascendancy, cooperated and compromised with one another, and disparaged each other based on divergent theological doctrines and institutions. This study analyses how the lives and missions of these Christian branches intersected (and failed to intersect) in colonial Korea, as imperial Japan’s policies varied and its international status fluctuated within its geopolitical context.

In a field afar: Roman Catholicism and Protestant Christianity in Korea, c. 1900

One of the most decisive years in the history of early Korean Christianity was 1899. In March of that year, Gustave-Charles-Marie Mutel (1854–1933), a member of the Society of Foreign Missions of Paris (MEP) and the eighth diocesan bishop of Chosŏn Korea, signed the Kyomin treaty (the treaty of Religion and State) after a month-long negotiation with officials from the Great Han Empire (the Chosŏn dynasty had renamed itself in October 1897). This nine-article treaty guaranteed Western missionaries’ safety and activity by prohibiting local Korean magistrates from intervening in missionary work and church administration.⁷ Korean

⁶ E. Anderson, ‘Introduction: empire of religions: exploring belief and practice in imperial Japan and colonial Korea’, in Emily Anderson (ed.), *Belief and practice in imperial Japan and colonial Korea*, Singapore 2017, pp. xviii–xix.

⁷ Chin-so Kim, ‘일제 하 한국 천주 교회의 선교 방침과 민족 의식’ [‘Missionary works and national consciousness of the Korean Catholic Church under Japanese colonial rule’], *교회사연구* [*Research Journal of Korean Church History*] xi (1996), 11–35 at p. 23.

Catholic converts had suffered state persecution that spanned nearly a century since the young neo-Confucian scholar Yi Sŭnghun (1756–1801) began preaching the Christian Gospel after his baptism in Beijing in 1784. However, the new agreement ensured the rights of Korean Christians to be treated equally and to receive equal protection under the law.⁸ Nevertheless, disputes involving Catholic churches, Korean citizens and the French consulate ensued, as exemplified by the Cheju Peasants' Uprising of 1901. The Sŏn'gyo treaty (Treaty of Proselytisation), signed in 1904, addressed these issues, reaffirming the Kyomin treaty and permitting missionaries to travel freely beyond the treaty ports and to purchase real estate.

Western Protestant missionaries, such as Horace G. Underwood (1859–1916) and Henry G. Appenzeller (1858–1902), arrived relatively late in the peninsula and thus benefitted from their Catholic predecessors' sacrifices for religious freedom.⁹ Protestant missionaries strategically adopted a form of 'hidden', 'indirect' proselytisation in order to avoid conflict with Chosŏn officials and to convert the Korean population effectively.¹⁰ Because neo-Confucian moral codes and practices still reigned in Chosŏn society, and the government condemned defying them, Protestant evangelists proselytised secretly. They appealed to the Chosŏn court by establishing Western-style schools and hospitals. Especially, to expand their mission field across the country, some American Protestants sought to build close relationships with the Chosŏn royal family. They obtained its support by emphasising that the United States was a wealthy and powerful nation that could assist Korea's reform project.¹¹ Protestants' rapid penetration into Chosŏn society undermined the privileged position that the Catholic Church had maintained for years in Korea as the sole messenger of the Gospel and of Western civilisation. While Roman Catholicism was still recovering from the suppression it had suffered in earlier generations, massive revival rallies such as the Great Revival of 1907 in P'yŏngyang and the Million Souls Movement of 1909 strongly encouraged Protestantism. In 1900 the Korean Catholic Church had 42,411 members, double the Protestant community's 20,914. One decade later, this gap had reversed, with 73,000 Catholics and 144,242 Protestants.¹²

⁸ D. L. Baker, *Catholics and anti-Catholicism in Chosŏn Korea*, Honolulu 2017, 60–6.

⁹ Idem, *Korean spirituality*, Honolulu 2008, 70–1.

¹⁰ Kwangch'ŏl Sin, *천주교와 개신교: 만남과 갈등의 역사* [*Roman Catholicism and Protestantism: a history of encounter and conflict*], Seoul 1998, 75–8.

¹¹ For example, H. N. Allen, *Allen's diary*, Seoul 1991, entry for 9 May 1886; L. H. Underwood, *Fifteen years among the top-knots: life in Korea*, New York 1904, 115.

¹² D. L. Baker, 'The transformation of the Catholic Church in Korea: from a missionary Church to an indigenous Church', *Journal of Korean Religions* iv/1 (Apr. 2013), 11–42 at pp. 14–15.

Indeed, Catholic and Protestant missionaries had meaningful similarities and differences. Both adhered to religious ‘rigorism’. The MEP, which assumed full responsibility for mission work in Korea, advocated the ‘spirituality of martyrdom’ and ‘sacred-secular dualism’ and Western Protestant missionaries (primarily from the American Presbyterian and Methodist Churches) defended spiritual piety and absolutism in Christianity. The two branches of Christianity attracted Koreans from various classes and geographical regions across the peninsula through their commitment to upholding human equality and fraternity with God. However, they laid the foundation of their faiths on different Christian principles and practices. Several key theological concepts that arose out of the Reformation distinguished Protestant Churches from Roman Catholicism: *sola scriptura* (‘the Bible alone’), *sola fide* (‘faith alone’), *sola gratia* (‘grace alone’), *solo Christo* (‘Christ alone’) and the priesthood of all believers.¹³ Meanwhile, the Catholic Church claimed that the magisterium (the pope and the bishops) was ‘endowed with the charism of infallibility in matters of faith and morals’, placing supreme authority in the Church. ‘Under the absolute monarchy of the papacy’, the magisterium asserted that God had given it ‘the task of providing the correct interpretation of the Scriptures for the rest of the church’.¹⁴ As such, while Protestantism permitted the laity to organise the spiritual union of church members (*communio sanctorum*), Roman Catholicism relied more on priestly mediation and accepted the Bible and the traditions of the Church as equal bases for Christian doctrine.

Catholic and Protestant missionaries in Korea recognised that their Churches championed different theological and liturgical teachings. Although they worshipped the same God based on similar clerical systems and Scriptures, the two Christian groups vied for supremacy in mission work; their competition often escalated into fierce conflicts. Catholics and Protestants initially clashed in the summer of 1889, while extreme droughts and plagues were sweeping through the southern provinces. A Presbyterian, the Revd Horace Underwood, donated funds to a relief committee organised by the Catholic Bishop Marie-Jean-Gustave Blanc (1844–90). Underwood then opined about distributing the contributions openly and fairly. Catholic priests were displeased because they perceived Underwood to be meddling in their relief work and trying to take advantage of the crisis to further his own interests.¹⁵ Friction

¹³ Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the context of world Christianity: how the global Church is influencing the way we think about and discuss theology*, Grand Rapids, MI 2007, 151.

