

G Kang and H J Hendriks¹
University of Stellenbosch

Leadership images in the Korean Church

ABSTRACT

This article addresses the membership stagnation problem in the South Korean Church with the hypothesis that leadership pathologies is one of the main reasons for the problems experienced by the Korean Church. The history of the Korean Church is surveyed by examining different leadership images that were applied during specific formative periods. The image of the leader, as charismatic, was very popular in the previous decades and led to spectacular church growth. However, some of the motives that played a role are questionable theologically and in the long run led to mistrust and decline. The article calls for a theological evaluation of both ecclesiology and leadership.

1. INTRODUCTION

At present the Korean Church leadership is experiencing a crisis. Despite the fact that fundamental problems, such as secularised, church-centred, and authoritarian leadership, portray the leadership in the Korean Church, it has misdiagnosed its leadership crisis as membership stagnation or decline (Gwak & Hendriks 2001:55-68) and has consequently focused on the development of a methodology for numerical church growth to cope with this decline.

A suitable remedy would emanate from an appropriate diagnosis, which is needed for the leadership crisis in the Korean Church. This article focuses on a diagnosis of the realities of the Korean Church leadership.

The objective of this article could be achieved by revealing the leadership images that have appeared throughout the history of the Korean Church. Here, the assumption is that a historical survey of the Korean Church will lead to the discovery of some leadership images that have played significant roles in a certain period and incessantly beyond that period. Such images will provide a general understanding of the background of the Korean Church leadership.

In the preliminary work, the researcher surveyed the history of the Korean Church and found certain leadership images. The result of this inductive survey showed that a particular leadership image had appeared strongly in a certain period or continued to do so over later periods. Based on this result, six focal leadership images will be selected in this article and reinvestigated deductively during several eras of history. The leadership images, discovered by the inductive survey, are the following: the martyr, revivalist, patriot, reformer, charismatic, and equipper.

This article should be viewed from a South Korean situation and the term "the Korean Church" refers to the South Korean Church. Moreover, all leadership images here will be traced and

1 Rev Gil-Soo Kang of Korea received his DTh degree from the University of Stellenbosch in March 2002. Jurgens Hendriks of the Department Practical Theology and Missiology of the University of Stellenbosch was his promotor.

explained on the basis of the history of the Korean Protestant Church, except one image, that of a martyr. Tracing the image of a martyr will include the history of the Korean Catholic Church because this church has a long history of martyrdom. This history will reveal the social and political situation of Korea at the time, which, in turn, will assist towards understanding the inception of the Korean Protestant Church.

2. THE IMAGE OF A MARTYR

2.1 Persecutions of the Korean Catholic Church

The origins of the martyr's image are found in the history of the Korean Catholic Church, which predates the history of the Korean Protestant Church. The Korean Catholic Church celebrated its bicentenary in 1984 and announced that it would regard its founding as 1784. It was at this date that Seung-Hoon Lee, who was the first Catholic to be baptised by an ordained priest in Beijing, China, together with his colleagues, Byuk Lee and Il-Shin Kwon, established the Korean Catholic Church independent of any aid from foreign missionaries (Cho 1984:14; The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1989:73-76).

After 1785, when the first persecution occurred, Korean Catholicism endured a history of persecution for the next 100 years: *Shin-hae persecution* of 1791, *Shin-yu persecution* of 1801, *Ul-hae persecution* of 1815, *Cheong-hae persecution* of 1827, *Ki-hae persecution* of 1839, *Byung-oh persecution* of 1846, and *Byung-in persecution* of 1866.