¹⁴ Bodie Hodge and Roger Patterson, *World religions and cults: counterfeits of Christianity*, Green Forest, AR 2015, i. 88–9.

¹⁵ Yong-gyu Pak, ‘초기 개신교와 천주교의 갈등’ [‘Conflicts between Catholicism and Protestantism in early modern Korea’], *신학지남* [*Theological Review*] lxxviii/1 (2001), 87–114 at pp. 88–9.

between the two Christian groups later intensified in the 1890s and 1900s. In April 1899 dozens of Korean Catholics invaded the *Capital Gazette* (황성신문) office, where the Protestant Namgung Ŏk (1863–1939) was the president.¹⁶ Outraged by an article slandering the Catholic Church, the invaders kidnapped and detained Namgung for hours. Only after Bishop Mutel apologised for their misconduct and punished them did the tension subside. The most violent incidents occurred successively in Hwanghae province between 1900 and 1903. Korean Catholics came later to the region than their Protestant counterparts, and the two groups of believers clashed over the construction of churches and land use. Amidst escalating conflict, Catholic converts accused the head official of Changyŏn county, a deacon of Sorae Protestant Church, of fraud and embezzlement. The crisis worsened when Catholic and Protestant missionaries joined in the lawsuit, and the county arrested several lay people for assault.¹⁷

The conflict between Catholics and Protestants entered a new phase as Korean Christians learned theology and canon law. The so-called ‘documentary debate’ (문서 논쟁) of the late 1900s reflected the maturation of Korean converts’ understanding of the Bible and church order. It indicated that Protestants and Catholics were battling for supremacy in doctrinal and liturgical issues. However, their points of contention were quite different: while Protestants primarily focused on the content and composition of the Bible used by the Catholic Church, Catholics denounced factionalised denominations within Protestant Christianity and their different ritual practices. In *The apologetics of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism* [예수천주양교변론] (1908), Pastor Ch’oe Pyŏng-hŏn (1858–1927), who succeeded Appenzeller in Chŏngdong Methodist Church, wrote, ‘Whereas Protestantism takes the Bible as its foundation and refuses to accept anything that is inconsistent with it, Catholics follow both the Bible and Apocrypha. When there are no exact verses in the Bible to obey, they find passages from the apocryphal texts and put them together skilfully. We cannot call them the truth.’¹⁸ Ch’oe intended to refute claims made in the anonymous booklet, *The four characteristics of true Christianity* [예수진교사괘]. Published in 1907 under the supervision of Mutel, *The four characteristics* contended that Protestantism lacks the four cardinal attributes that constitute true Christianity: unity (至一), holiness (至聖), catholicity (至公) and the inheritance of apostolic traditions (司徒徒傳下來的).

¹⁶ ‘별보’ [A special report], 황성신문 [Capital Gazette], 26 Apr. 1899.

¹⁷ K. Sin, ‘개항기 한국 천주교와 개신교의 관계: 해서교안을 중심으로’ [‘The relationship between Catholicism and Protestantism in early modern Korea’], 종교연구 [Studies in Religion] xi (1995), 355–80 at pp. 370–4.

¹⁸ P. Ch’oe, 예수천주양교변론 [The apologetics of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism], Seoul 1908, 18–19.

Ch'oe countered these attacks by highlighting controversial theological topics that had resonated within Roman Catholic circles throughout the previous centuries, including restrictions on lay access to the Bible, the worship of Mary, papal inerrancy and purgatory.

Missionaries from both sides were emphatically vocal. With strong commitment to their own beliefs, they directly discredited each other. Calling Catholicism 'the forces of the great evil', the Canadian Presbyterian missionary James S. Gale (1863–1937) asserted that Catholicism oppressed people by discounting the Bible and obscuring the truth. He maintained that God had sent Luther to defeat such advocates of evil: 'The East would have been left in long nights if God had not sent Confucius. Similarly, if God had not sent Luther to the West, we must have lived in darkness and the Way of the Cross would have perished forever. How can it not be God's will?'¹⁹ Catholic leaders also showed their hostility towards Protestantism. The Catholic newspaper, *Kyŏngnyang News* [경향신문], where Bishop Florian Demange (1875–1938) was editor-in-chief, often compared Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, arguing that the latter merely imitated the former because it had no sacramental tradition or authority. In 1907, when Korean Protestants increasingly practised confessing their sins in public during worship services, the editors claimed that they had borrowed the sacrament of penance from the Catholic Church: 'Protestants do not have the pope nor the council but the bible only, so they never rectify or modify their church law.' They asked, 'How did this new rule come out in Korea? There is no Rule of Penance in Western Protestantism, and it is now found in Korean Protestantism ... Are the souls of Koreans different from those of Westerners?'²⁰

While Catholics and Protestants exchanged bitter recriminations, Meiji Japan loomed large as an imperial power that could determine their survival or demise – and their mission in Korea. As the Japanese Empire eviscerated Korean sovereignty and colonised the Chosŏn dynasty in 1910, Christian Churches across Korea grappled with this new secular authority. Records show that disputes between the Churches and the Japanese over land use increased following the Protectorate treaty of 1905. Facing Japan's accelerated expansion throughout the peninsula, Protestant missionaries protested vigorously to the Residency-General of Korea (RGK) about the Japanese military's unauthorised occupation of church buildings and dispossession of Korean homes.²¹ For Eugenius Deneux (1873–1949),

¹⁹ J. S. Gale, 루터개교기략 [A compendium of Protestant Church history], ed. Yi Ch'angjik, Seoul 1908, 1–2.

²⁰ '별소문' [A strange rumour], 경향신문 [Kyŏngnyang News], 4 May 1907.

²¹ For example, Samuel A. Moffett, 'Pyeng Yang, Korea' (14 July 1904), in Sŏng-dŭk Ok (ed. and trans.), 마포삼열 자료집 [Collection of Moffett's documents], Seoul 2017, iv.

a priest of the diocese of Inch'ŏn, the illegal seizure of church property by the Japanese authorities and by settlers was a serious problem. In a letter to Mutel reporting on a lawsuit Deneux had filed against the RGK, he wrote: 'The land that [was] recently confiscated by the Railway Bureau was originally acquired by our church in February 1898. The total size of that land is 7,000 mpr, and the portion of railroad lines that were built is 104 metres. Those lines were installed without any notice.'²² In the wake of Japan's annexation of Korea, Catholics and Protestants realised that they now had to accept a shifting political order and the incorporation of the peninsula into the imperial system. This change was not simply an administrative transition but also marked the beginning of an era of unprecedented tensions between opportunity and tribulation.

New relationships in a new era: the colonial state and Christian Churches in the 1910s

A week after it was signed, on 29 August 1910, the annexation treaty went into effect, with the first governor-general of Korea, Terauchi Masatake (1852–1919), defining the direction of Japan's policies on religion in colonial Korea. He announced that 'While [Japan], as a civilised nation, recognises [Koreans'] religious liberty, those who discuss political affairs or plot a scheme under the pretence of that liberty will be strictly punished because they hurt social stability and moral consensus.' In addition Terauchi promised to make it possible for religious practitioners to follow their faith traditions on condition that Confucianism, Buddhism and Christianity did not contradict the government-general of Korea's (GGK) 'administrative objectives' (施政の目的).²³ This two-faced attitude towards religion in the colony suggested that the GGK intended to keep Koreans' faith under tight control; such coercion reflected the military rule (武斷統治) of the 1910s, which deprived Koreans of their civil rights and freedom of political participation, assembly and speech. The notorious so-called 'Sŏnch'ŏn Incident' caused Koreans to see that military rule posed an immediate threat to their religious lives. The colonial authorities sought to remove church leaders and nationalist activists in the north-western

236–8; '日本人 使用 教会堂 明渡 問題 件' ['An issue regarding a Korean church building used by the Japanese'], *주한일본공사관기록* [*Documents of the Japanese consulate in Korea*], Seoul 1997, xxii/26, 14 Apr. 1904.

²² '철도 부지 보상 요구' ['Claims for compensation for lands relinquished for railroad purposes'], 자료로 본 천주교 인천 교구사, 제2집: 파리외방천주교회 선교사서한문 [*A history of the Catholic diocese of Inch'ŏn seen through documents: letters written by missionaries from the Society of Foreign Missions of Paris*], Seoul 1988, ii. 292.

²³ '諭告' [An ordinance], *朝鮮總督府官報* ['Official gazette of the government-general of Korea'], no. i, 30–1.

provinces by fabricating an anti-Japanese conspiracy. They arrested approximately 700 Koreans and accused 123 others – primarily Protestant Christians – of attempting to assassinate the governor-general.

Among the diverse factors contributing to the GGK's constraining of religion in the early colonial era was the possible link between the Churches and Korean anti-colonial resistance. Rather than helping Koreans appreciate the 'civilisation and progress' that the Japanese brought to the peninsula, Christianity and church communities encouraged Koreans to envision God's righteousness revealed on earth and offered them social spaces to 'discuss political affairs or plot a scheme', just as Terauchi had feared. One year before Korea's annexation, An Chunggŭn (1879–1910), a Catholic convert and Korean patriot, assassinated the first resident-general, Itō Hirobumi (1841–1909), at Harbin station in China. The Korean historian Cho Kwang notes that An did not perform this insurgent action because of his Catholic faith; instead, An believed that Itō deserved to be removed because he had betrayed his promise to defend Korean sovereignty by proclaiming a protectorate rule over Korea after the Russo-Japanese war.²⁴ However, during the early 1900s, An helped to form immigrant Korean Christian communities in China's northern regions and mobilised guerrilla soldiers there, many of whom were young Korean Catholics. His armed struggles and other independence movements, which Christian believers abroad (mainly in Manchuria and Russia) joined during these years, provided a logical foundation upon which Tawara Magoichi (1869–1944), a vice-minister in the Bureau of Education of the RGK who surveyed the state of religion in Korea, could base his conclusion that 'the widespread anti-Japanese sentiment shared by Koreans today originated from vibrant activities of the Christian Church'.²⁵

Subsequently, the GGK advocated for the 'separation of the state and religion' to prevent religious groups from intervening in colonial politics and administration. This measure had an inextricable link to the Japanese oligarchy's efforts to resolve the 'epistemic questions' (or contradictions) they had faced since the Meiji Restoration of 1868. In other words, '[when] there existed [in the archipelago] no concept of religion as a general phenomenon, of which there would be variants like Christianity, Buddhism, and Shintō', Meiji leaders needed to address

²⁴ K. Cho, '일제 하 무장 독립 투쟁과 조선 천주 교회' ['The Korean Catholic Church and its armed struggles under Japanese colonial rule'], *교회사연구* [*Research Journal of Korean Church History*] xi (1996), 149–78 at pp. 156–7.

²⁵ Magoichi Tawara, '在韓宣教師にたいする意見' ['Opinions about missionaries living in Korea'], in Sŭngt'ae Kim (ed.), *일제강점기 종교 정책사 자료집: 기독교 편, 1910–1945* [*Sourcebook of the history of religious policy during the Japanese colonial era*], Seoul 1996, 26.

how to manage a sphere of life that could be called ‘religious’, designate its discursive boundaries and, above all, define the imperial institution as an entity separate from the state while retaining its religious qualities and practices.²⁶ For Japan, as ‘the semicolonial regime imposed by the so-called unequal treaties’, the political imperative was to preclude Western powers from interfering in Japan’s internal affairs in ‘matter[s] of religion’, particularly the promotion of State Shintō. As Trent E. Maxey aptly notes, ‘the secular pretensions of the Meiji state grew out of this concern’.²⁷ Under the banner of harmonising Japanese and Koreans (内鮮融和), the GGK adopted many of the politico-religious policies that had been implemented in the metropole. One such policy was the Revised Private School Ordinance (1915). As the education minister Sekiya Teizaburō (1875–1950) stressed, this ‘was designed to put the education of the colonial people outside the religious realm’; thus, church-affiliated schools ‘were forbidden from performing any religious education or rituals’.²⁸ Although Western missionaries, especially those from Korean Protestant churches, opposed this decision, they agreed with the GGK’s separation of state and religion in order to secure ministerial autonomy. In his earlier report to the Northern Presbyterian Church, the Revd Edwin W. Koons (1880–1947) wrote that ‘We have assured our congregations that their duty was to obey the Japanese, with a “sweet mind”, and not to work for independence; and we have in no way tried to discredit or hamper ... [Japanese] reforms ... I cannot think of one who [disagrees with the GGK’s separation of religion from the state].’²⁹

Nevertheless, Western missionaries found it impossible to keep themselves at a distance from politics when Koreans’ mounting dissatisfaction with colonial rule erupted in the March First Movement. In the spring of 1919, discontented Koreans flooded the streets shouting for the restoration of Korean sovereignty. Dismayed by the size and intensity of the demonstrations, the GGK suppressed peaceful protesters, resulting in almost 1,000 deaths, with many more injured and arrested.³⁰ In facing

²⁶ Helen Hardacre, *Shintō and the state, 1868–1988*, Princeton 1989, 18.