In fact, in the first 100 years of the Korean Catholic Church's history multi-level conflicts were prevalent – political, cultural, and religious – between the Korean government, the intellectuals and the people. More than 10 000 Catholics were massacred over about 100 years. In particular, many inspired Catholic leaders, including Fathers Chou and Kim, not only encouraged Catholic members to remain loyal to their faith but also died as martyrs, setting an example, during those persecutions. From among 20 French missionaries of the Society of Foreign Mission of Paris, who lived in Korea after 1836, three were beheaded in the *Ki-hae persecution* of 1839, five died of illness, nine were martyred in the *Byung-in persecution* of 1866 and only three survived – Fidel, Feron and Calais (Lee 1988; Kim 1995; Choi 1984; Kim 1992; The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1989).

2.2 Persecutions of the Korean Protestant Church

The image of a martyr is also to be found in the history of the Korean Protestant Church. However, unlike Catholicism, Protestantism was able to settle down in its first stage of evangelisation in Korea without great difficulties because the Protestant missionaries were able to win public confidence through their medical assistance and schooling ministries. In addition, they evangelised the populace using indirect methods, such as promoting the distribution of the Bible and Christian pamphlets, rather than direct evangelising. Even though there were occasional persecutions of Protestant Christians in 1888 and 1894, this subsided before long (The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1989:247-253). In fact, it was only in the period of Japanese colonisation (1910-1945) that the Korean Protestant Church suffered persecution.

During Japanese colonial rule, the Protestant Church and its leaders played a central role in cultivating national awareness through the Western methods of education, the press, Bible teaching and so forth. It was thus indispensable for Japanese political goals that Japanese rulers should put a damper on the spirit of Protestantism.

Japanese persecution of the Korean Protestant Church reached its climax when the issue of Shintoism (the worship of the Japanese emperor)² surfaced. The Japanese rulers instituted Shinto shrines in every town and forced all people to participate in Shinto shrine worship (*Shinsachambae*) (Kim 1995:43-45; The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1990:285-294).

One of the main reasons why the Japanese promoted Shintoism in Korea was to weaken and finally to destroy Protestantism in Korea (Min 1993:478-479). This plan seemed to succeed through legal coercion. However, *Shinsachambae* was strongly rejected by several prominent church leaders, who initiated the “Shinsachambae Rejection Movement” nationwide (The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1990:331). On the one hand, dreadful, dehumanising tortures were inflicted on the leaders in prison and, on the other hand, they were made enticing offers of compromise. Despite all the brutal tortures and temptations, these leaders did not abandon their faith and inspired a number of church members to follow Jesus Christ by standing firm in their faith. The spirit of resistance that they showed exerted a great influence, not only at the time, but nowadays as well.

The persecution of the Korean Protestant Church by the Communists was continued during the Korean War (1950-1953). The Communist government in the north perceived the churches as a threat to its rule, resulting in the execution of many Church leaders just before and during the outbreak of the Korean War, which had started with the invasion of South Korea by the North Korean armies on Sunday, 25 June 1950 (Kim 1995:45; Lee 1984:373-381; Reeve 1963:33).

During the war, the Communists also persecuted Korean Christianity. According to the *Korean Christian Newspaper*, on 25 June 1952, 541 Presbyterian Churches, 239 Methodist Churches, and 106 Holiness Churches were demolished and 177 Presbyterian pastors, 44 Methodist pastors, 11 Holiness pastors, and 6 Anglican pastors were kidnapped or killed by the North (Min 1993:526). However, these statistics represent only a small part of the suffering that the Korean Church endured (Min 1993:526). According to Kim’s evaluation (1995:46), for the Korean Churches, the Korean War proved to be the most appalling sequence of events and it outweighed the persecutions suffered by the Catholics during the 19th century.

In conclusion, the image of a martyr in the Korean Church leadership has a long history from the founding of the Korean Church until the end of the Korean War.