²⁷ T. E. Maxey, *The ‘greatest problem’: religion and state formation in Meiji Japan*, Cambridge, MA 2014, 3.

²⁸ Teizaburō Sekiya, ‘私立学校規則改正の要旨’ [‘Essential aspects of the reforms to private school regulations’], 朝鮮彙報 [*The Chosōn repository*], Keijō [Seoul] 1915, ii. 23.

²⁹ George L. Paik, ‘The history of Protestant missions in Korea, 1832–1910’, unpubl. PhD diss. Yale 1927, 453–4.

³⁰ Mark E. Caprio, *Japanese assimilation policies in colonial Korea, 1910–1945*, Seattle, WA 2009, 81–110. As Gi-Wook Shin and Rennie Moon note, the number of deaths, injured and arrested vary from the official Japanese account (533 dead, 1,409 injured, and 12,522 arrested between March and December) and a Korean nationalist document (over 7,500 deaths, roughly 15,000 injured, and some 45,000 arrested): ‘1919 in Korea: national resistance and contending legacies’, *Journal of Asian Studies* lxxviii/2 (2019), 402.

this dire situation, Korean Catholics and Protestants responded differently. As is commonly agreed, Protestants were crucial in initiating the movement; sixteen out of the thirty-three signatories of the Declaration of Independence were Korean church leaders. Initially, Protestant missionaries attempted to distance themselves; however, upon hearing about the GGK's barbarity – such as the massacre of twenty-nine men in the village of Cheamni – missionaries reported their atrocities back to their home governments and denominational leaders. Some Protestant missionaries even denounced the authorities directly: in a petition submitted to Saitō Makoto (1858–1936), who took office as the third governor-general in September 1919, the American Methodist missionary Bliss W. Billings (1881–1969) wrote: 'We strongly condemn the cruel, barbaric, and unjust acts inflicted by the Japanese military police on unarmed Korean civilians.'³¹

Unlike several Korean converts of the prior decade, including An, who devoted themselves to national independence, Catholic missionaries sought to distance their Korean followers from the political unrest. When students from the Seoul and Taegu seminaries participated in the mass rallies, Mutel ordered them to 'stop' or 'otherwise leave the school'.³² Mutel even expelled those who disobeyed him and cancelled a scheduled ordination ceremony.³³ In several meetings held after much of the turmoil had dissipated, colonial officials complimented Mutel on successfully deterring Korean Catholics from joining the resistance.³⁴ Thus, in the eyes of activists, Catholic missionaries aligned themselves with the GGK and Korean believers – except for the young seminary students – obediently followed the Church's authority and order. The Korean Provisional Government, established in Shanghai in April 1919, secretly distributed flyers to inspire Catholic adherents on the peninsula. One such brochure read:

Are you not Koreans? ... What happened to 300,000 Catholic followers remaining silent at this vital moment when many of our compatriots are shedding their blood and fighting to attain liberation? We heard that you do not rise up because your bishop did not give you permission to do so. But the bishop is French ... Alas! Our Catholic brothers! Arise right now because it is not yet late!³⁵

Korean nationalists urged their Catholic fellows to act immediately by appealing to national feelings over religious belief.

³¹ B. W. Billings, 'A petition presented at the conference of missionaries in Korea', in Sūngt'ae Kim (ed.), *일제강점기 종교 정책사 자료집: 기독교 편, 1910-1945*, Seoul 1996, 175.

³² G. Mutel, *뫼텔주교일기* [*Archbishop Mutel's diary*], trans. Ch'oe Sōgu, Seoul 2002, vi. 260.

³³ Kim and Kim, *A history of Korean Christianity*, 123–4.

³⁴ Mutel, *뫼텔주교일기* [*Archbishop Mutel's diary*], vi. 273–4.

³⁵ '천주교 동포여' ['My Catholic compatriots'], 우남 이승만 문서: 동문편 7 [*Documents of Syngman Rhee*], Seoul 1998, 41–3.

Meanwhile, the Korean Catholic Church was facing serious practical challenges. The MEP suspended its financial aid because of World War I. Moreover, the French government conscripted almost half of the Catholic missionaries serving in Korea. These challenges led Catholic leaders to concentrate more on their 'religious' responsibilities than on 'secular' matters. Then, in the early 1930s, after a brief period of active social engagement, isolationist leanings likewise became increasingly prominent in Korean Protestant Churches. The subsequent decades thus heralded a more complex tripartite relationship among the Japanese, Korean Catholics and Korean Protestants within the colonised peninsula.

Interactions, crisis and division: Korean Christian Churches, 1920–45

Although the colonial authorities forcibly crushed Koreans' demonstrations, they had difficulty sustaining their dominance. In the spring of 1921, Saitō delivered a speech in which he announced that the GGK would implement cultural rule (文化統治) to 'accomplish the grand ideals of Japanese-Korean unity (日鮮同化)' while promising that 'those who cherish anti-Japanese ideas and refuse to abide by the law would be unrelentingly punished'.³⁶ By offering Koreans limited opportunities for social activities in education, business and publishing, the *bunka seiji*, as noted by Gi-Wook Shin and Michael E. Robinson, 'co-opted nationalist leaders and channelled popular anti-Japanese sentiments into institutionalised forums'.³⁷ Additionally, Saitō made conciliatory gestures towards Korean Christianity: he approved the incorporation of religious organisations, launched an efficient permit process for new church construction and lifted the suspension on publishing Christian periodicals. Saitō's priority was to restore Japan's international reputation, which had deteriorated sharply due to Japan's harsh suppression of Korean protests. Saitō hosted dinner parties in his residence every two or three months and invited Western missionaries to promote the GGK's various reforms and industrial developments of the past decade. Saitō also commended missionaries' services in Korea and addressed their concerns on church administration and proselytisation.³⁸

These meetings not only facilitated interpersonal communication between foreign missionaries and colonial officials but also helped

³⁶ 朝鮮總督府 [The government-general of Korea], 齋藤實文書 [Documents of Saitō Makoto], Seoul 1990, ix. 143–7.

³⁷ G. Shin and M. E. Robinson (eds), *Colonial modernity in Korea*, Cambridge, MA 1999, 8.

³⁸ Nakarai Kiyoshi, *Relations between the government and Christianity in Korea*, Seoul 1921, 17–20.

representatives of the two branches of Christianity in Korea to interact more closely than ever before, although Saitō neither intended nor mediated this interaction. Indeed, Catholic and Protestant missionaries had met several times before Saitō's inauguration; however, according to Bishop Mutel's diary, the majority of their earlier encounters were coincidental or even hostile, meant to settle various disputes among congregation members, or coincided with momentous events (for example, the anniversary of Japan's WWI victory). By attending meetings held by the GKG, Bishops Mutel and Demange, the Revds James Gale and Horace Underwood and Dr Oliver R. Avison (1860–1956) became friends almost twenty years after arriving in Korea. Mutel described an episode that illustrates their friendship:

The Underwoods visited me tonight at 5 PM. They found a ten-centimetres-long crucifix when working in the yard of the Paejae Academy. Mrs. Underwood brought it to me because she thought that it was a Catholic relic. It seemed to me that someone had lost the crucifix there; it was not a piece of evidence of past persecutions, because it was a kind of item recently produced and looked pretty similar to ones in stores. Anyway, I received it as a gift and expressed my gratitude to them. I spoke with Reverend Underwood in Korean at dinner. Born in Korea forty years ago, he speaks Korean like a native.³⁹

Mutel is writing about a day when the Underwoods found a crucifix at the Paejae Academy, established by Henry Appenzeller in Seoul in August 1885. The Underwoods thought the crucifix was a relic left by a Catholic martyr killed a century ago, so they visited Mutel to give it to him. However, it turned out that someone had recently lost the crucifix; none the less, Mutel received it gratefully. Although the Underwoods visited Mutel unexpectedly, they had dinner together and talked for hours. To symbolise their equal and respectful relationship, they communicated in Korean rather than in one of their native languages (English or French). Recalling that members of the two Christian Churches had slandered one another and that several even contributed to the violence of the 1900s and 1910s, these seemingly mundane gatherings between Mutel and the Underwoods were surprising.

Along with personal fellowship among Christian missionaries, Korean Catholic and Protestant Churches of the 1920s recognised, albeit temporarily, the sacrifices each had made to Koreans' spiritual awakening and salvation and their religious devotion. A prominent example is the joint Evangelical campaign in which all the Protestant Churches in Korea participated from May to June 1926. Under the leadership of the 'Pyōngin Memorial Evangelical Committee', organised by Korean representatives of the Presbyterian, Methodist, Holiness and Congregational Churches,

³⁹ Mutel, *뫼뵐주교일기* [*Archbishop Mutel's diary*], viii. 322–3.

the Salvation Army, and several seminaries, this campaign generated a spiritual revival among Koreans and commemorated Catholic martyrs executed by the Chosŏn government precisely sixty years previously, during the Pyŏngin Persecution of 1866:

As previously reported, this evangelical campaign is aimed to commemorate the martyrdom of our Catholics [who sacrificed themselves] 60 years ago. On the one hand, we revere that [our Catholic adherents] endured the hardships of exile and slaughter in the era of Korea's isolation (*swaeguk*), won the victory and eventually opened the door of evangelism. On the other hand, we hope to inherit their will and complete their missions. This is why this campaign means a lot to all and is extremely important ... Behold! Today's Korean Christianity! It has overcome the difficult times of snow and rain, passed the nights in desolate mountains, and grown so much for the last 60 years ... Now we have 300,000 members [in the Christian Church of Korea].⁴⁰

Although the campaign ended for unknown reasons after one month, its organisers planned to undertake outreach work every Monday and Saturday for a year and distribute 100,000 gospel tracts. They also prepared to install a booth and preach the Gospel during the Korea Exposition between 13 May and 11 June.⁴¹ However, the authorities disapproved of their event, so the proselytisers had to move to the Young Men's Christian Association Hall.⁴² Despite the campaign's limited influence on the general public, its significance is noteworthy. Korean Protestants conceived of Catholics as belonging to the same Christian community and praised their martyrs as noble pioneers of Korea's mission field. Furthermore, Korean Protestants admired their Catholic adherents' sacrifices and declared that they would inherit their deceased predecessors' aspirations and visions. Thus, the two Christian groups in Korea, which had long run in parallel, now met for the first time in remembrance of their thorny past.

In Manchuria, Korean Catholics and Protestants united and conducted military operations against Japanese troops stationed there. Although they did not take up arms against the GGK during the colonial period (even during the March First Movement), Korean Christian settlers outside the Sino-Korean border confronted imperial Japan directly because they could avoid its tight surveillance and thus form alliances with other resistance groups. A salient example is the Association of

⁴⁰ '병인 기념 전도회' ['Pyŏngin memorial evangelical campaign'], 기독교신보 [*The Christian Messenger*], 2 June 1926.

⁴¹ Kyu-mu Han, '1920년대 한국 개신교회의 천주교 인식' ['Korean Protestants' views of Roman Catholicism in the 1920s'], 교회사연구 [*Research Journal of Korean Church History*] xxxiv (2010), 121–47 at pp. 139–42.

⁴² '박람회를 이용한 병인 전도회' ['Pyŏngin proselytisation campaign held during the Korea exposition'], 기독교신보 [*Christian Messenger*], 19 May 1926.

Great Koreans (Taehanminhoe), founded in February 1919 by young Christians, including Pang Wiryong and Ku Ch'unsŏn; it attracted over 500 members and had 80 local branches across Manchuria. The Taehanminhoe also established military academies to train soldiers to conduct raids on the peninsula and purchased weapons from the Russian Bolshevik party.⁴³ In May of the following year, the Korean Independence Army (KIA), led by General Hong Pŏmdo (1868–1943), incorporated the Taehanminhoe and formed the region's first KIA Command. Although the Taehanminhoe won no significant victories in battle, its armed struggle is an example of a rare coalition between Catholics and Protestants united against a non-Western empire.

Japanese imperialism was not the only daunting opponent that the two Korean Churches would fight together. Since the Russian Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, radical ideas such as Communism, Socialism, anarchism and Fabianism had been spreading throughout the peninsula *via* Manchuria, Japan and Siberia, fascinating Korean intellectuals and dominating public discourse during the 1920s and 1930s. Proponents of these leftist ideologies – most notably, the Socialists – asserted that Christianity endorsed bourgeois capitalists and ruling elites by advancing their class interests and supplying theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, they argued that Christianity blinded labourers to the socio-political contradictions of the present world by offering promises of spiritual salvation and heavenly rewards rather than facilitating resistance. In late 1925, the anti-religion and anti-Christian movement, led by Socialist organisations such as the New Rising Youth League (신흥청년동맹) and the Hanyang Youth League (한양청년동맹), thrived. The Marxist journalist Pae Sŏngnyong (1896–1964) posed a provocative question: 'Why do the bourgeoisie deceive the masses by inspiring religion?' He answered his question thus: 'While capitalism is the most ideal system for the bourgeoisie, it only brings misfortune to all labourers. So, the bourgeoisie has developed narcotic religious practices in order to bolster that system.'⁴⁴ Criticising Christianity was a powerful theme in Socialist periodicals during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Many Christians were embarrassed by these attacks and their 'deleterious' effects. The editors of the *Christian News* [기독교신보] wrote that 'Young people who used to come to the church are now attending seminars to learn Communism. They curse Christianity and disturb our worship services. It is even more striking that most of them are children of church staff and graduates of mission schools.'⁴⁵

⁴³ Cho, '일제 하', 156–7.