3. THE IMAGE OF A REVIVALIST

The image of a revivalist is another important image that appears in the history of the Korean Church. Since the time when some missionaries experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit while in a meeting for Bible study and prayers at Won-san in 1903, similar phenomena occurred intermittently in several meetings until 1907, when the Great Revival in the Korean Church was at last initiated at the annual Bible conference, held in the Chang-dae-hyun Church at Pyung-yang.³ The Holy Spirit, which filled the whole conference, overwhelmed all the attendants. This atmosphere of a “Great Revival Movement” was transferred to the Christian schools, to the churches nationwide, and even to China. Revivalists went everywhere, holding conferences, and similar experiences occurred (The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1989:268-273). This

2 For a more detailed account of Shintoism, see ch 4 (pp 82-141) in Kim’s dissertation (2000).

3 For more detailed accounts of the Great Revival Movement in the Korean Church, see Park (2000) and Kim (1997).

image can be considered in two stages: firstly, an emphasis on prayer and Bible study, and secondly, an emphasis on a mystic, eschatological faith.

3.1 The first stage (1900-1920): an emphasis on prayer and Bible study

The first and foremost feature of the “Great Revival Movement” was an emphasis on prayer and Bible study. Without exception, in the first stage, the revivalists held meetings for Bible study and prayer. Because the Bible itself initiated the mission of the Korean Church, the yearning of the Korean believers to study the Bible was unique. Believers travelled to Bible study conferences wherever they were held, regardless of the distance. Inspired by their Bible study, believers started to pray together from dawn to dusk. The dawn prayer meeting, commencing at 04:30 or 05:00, initiated by Sun-Joo Kil, became a way of life for the Korean Church and it continues to this very day. Such an emphasis on prayer and Bible study resulted in repentance of sin, moral renewal and ardent evangelisation.

3.2 The second stage (1921-1940): an emphasis on eschatological faith

In the 1920s, several negative phenomena became evident in the Korean Church: conflict among denominations, criticism from the liberal camp and from socialists, conflict between missionaries and Korean Church leaders, and a struggle for hegemony. While the Korean Church was losing its vitality, another revival movement was founded. The feature of this second revival movement is that it was led by the individual activity of revivalists, in comparison with that of the first stage, which was led by the collective activity of revivalists. Among many, Sun-Joo Kil, Ik-Doo Kim and Yong-Do Lee were prominent revivalists at the time and each of them introduced his own particular style to the revival movement: “heaven-oriented”, “healing-accompanied”, and “mystical”.

Pastor Sun-Joo Kil formulated an eschatology after reading Revelations 700 times, when he was imprisoned as one of the representatives of the March First Movement in 1919. According to his conviction that true peace and justice should come from above, that is, Jesus’ Second Coming, his preaching in the 1920s and 1930s focused on the end of the world and the Second Advent of Christ. By emphasising a heaven-oriented faith, he encouraged many Korean people to have hope amidst the suffering caused by the Japanese government (Park 1995:59-66; The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1990:189; Min 1993:394-398).

It was Ik-Doo Kim (1874-1950) who continued the revival history of the Korean Church after Sun-Joo Kil. Healing miracles occurred whenever and wherever Kim led a revival conference. While leading these revival-cum-healing conferences, Kim approached people shunned by society: the poor, the ill, and the uneducated. Because of this, he was criticised by some intellectuals in the churches, by socialists, and by some anti-religionists who would prevent his conferences (Min 1993:398-401; The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1990:187-188).

Yong-Do Lee (1901-1933) emphasised transcendental faith, mystic piety, and a mystical union with the suffering Christ. However, his excessive emphasis on the last aspect led Lee astray in identifying himself with the suffering Christ. As a result, he was declared a heretic at the Pyung-yang Presbytery in 1933 (Min 1993:434-444; The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1990:189-192; Park 1995:73-85).

4. THE IMAGE OF A PATRIOT

The image of a patriot in Korean Church leadership appears strongly during the Japanese colonial period. Hong called the image of a patriot a “Sun-bi”, its literal meaning in Korean being “a scholar”, but the implied meaning here is “a patriot” or “a nationalist” (Myung 1997:64). Many

Christian leaders were so influenced by the spirit of Sun-bi that they stood at the forefront of independence movements during the Japanese colonial period. It can be proved that the Korean Church leaders played a central role in the independence of Korea.

Firstly, it can be proved by analysing statistics. Almost half of the representatives (16/33) of the Korean people who signed the Declaration of Independence for the Independence Movement on 1 March 1919 in Seoul, were Christian leaders. Of the 311 regions in which the identity of the leading group was openly revealed early in the March First Movement, 78 regions were led by Christian leaders, 66 by Chun-do-gyo leaders, and 42 by leaders from both groups. Moreover, statistics of the Japanese police relating to those arrested until the end of 1919 show how deeply Church leaders were involved in the independence movements.

Table 1: The number of the arrested according to religion

<i>Religion</i>	<i>The number of the arrested</i>	<i>%</i>
Chun-do-gyo	2 297 (125)	11.8
Buddhism	220 (120)	1.1
Confucianism	346	1.8
Christianity	3 428 (244)	17.6
Other religions	21	0.1
Non-religious	9 304	47.7
Anonymous	3 907	20.0
Total	19 523	100.1

() = the number of religious leaders

As shown in Table 1, the percentage of those arrested that were Christians is 17.6, which means that, among the other religions, Christianity was the largest group involved in the independence movements. The number of Christian leaders is almost twice as high as that of Chun-do-gyo or Buddhism. If the fact is taken into account that Christians, at the time, were only 1.5% of the whole population, then these statistics reveal a remarkable Christian involvement in the independence movements (The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1990:35-40).

Secondly, it was mainly in church buildings that demonstrators gathered to read the Declaration of Independence, from which they started marching peacefully into the streets. All over the country, almost all pastors opened their church buildings as meeting places for demonstrators.

Thirdly, church leaders played a major role not only in the preparatory stage of the movements, but also in the course of the movements through effective organising, rapid expansion by a nationwide system of connections, and the promotion of a spirit of non-violence.

5. THE IMAGE OF A SOCIAL REFORMER

After the March First Movement failed, on the one hand, there were revivalists who encouraged people to have an eschatological faith to cope with their miserable reality, and, on the other hand, there were social reformers who tried to evoke people's consciousness through social upliftment. While the former believed that the world of peace and justice could be established by God's intervention only, the latter believed in God's intervention, but through people. Therefore, the former were inclined towards vertical spiritual activities such as worship, Bible study and prayer, whereas the latter were inclined towards horizontal spiritual activities such as social participation,

social upliftment movement and so forth. Social reformers were mainly intellectuals, an elite group in the Korean Church at the time. One of the decisive factors that formulated the social consciousness of Christian leaders was the International Missionary Council held in Jerusalem in 1928, at which six Korean Christian leaders, including two foreign missionaries, participated. There they learnt that Christian faith should be related to life. Remarkable activities that they promoted at the time were the agricultural movement, the temperance movement, and social work.

5.1 The agricultural movement

The devastation of Korean farm villages that had resulted from the Japanese policy of exploitation of the national economy, motivated Christian leaders to initiate an agricultural movement in which youth organisations such as the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) and the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association), and other church organisations were involved.

With the purpose of enhancing the intellect, the culture and the economy of Korea, the YMCA and the YWCA promoted several activities: the eradication of illiteracy, upliftment lectures, the development of agricultural leaders and farm culture, organising cooperative associations, developing agricultural skills, farm counselling, farm support, and so forth. In 1928 at the Presbyterian General Assembly, a department of agriculture was established that promoted several initiatives. It engaged a professional agriculturalist, published a farmers' magazine, established a model village and founded an agricultural school. The next year, new initiatives were promoted: the establishment of villages, farm hygiene, farm education, farm school ethics and a farm association movement (The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1990:222-231).