⁴⁴ Sŏng-nyong Pae, '반종교운동의 의의' ['The meaning of the anti-religion movement'], 개벽 [The Genesis] lxiii (1925), 57–81 at pp. 57–8.

⁴⁵ Yŏng-t'aek Chŏn, '현대 교회는 조선을 구할 수 있을까?' ['Will the Church be able to rescue Korea?'], 기독교신보 [Christian Messenger], 11 Nov. 1931.

The tension between Christians and Socialists heightened as colonial society suffered from the Great Depression, culminating in a series of open forums, entitled ‘Critique of Catholic Literature’, hosted by the *Korea Daily* [조선일보] in the summer of 1933. In discussing the recent publication of the magazine *Catholic Youth* [가톨릭청년], famous Socialist writers, such as Im Hwa (1908–53) and Hyŏn Chunhyŏk (1906–45), attacked Roman Catholicism and the Korean Catholic Church, and Father Yun Hyŏngjung (1903–79) became defensive. Im contended that the global economic downturn had undermined the romantic idealism of the bourgeoisie and catalysed regressive waves in all intellectual domains, including philosophy, arts and the social sciences. Amid the staggering crisis of bourgeois culture, Im argued that retrospective interest in Catholic literature increased dramatically. For Im, three reactionary points characterised Catholicism: ‘superstitious doctrines and practices’, ‘imperialist history’ and ‘ties to fascism’. Im was most distressed by the alleged links between the Catholic Church, Nazi Germany and the several Churches that survived (and even prospered) under Hitler’s regime, precisely because they had acknowledged his dictatorship. Im declared:

Today, when the creation of a new human culture is clearly evident, the bourgeoisie relies on religion more desperately than ever before. The Catholic Church, the most zealous advocate of feudal rule in the past, has now dedicated itself to the capitalist world ... Recently, not only have [Catholics] become the most loyal servants of international fascism, but they have also colluded with it ideologically, institutionally, and systematically ... In Germany, Catholicism is a widespread idea upheld by the Wehrmacht and the Nazis ... [For these reasons,] Catholic literature can never form an artistic self and ... [it is] only entering the abyss of destruction and death.⁴⁶

Im adamantly claimed that Catholicism had metamorphosed from a guardian of feudalism into one of capitalism and then fascism. For Im, Catholicism’s alliance with Nazi Germany was inevitable because he believed the Catholic Church had aligned itself with the ruling classes and deceived the masses by instigating religious fanaticism. Because the Catholic Church had opposed radical changes to the socioeconomic system, as demonstrated by the March First Movement, it had likewise naturally embraced fascism as the guiding principle of the new world, an order that would help nations ‘transcend class divisions while keeping in place

⁴⁶ H. Im, ‘현대 문화와 카톨릭시즘’ [‘Modern culture and Catholicism’], 조선일보 [Korea Daily], 13 Aug. 1933; ‘반평화의 이데올로기인 카톨릭시즘’ [‘Catholicism, an anti-peace ideology’], 조선일보 [Korea Daily], 16 Aug. 1933; ‘현대 조선 문학과 카톨릭시즘 반동의 의의’ [‘Modern Korean literature and the meaning of reactionary Catholicism’], 조선일보 [Korea Daily], 18 Aug. 1933.

existing property relations'.⁴⁷ Subsequently, Im condemned Catholicism for consenting to Hitler's totalitarian rule and antisemitism without reflecting on the Church's dark path at the forefront of Western empires. According to Im, the fusion between such a degenerate religion and literature was 'an expression of the incorrigible bourgeois spirit'.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, Father Yun launched an *ad hominem* counter-attack, calling Im a 'scurrilous demagogue' and dismissing him for making 'fabrications and lies about Catholicism as he pleased'.⁴⁹ Yun insisted that Roman Catholicism was not a proponent of feudalism in the Middle Ages but a true source of light which had fostered great artistic and architectural monuments. Listing renowned medieval intellectuals who helped advance philosophy, science and theology, including Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) and Thomas Aquinas (1224–74), Yun emphasised Im's perspective as biased and worked to expose his historical ignorance. Yun also answered Im's charge that Catholicism was Nazism's client ideology: because Catholicism pursued God's justice and refrained from real politics by rejecting both Communist extremism and ultraconservative capitalism, the Church had been persecuted by Hitler's regime, which needed Catholic communities' collaboration to meet the material and ideological demands of its fascist enterprise. Thus, Yun's conclusion was short and clear: Im was a 'recalcitrant and pathetic man who defied the truth' because he was 'tainted by evil trends'.⁵⁰

Just as the division widened between Korean Socialists and Catholics amid a deteriorating global economy, so did the relationship between Catholics and Protestants in colonial Korea. According to records such as Bishop Mutel's diary and newspapers produced by both Christian denominations, missionaries had fewer casual meetings than before and, therefore, all organised events, such as the Pyöngin proselytisation campaign of 1926, had entirely ceased. Surprisingly, Korean Catholics and Protestants never united, at least explicitly, against the Socialists' attacks. Instead, Korean Socialists took advantage of Protestant missionaries' scandals, which had been reported in the news, thereby encouraging both their deportation and the abolition of biblical education in mission schools. In the early 1930s, as evidenced by the debates between Im and Yun, Catholicism was the main target of criticism. However, Catholic and

⁴⁷ Marilyn Ivy, 'Foreword: fascism, yet?', in Alan Tansman (ed.), *The culture of Japanese fascism*, Durham, NC 2009, pp. vii–xii at p. viii.

⁴⁸ Im, '현대 문화' ['Modern culture'].

⁴⁹ H. Yun, '암흑한 중세기, 그것은 참말인가?' ['Were the Middle Ages the dark ages?'], *조선일보* [*Korea Daily*], 2 Sept. 1933.

⁵⁰ Idem, '카톨릭은 젊은 인텔리 계급의 모방열을 배격함' ['Catholicism rejects the young intelligent class's tendency to imitate others'], *조선일보* [*Korea Daily*], 30 Aug. 1933.