5.2 The Temperance Movement

After the March First Movement, the Japanese government altered its policy from a police system to an enlightened administration or civilisation policy to conciliate the Korean people. This new policy was actually fraudulent and deceptive. Accordingly, the Japanese government tried to introduce decadent aspects of Japanese culture, such as alcohol, tobacco, opium, and licensed prostitution in Korea. Against this Japanese cultural and mental onslaught, church leaders launched an anti-decadence drive called the "Temperance Movement." In the 1920s, some Korean Christian women leaders, who belonged mainly to the Methodist Church, organised the Korean Woman's Christian Temperance Union and held temperance seminars on a national scale that culminated in 52 branches and 3 217 members by 1928. In 1923, a committee to abolish licensed prostitution was established by Christian leaders. At the 17th Presbyterian General Assembly in 1926, a motion was passed to support the work of a committee to abolish licensed prostitution. In 1932, Christian male leaders who mainly belonged to the Presbyterian Church organised the Chosun Christian Temperance Union. They continued to urge the governor-general of Korea to enact a law prohibiting minors from drinking and smoking and, at last, this law was enacted in 1938. This law retains its legal force today (The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1990:231-236).

5.3 Social work

The Korean Church also promoted social welfare services, in addition to the Temperance Movement, in several other areas. The Salvation Army was the leading group in respect of social welfare services. In particular, in its relief service to the poor and orphans, the Salvation Army not only donated relief supplies, but also granted such people the opportunity of an industrial education to become self-reliant. The Salvation Army Girl's Home and The Salvation Army Boy's Home functioned both as orphanages and as industrial training schools. The women's mission board of the Korean Methodist Church organised the Social Centre and promoted several welfare

services for children and women. Besides these, many Christian leaders were devoted to various social welfare services: orphanages, crèches, old age homes, a movement for the eradication of tuberculosis, a relief service for lepers, adapting the Braille system to Korean, and schooling for the blind (The Institute of Korean Church History Studies 1990:237-241).

6. THE IMAGE OF A CHARISMATIC

Yong-Gi Cho, serving the Yoido Full Gospel Church (YFGC) (a Pentecostal denomination called the Assemblies of God at Yo-i-do in Seoul), who was and is one of the best-known Korean pastors, radiated the image of a charismatic, one of the distinguishing characteristics of leadership in the history of the Korean Church growth. Starting with a little tent-roofed church in the poor part of the city in 1958, Cho won 600 church members within three years. In 1981, when he wrote his book entitled *Successful home cell groups*, the YFGC had already become the largest single congregation of Christians in the world, with more than 150 000 members (Cho, with Hostetler 1981:50). Furthermore, the YFGC had about 325 000 church members in 1983 (Cho & Hurston 1983:270), about 625 000 in 1990 (George 1992:52), and about 700 000 in 1995 (Compilation Committee of the 40th Anniversary of the Yoido Full Gospel Church, 1998), an unprecedented number in the history of Christianity. According to Cho (1981; 1983), it was the principle of the home cell group that enabled the incredible numerical growth of the YFGC. Cho's charismatic leadership can also explain this unbelievable growth.

In the early stage of his ministry, Cho thought that the pastor alone was responsible for doing everything, from preaching to home visitation, from counselling to baptising and from marrying to burying. He thought God could bless his members only through himself, and considered himself to be a "specially chosen vessel of God". This view proves that he had a charismatic image of his leadership. Ultimately, overwork resulting from this lifestyle caused him to collapse from physical exhaustion. It was while studying the Bible on his sickbed that he discovered the principle of the home cell group. Thereafter he emphasised delegating his ministry and authority to lay leaders. Yet, the hierarchical pyramid structure that he established in the YFGC proves that he still maintained a strong charismatic style of leadership.

Elements of the charismatic movement, such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, and the healing ministry, also support his charismatic leadership. In the 1980s, while planning to found an international mission centre, named *Church Growth International*, for church growth to accelerate numerical church growth and to promote the spread of the secret of the YFGC's growth, he expressed himself as follows (Cho, with Hostetler 1981:102-103),

The 1960s were an era of healings that helped to spread the renewal of the churches. The 1970s were the era of the charismatic movement. Now it's time for church growth. Healings and charismatic renewal will do no good for the church unless they contribute to the growth of the church. In fact, all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to build up the body of Christ, and that does not mean only spiritual encouragement; it includes physical growth as well.

This quotation indicates that the charismatic movement's inclusion of the healing ministry for church growth was already well advanced from the early stage of Cho's ministry. Based on 3 John 1:2, "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well," he emphasised that all believers should be prosperous in their spiritual life, healthy in body and rich in possessions. These are called the "Sahm-bahk-ja (threefold) blessings" (cf Compilation Committee of the 40th Anniversary of the Yoido Full

Gospel Church 1998:409-432). Because of his charismatic ability, Cho's leadership has increased in power, with people flocking to the YFGC.

The visible example of the YFGC's success has made an enormous impact upon the Korean Churches, irrespective of their denomination. Numerous pastors attempted to imitate pastor Cho by taking a keen interest in the charismatic movement and by applying the healing and blessing-oriented ministry to their churches. They did indeed experience moderate success as far as the increase of membership and offerings were concerned. Accordingly, charismatic leadership is still so dominant and typical in the Korean Church that the ministry and style of many pastors of medium or large churches are charismatic. In fact, it is generally said that charismatic leadership has been a driving force behind the astonishing growth of the Korean Church (Myung 1997:64).

Even though there are numerous similarities between the images of a charismatic and that of a revivalist, such as personal evangelism, mass crusade movements, revival conferences, and healing ministry, there is a difference. Whereas revivalists in the 1920s and 1930s focused on eschatological faith, aspiring to a heaven beyond this world, since the 1960s charismatic leaders have focused on pragmatic faith, emphasising prosperity in this world along with the economic growth of the Korean society (Lee 1991:285).

7. THE IMAGE OF AN EQUIPPER

Another distinguished image of leadership in the history of the Korean Church growth, beside the image of a charismatic, is the image of an equipper, which has been dominant from the 1980s until today (Lee 1999:39). Han-Hum Oak, serving the SaRang Community Church⁴ (SCC – Presbyterian denomination) in Seoul, has been the leading pastor representing this image. Since the SCC was founded in Seoul in 1978, it has become one of the mega-churches in Korea, with a current membership of about 30 000. It was by means of the discipleship-training, equipping leadership model that Oak employed in the SCC that he achieved success.

The two main pathological phenomena in the Korean Church in the 1970s that Oak was forced to wrestle with, are: the excessive Charismatic Movement and the weakening traditional churches. On the one hand, the Korean Church faced several serious problems, such as an indifference to social responsibility and a Shamanistic blessing-oriented belief, the result of an excessive focus on mere quantitative growth and worldly blessings, based on materialism. Furthermore, the Korean Church had no solution or spiritual power to cope with these problems, because its quantitative growth was not supported by qualitative growth (Park 1998:41).

On the other hand, despite the numerical growth of the Korean Church, its youth groups declined rapidly in the early 1970s. Most young adults left the church and joined student mission organisations such as Navigator, CCC, IVF, UBF, and SFC. Consequently, the youth groups of traditional churches became weak. While Oak wrestled with this phenomenon, he found that contact with the Gospel, training and vision were lacking in the traditional churches: there were sound doctrines but no Gospel to inspire people with vitality, many meetings but no training to nurture and equip followers with the Word of God, and diverse programmes but no vision to capture the people's imagination (Oak 2001:24).

4 When Oak founded the church in 1978, its first name was Kang-nam-eun-pyung Church. This was changed to a new name, Sa-rang-eui Church in 1981 and is still in use today. However, Oak called the Church the "SaRang Community Church" in English in his book (2001). This article follows the English name.