Protestant leaders rarely united to overcome these difficulties together. Although it is unclear exactly how and why they became alienated, several factors may explain it. Between the late 1920s and mid-1930s, several simultaneous projects preoccupied the Korean Catholic Church: building a new cathedral in Hyehwadong, assisting the Missionary Society of St Columban of Ireland in settling in Kangwŏn province and Mutel's death. Meanwhile, Korean Protestants, especially Presbyterians, Methodists and the YMCA, focused on rural reform programmes to improve the Korean countryside's economic, social and cultural conditions. Additionally, several Protestant Churches suffered internal divisions and factional disputes, particularly when factions broke away from their denominations.⁵¹

While Japan established the puppet state of Manchukuo in north-east China in 1932 and waged the Sino-Japanese War from 1937, the GGK harnessed State Shintō to reinforce the ethnic assimilation of Koreans into the Japanese Empire under the slogan 'Japan and Korea as one body' (內鮮一體). As a result, the GGK rigorously suppressed all other religions in colonial Korea, including Catholicism and Protestantism. Furthermore, by enforcing Shintō shrine worship, the authorities sought to inculcate Japanese morals and values into colonial subjects and mobilise them for Japan's wartime effort. Since the early 1920s, the GGK had been propagating the idea that the Shintō ritual had neither political nor religious meaning; it was merely a traditional act of expressing reverence to the imperial court and its ancestors. However, as Ung Kyu Pak notes, Korean Christians opposed Shintō worship because they regarded it as 'a violation of God's commandment against idolatry'.⁵² Consequently, the GGK closed eight North American and ten South American Presbyterian mission schools between November 1935 and February 1938. In addition, the authorities closed over 200 Protestant churches across the country and had arrested 2,000 Protestant laity and seventy pastors by June 1940. Tragically, fifty of those pastors died in prison.⁵³ As the French government conscripted many Catholic priests in Korea – thirteen out of forty-four missionaries – and sent them to fight in World War II, the GGK placed the Korean Catholic Church under its vast system of surveillance and control. The GGK arrested, imprisoned and deported missionaries and nuns from France and the

⁵¹ So-yŏng Paek, '일제 하 한국 교회와 무교회의 출현' ['The emergence of independent churches in colonial Korea'], *기독교사상* [*Studies of Christian Thoughts and Culture*] xlvii/11 (2003), 258–71 at pp. 261–68.

⁵² U. Pak, *Millennialism in the Korean Protestant Church*, New York 2005, 191.

⁵³ Wan-yao Chou, 'The kōminka movement in Taiwan and Korea: comparisons and interpretations', in Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (eds), *The Japanese wartime empire, 1931–1945*, Princeton 1996, 47.

United States, the countries that Japan reacted to belligerently at the time, alleging that they were involved in espionage.⁵⁴

Eventually, both Catholics and Protestants succumbed to these pressures. The Methodists acted first: in April 1936, they indicated their willingness to comply with the authorities by posting in the *Methodist Bulletin* [감리회보] an ultimatum issued by the GGK regarding Shintō worship.⁵⁵ Three months later, Yang Chusam (1879–?), general superintendent of the Korean Methodist Church, attended a conference hosted by the GGK and confirmed that the Church would follow the government's directives. In September 1938 the Korean Presbyterian Church passed a resolution at the 27th General Assembly acknowledging Shintō worship as a patriotic duty and agreeing to its active practice. From 12 to 21 December, Yang and his fellow Presbyterian and Holiness Churches pastors travelled to Japan and visited the Ise Grand Shrine. Previously, the Korean Catholic Church had banned any form of worship at Japanese shrines because the practice was deemed heretical or superstitious. However, in May 1935, the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples in Rome (CEP) announced that Shintō worship was no longer an idolatrous ritual that contravened Christian strictures; the Korean Catholic Church accepted the decree. Cardinal Paolo Marella (1895–1984), the papal ambassador to Japan, wrote that shrine worship was a non-religious civic ceremony unique to Japan; hence, he mainly influenced this arbitrary change.⁵⁶

Although Korean Christians could not prevent imperial Japan's fanatical drive towards total war, one should not interpret their inability to stymie Japan as resulting from a monolithic state at its apex that had successfully colonised the peninsula. Instead, it should be emphasised that the two branches of Christianity made only limited efforts to survive their travails together. During such tumult, they maintained an antagonistic stance against one another, the same antipathy that characterised many of the theological writings produced at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although in the 1920s Catholic and Protestant missionaries had friendly exchanges more frequently than before, Bishop Demange published *The origins of Protestantism* [신교지기원], a dialectical critique of Protestant thought and tradition. From the date of its publication in 1923, Korean Catholics had continued to read Demange's monograph, and Catholic

⁵⁴ Sōn-ja Yun, '1940년대 일제의 한국 천주교회 통제 양상' ['Imperial Japan's control of the Korean Catholic Church in the 1940s'], *교회사연구* [*Research Journal of Korean Church History*] lvii (2020), 113–55 at pp. 119–39.

⁵⁵ '신사 문제에 대한 통첩' ['An ultimatum regarding Shintō shrine worship'], *조선감리회보* [*The Korean Methodist News*], 10 Apr. 1936.

⁵⁶ Hyōn-bōm Cho, '일제강점기 조선 천주교회의 정체성' ['The identity of the Korean Catholic Church under Japanese rule'], *정신문화연구* [*Korean Studies Quarterly*] xxv/2 (2002), 149–76 at pp. 162–3.

newspapers and magazines reproduced their negative perceptions of Protestantism throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Demange contended that ‘Since it betrayed the Church and overthrew the papal authority, [Protestantism] had gone astray. The doctrines of different Protestant denominations are incoherent ... In the last 300 years, 300 factions have emerged.’ He concluded: ‘Although Protestants call themselves the sons of Christ, the true faith does not exist in their hearts.’⁵⁷ Thus, behind the veneer of a favourable relationship with Protestants, lay Catholic leaders consistently distrusted and were acrimonious towards their spiritual rival.