During his three-year study at Calvin Seminary and Westminster Theological Seminary, Oak became convinced that the discipleship-training model should provide an alternative to the spiritual renewal of the Korean Church by discovering the theological meaning of the apostolic nature of the Church (Oak 2001:24-25).⁵ Accordingly, the main and most important function of a pastor should be to awaken, train and equip lay people to enable them to carry out both an evangelical mission and a social responsibility.

The SCC became the first local church that fully employed the discipleship-training model. Since 1984, the Korean Church has paid thorough attention to the laity movement through discipleship training. This occurred after Oak employed his model experimentally for a six-year period and wrote a book entitled *Called to awaken the laity (CAL), a manual of discipleship training in Korea*. Many pastors, leaders and lay people have studied this publication; many churches have used it as a guidebook and have applied the model to their churches. Oak was obliged to revise the book in 1998 because the SCC had experienced rapid growth – more than 14 000 members that year (Oak 1999:13), and about 30 000 members in 2001 (Oak 2001:315). The revised version was translated into English and published in 2001 under the title *Healthy Christians make a healthy church: The story of how discipleship training is building one of Korea's megachurches-SaRang*.

Furthermore, Oak established “Disciple Making Ministries International” (DMMI) in 1986 and held regular seminars to equip pastors and church planters to use the SCC’s discipleship training model. About 4 000 pastors, including foreign pastors, graduated from this extensive programme of seminars. Of the graduates, 47% have been applying its principles in their own ministries (Park 1998:43). In 1999, the DMMI also held a “Discipleship Training Leader Convention” to help graduates to plant the discipleship-training model successfully in their own ministries and to activate the existing “Discipleship Training Movement” more effectively and collectively than before in Korea and even in the world by establishing a strong network among graduates (Oak 1999:14-15).

8. CONCLUSION

We believe that one of the reasons for the stagnation in the growth of the church in Korea is due to a leadership crisis, which resulted from a theologically insufficient or perverted use of certain images. The first four images of leadership seem to have arisen from the demands of the contemporary situation, whereas the latter two came into use because of certain theological convictions. The fundamental problems of the Korean Church leadership, such as secularised, church-centred and authoritarian leadership, go hand in hand with the prominence of the charismatic leader’s image. This leadership has been supported by Cho’s theological conviction called “Sahm-bahk-ja (threefold) blessings” based on 3 John 1:2: spiritual, physical, and materialistic blessing.

Because of their prevailing emphasis on materialistic blessing, the Korean Church leadership has been secularised, influencing believers to pursue earthly prosperity, such as acquiring money, status, their children’s success, and power. Church leaders, in turn, want their churches to be megachurches driven by a vendor ethos, a marketing theory, and a competitive mentality. Owing to the

5 For this, Oak was greatly indebted to Hans Küng, a Catholic theologian. His idea of the apostolic nature of the church came from Küng’s seminal book entitled *The Church* (New York: Image Books, 1967) (Oak 2001:69-118).

emphasis on spiritual blessing, understood as something to be acquired by devoting one's life to the church in terms of time and money, leadership in the Korean Church has been church-centred. The personal and material resources that the Korean Church possesses have almost all been used for its own building up, in other words, inwardly focused. Because of the emphasis on physical blessing or health, sick people come to the pastors to be healed by their powerful prayers. People also want pastors to pray for their materialistic blessing. They probably believe that the pastors' prayer is much more effective than their own, or that the pastors are mediums who act as a bridge between God and themselves. Accordingly, the pastors become authoritarian beings, visualised as able to control people's physical and material wellbeing.

Although the image of an equipper seems to have started from a sound theological motivation, it still lacks the comprehensive support of a broader theology on both ecclesiology and leadership. The danger is that it may support a self-centred "powerful-ghetto" mentality as its drive to establish its own worldwide network seems to indicate.

In conclusion, the article formulates the challenge that the Korean Church has to face in the 21st century. It has to construct a contextual yet biblical ecclesiology that will be able to confront the pervasive culture and motivate theologically founded, principle-centred, visionary leadership.

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