If Demange heralded a rift that began to widen between the two branches of Christianity in colonial Korea during the 1920s, then it was Pastors Charles F. Bernheisel (1874–1958) and Han Sönggwa who marked the zenith of the Korean Protestant Church’s anti-Catholic theology during its conservative turn in the late 1930s and 1940s. Their fraternal love for Catholics, previously embodied in the Pyöngin proselytisation movement, had vanished. Protestant apologists, such as Bernheisel and Han, strove to restore its doctrinal intransigence and purity *vis-à-vis* Korean Catholicism. Such endeavours seemed utterly contradictory because Korean Protestants had themselves yielded to what they previously believed was idolatrous, namely, Japanese Shintō. Nevertheless, Bernheisel hoped to consolidate the theological identity of Evangelical Protestantism by negatively defining Catholicism as ‘a religion that worships idols’, by which he meant the pope, Mary and other historical saints.⁵⁸ In the late 1930s, when the GGK fully mandated Shintō shrine worship, Bernheisel published detailed analyses of Roman Catholicism in the *Theological Review* [신학지남], a Christian scholarly journal issued by the Korean Presbyterian Church. His papers explained the traditional topics that had distinguished Catholicism from Protestantism, including the papal system and emphasis on salvation through the Church.⁵⁹

In 1940 Han added his volume to the ongoing discussion of Catholicism: *Fallacies of Roman Catholicism seen through the Bible* [성서를 통하여 본 천주교의 오류]. Han was born and raised in a Catholic family but converted to the Holiness Church at the age of seventeen. His background and book, noteworthy for being the first complete manuscript to wrestle with the doctrinal problems of Catholicism, received significant attention

⁵⁷ Florian Demange, 신교지기원 [*The origins of Protestantism*], Seoul 1923, 65.

⁵⁸ Ha-söl P’yön (C. F. Bernheisel), ‘로마 천주교회 예배’ [‘Worship services held in the Roman Catholic Church’], 신학지남 [*Theological Review*] xviii/3 (1936), 28–31, and ‘천주교의 교회관’ [‘Catholicism’s understanding of Church’], 신학지남 [*Theological Review*] xviii/5 (1936), 44–52.

⁵⁹ Idem, ‘교황 제도의 내용 분해’ [‘An analysis of the papal system’], 신학지남 [*Theological Review*] xix/1 (1937), 23–9.

from Korean Protestants. Notably, major Korean Protestant denominations endorsed the book: prominent pastors from the Presbyterian, Methodist and Holiness Churches contributed prefaces and encouraged their congregations to read it. According to Han, Roman Catholicism had deviated from the Bible's teaching. It incorporated apocryphal traditions into the authentic ecclesiastical establishments of the Early Church and adhered to what Han called heretical practices not ordained by Christ. Thus, the Church had descended into superstition-based ritualism and pope-centred humanism.⁶⁰

These assessments exchanged by Catholics and Protestants strained the relationship inexorably. As long as they remained divided, it would be difficult or impossible to respond effectively to their common adversary. Indeed, the colonial regime's power lay in its hegemonic position to elicit and enhance the consent of the colonised to accept Japan's domination. As war conditions worsened for Japan, the GGK intensified the imperialisation policy (皇民化政策) to reconfigure Koreans into loyal subjects of the emperor and prompt them to undertake the new 'sacred' mission of building the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere (大東亜共栄圏). Except for a minority who boldly opposed the empire and Shintō worship, most Korean Catholic and Protestant elites and associations increasingly supported Japan's war in Asia. They volunteered for military service, donated money to national defence funds and welcomed the unification of the Korean Christian Church with the Nihon Kumiai Kirisuto Kyōkai (Japanese Congregational Church). In this broader context of ethnic assimilation, it was difficult for Korean Catholics and Protestants to imagine a unity that could transcend their extreme differences. Nor would any coalition necessarily have resulted in more direct resistance to colonial rule. However, it became apparent that the two Christian sects were at odds when each felt the need to preserve its spiritual integrity.

The strained relationship between Korean Catholicism and Protestantism began to lessen in the post-liberation era. Following the Second Vatican Council of 1962–5, which addressed the necessity to restore unity among all Christians and demanded Churches' adaptation to the modern world and their coexistence with other faiths, Korean Catholics actively pursued reconciliation with their Protestant counterparts.⁶¹ The first outcome was publishing the Common Translation Bible

⁶⁰ K. Sin, '일제강점기 한국 개신교의 천주교관' ['Korean Protestants' views of Catholicism during the colonial era'], *종교문화연구* [*Journal of Religion and Culture*] 1 (1999), 225–42 at p. 236.

⁶¹ The Second Vatican Council of 1962–5 was a milestone for the Roman Catholic Church and the other Christian sects because it reversed preconciliar Roman theology and acknowledged the indispensability of the ecumenical movement, collaborative government and freedoms of religion. 'Four hundred years after the Reformation', as Philip Kennedy notes, Vatican II 'decreed that the assembled people of God celebrate

in Korean; after the Vatican Bible Committee and the Protestant World Bible Society had agreed to co-translate the Bible, they published the New Testament in 1971 and the Old Testament in 1977. Then, in the 1980s, the Korea Christian Action Organisation for Urban Industrial Mission (한국교회사회선교협의회), a cooperative society of Catholics and Protestants, participated in the Korean democratisation movement against the military dictatorship and led nationwide campaigns to improve the living standards of labourers, farmers and the urban poor.⁶² As a result, Korean Catholics and Protestants held their first joint prayer meeting during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January 1986.

This article has explored how Roman Catholicism and Protestant Christianity at times unified, clashed and vied for supremacy in Korea during the first half of the twentieth century. It analysed the roles, activities and discourses in which various agents – such as French and American missionaries, Korean converts and Japanese officials – engaged in realising their disparate visions for cultural progress and world order. Thus, this research illuminates how the two branches of Western Christianity established footholds and developed in Korea through their interactions with and against the Japanese colonial authorities. There was an inextricable connection between the spread of Christianity in Korea and the geopolitical environment of that particular era. Indeed, their encounter with imperial Japan, a non-Christian empire expanding its sphere of influence in Asia, was an inescapable influence.

Furthermore, rapid social transformation and divergent agendas in Korea – both denominations wanted to build the Kingdom of Heaven on earth through spreading the Gospel, while imperial Japan sought to reinforce its colonial domination for politico-economic purposes – obliged these foreign religious forces to negotiate their presence on the peninsula. The Korean Catholic and Protestant Churches constantly oscillated between coalition and opposition, renewing their mission work in concert with shifts in Japan's assimilation project and international status. Therefore, when considering that Korean (and, more broadly, Asian) culture is becoming influential worldwide today, examining the vicissitudes of the divided Churches in colonial Korea helps us understand the fluid nature of Korea's religious and intellectual culture. It also highlights Christianity's expansion and development into an 'indigenised' religion in Korea within the changing local and global contexts.

the liturgy'; it proclaimed that 'the Eucharist was to be regarded as the source and summit of the church's life', a decision 'entirely consonant with Protestant sensibilities': *Christianity: an introduction*, New York 2011, 247.

⁶² Minah Kim, 'Seeking solidarity between Protestant and Catholic Churches for social justice in Korea: the case of the Korea Christian Action Organisation for Urban Industrial Mission (*Saseom*) (1976–89)', *Religions* xi/6 (2020), 1–13.